



Jefferson
Unitarian
Church



COMING OF AGE PROGRAM

2019-2020

Children and Youth Religious Education

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Description

Coming of Age (COA) helps youth discern for themselves what it means to live a life of faith, individually and as part of the larger Unitarian Universalist (UU) faith community. It involves classroom group activities, individual activities, community service, family participation, and working with a mentor. This program initiates a process of life-long learning and promotes right relationship with one's self, with others, and with the wider world. This program is designed for 8th-grade youth.

Purpose

Coming of Age is a way to:

- Create community between youth/youth and youth/adults in the JUC community.
- Enables youth to discover what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist among diverse faith traditions and in an increasingly secular world.
- Develop a maturing pursuit of life-long spiritual inquiry, personal integrity, and action for the greater good.
- Provide a foundation for a life of faith and a sense of belonging in a covenantal community within the Unitarian Universalist tradition.

Program Structure

Our program consists of a year-long journey, culminating in a Coming of Age recognition worship service during which youth deliver their personal credos. Each session provides the COA participant with the opportunity to explore aspects of a mature religious life, including both beliefs and practices. In combination, these sessions assure a comprehensive program and a meaningful Coming of Age experience.

- Community and Covenant Building
- Identity
- UU Principles and Sources
- Unitarian Universalist Perspective & Identity, Theology/Belief, & Spiritual Practices
 - Building a stronger connection to the foundation of our UU faith
 - UU Perspectives
 - Surveying UU history and prophetic UU leaders, values, and beliefs
 - Spiritual Practices
 - Learning practices that balance us and keep us in touch with life
 - Theology/Beliefs
 - Clarifying ideas about humanity and the divine
- Leadership & Social Action



- Developing leadership skills, handling conflicts, and inspiring others
- Historical perspective of UU social action, developing and putting social action values into practice
- Worship
 - Connection to the practice of worship and designing and leading worship services
 - Writing Chalice Lighting
 - Credo Development
 - Articulating your spiritual path

The Credo

Over the course of the Coming of Age program, participating youth will develop a personal statement—a Credo—of how one should live. Answers to four questions lead youth in the creation of this statement, the final version of which will be presented as part of the Coming of Age Sunday worship service. These questions gently awaken four fundamental realms of the inner life: Identity, Love, Daily Practice, and Kindness (Muller, 1996, p. xi). Our Credo questions adopted from Muller are:

- **Who am I?** What is my true nature, and how do I find it?
- **What do I love?** By what star do I navigate my journey on earth?
- **How shall I live, knowing I will die?** In our brief time here, what qualities do I wish to cultivate? What shall I set my heart to?
- **What is my gift to the family of earth?** How do I uncover my true gift? How do I balance giving and receiving (Muller, 1996, p. xxi)? Who is most in need of my gift?

Credos may take the form of a written statement, original artwork, poetry, multimedia, a collage, a scrapbook of collected pictures, words, and mementos from program projects, video and/or audio recordings, as well as music, silence, meditation, readings, or other worship elements (or any combination of these or other appropriate elements).

Recognition Worship Service

Our Coming of Age Program ends with a Sunday worship service, including some form of recognition and celebration. Youth share the Credo they prepared during the program. Teachers and/or mentors may elect to speak about the young person and their changing place in the world as they enter adolescence.

The celebration is a time to bring all the parts of the COA program together in a way that articulates what the participants have learned throughout the year. The participating youth will help design the worship service that concludes the program with guidance from the DRE & Minister.



Although participating youth help plan the worship service, parents, mentors, and others may wish to plan a celebration to augment our social hour following the services. Inviting friends and extended family to this service and celebration is a customary part of the process, with the ultimate goal of the larger faith community welcoming youth into the community in a new way.

Getting Started

Commitment

This program is voluntary; however, participants and mentors must commit to the entire program—both content and duration (which for our program means from September thru May). Youth must be both self-actualized and personally responsible for accomplishing the required activities and meeting with their mentor. Participant planning includes considering COA time commitments as well as necessary schedule adjustments to other personal commitments.

PARTICIPANTS

Youth

Pursuing a Coming of Age experience may make a busy life even busier; in addition to being challenging and affirming, it is both serious and fun. If you've ever wondered about:

- Who or what is in charge? Is there a creator?
- Is there a god? Is god a being? An entity? A path? A process? A human concept?
- What is my purpose?
- Why am I here?
- How do I know what I know?
- What is the nature of existence, and how do I fit into the picture?
- What in our world is divine—if anything?
- What is our uniquely human challenge?
- What is the purpose of faith and the role of religion?
- How will I learn from those that have gone before me?
- What does it mean to be a religious community?
- How shall I live in order to transform myself and the world?
- What happens when I die? Is there an afterlife for me? Reincarnation?
- What does Unitarian Universalism have to say about these questions?

. . . this program is for you.



Parents

Recognize the importance of the Coming of Age program as a Rite of Passage. Your support of the COA program and your youth's participation is a vital element in the success of the program and your youth's experience.

- Participate in the COA initial meeting.
- Support and encourage your youth to remain committed to the program and to attend Sunday morning class, mentor sessions, retreats, and Faith in Action.
- Ask your youth for periodic updates on covered topics, so that you can continue the conversations at home and help youth carry what they have learned into the wider world. Participate in family homework.
- Honor your youth by attending the Recognition Service; you may elect to plan additional celebratory activities after the COA Service.

Teachers and Mentors

Coming of Age Teachers and Mentors are adults who work with the COA participant throughout the program, inviting conversation, supporting exploration, and providing the support of an adult with a perspective from outside the family. Program participants must follow JUC's Safety Policies. (see Children and Youth Safety Policies below) All teachers and mentors working with youth must have a current volunteer clearance and background check on file in the church office. Everyone involved in the program must understand the Teacher/Mentor relationship guidelines, which must be documented and signed by the mentor and youth.

Qualities of a Good Mentor

- A mature and emotionally secure adult
- A good listener
- Able to focus the relationship on the youth's needs
- Model respect and trustworthiness
- Affirm youth as they are
- Know that the youth is the real architect of transformation
- Has resolved his or her own issues and is not trying to relive adolescence through the youth
- 25 years or older, and a member of the congregation or on the path to membership
- Not currently a parent of a teenager
- Will follow all of JUC's Children and Youth Safety Policies

Teacher Responsibilities

- Meet Sunday morning with youth in church classroom (alternating schedules with teaching team)
- Follow lesson plans for each session, understanding that your connection to the lesson can assist the youth in valuing their time in class.



- Be prepared for each session by thoroughly reviewing lessons, engaging in the spiritual practices at home, and reading material youth are asked to read.
- Encourage youth's full participation in the COA program
- Provide youth a safe, impartial atmosphere in the classroom to express ideas and practice articulating those ideas.
- Be an adult in whom youth trust they will not be responded to with parental voice or with a judgment lens.

Mentor Responsibilities

- Mentors must be church members or on the path to membership (approved by DRE)
- Pass a background check
- 2 personal references.
- Attend Mentor sessions, applicable retreat sessions, and program activities
- Play an active role in mentor's meetings and activities, including reading the same material as the youth and reviewing such additional and on-line resources as may be necessary to be an effective mentor
- Support youth in making choices to fulfill program activities, assignments and session participation
- Provide youth a safe, impartial atmosphere in sessions and activities to express ideas and practice articulating those ideas.
- Be an adult in whom youth can trust they will not be responded to with parental voice or a judgment lens.
- Help the youth prepare their Credo and sponsor the youth at the Recognition Celebration, and worship service.
- Create your Credo to share with the youth
- Remain in contact with the DRE if you need any support or guidance during the mentoring process.
- Participate in Adult Faith Development session with the Associate Minister and DRE when scheduled in regards to COA mentor credo development

Coming of Age Units

Unit 1

Community and Covenant Building

Initial community building creates the foundation for the entire Coming Of Age program by:

- **Bonding:** The first step in building community is to break down the cliques and barriers that exist, and to establish a relationship of trust among the individuals in the group.
- **Opening Up:** When an individual can share non-threatening areas of her or his life, an exciting step in group building has taken place. The more sympathetically a group listens, the more an individual feels like a secure member of a group.



- **Affirming:** The act of encouraging each other through affirmation is crucial to the growing process of a group. Participants in affirming interactions build confidence in the group and themselves.
- **Stretching:** Difficult situations naturally arise if the group is together long enough. Stretching exercises reap many benefits. When people move beyond their normal comfort level, they experience the greatest potential for growth. Through a simple stretching exercise, individuals also realize they can achieve much more as a group than they could as a collection of individuals. They recognize the importance of each member of the entire group. Facing and overcoming programmed difficulties give young people the confidence that they can cope with the everyday problems they face.
- **Deeper Sharing:** The youth group becomes a setting where young people can express their visions of the future and present struggles. The group will not laugh at or condemn its members. The group can help the individual talk through possible solutions and goals. The group holds the individual accountable for his or her decisions, remaining supportive throughout the process.

Related Unitarian Universalist Principle(s):

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations.

Unit 2

Identity

- Who are you?
 - Developing insight and internal reflection
- Who am I at JUC?
 - What is my place here, why is church relevant, are these my people, is it my choice to be here or my family's, what do I gain, and what do I give?
- Where is my place in the world, and how does Unitarian Universalism guide me?
 - Developing a connection between identity, religion, and values, working to claim an identity
- How does Unitarian Universalism call us to make our faith a more welcoming, inclusive, empowering, and just faith for all?
 - Youth with white identities: Developing a healthy white anti-racist identity so we can continue to most effectively follow the call of our faith to build the beloved community.
 - Racial and Cultural Identity for Youth (Youth of Color caucus)
 - Introduction to Gender and Sexual Orientation (Sexual/affectional orientation and gender identity for youth and their families caucus)



- Exploring healthy masculinity and how young Unitarian Universalists can use UU values to promote healthy masculinity in our culture and communities.
- Transgender, gender-variant, and non-binary identities and how we can welcome and make most comfortable those youth who hold or are exploring such identities. (Transgender identified caucus)
- Identity in the greater world

Related Unitarian Universalist Principle(s):

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations.
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

Unit 3

Unitarian Universalist Perspective & Identity, Theology/Belief, & Spiritual Practices

Our Seven Principles define our public persona as a faith community; our six Sources inform our spiritual practice. Unitarian Universalism comes from a long and distinguished history of individuals and organizations that struggled to live out our values of open-mindedness, equality, and compassion. Our members embrace, respect, and are informed by a bewildering array of faith traditions and beliefs. Non-creedal, covenantal, and welcoming, our rich UU heritage defines who we are as a faith community.

Unitarian Universalists do not have a creed or a dogma—there is no one thing that all UU’s believe—we are one faith with many beliefs. This means that each of us is responsible for deciding for ourselves what we think are the best answers to life’s most vital questions. Our answers may change over time, but part of moving toward adulthood—at least in the Unitarian Universalist tradition—is to think about what answers are true for you at this time, rather than unquestioningly accepting the beliefs of family and friends.

Related to Unitarian Universalist Principles

- Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations.
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Spiritual practice is about *relationship*—with one’s self, with others, and that which is beyond one’s self. Spirituality is the process of staying *engaged* in these relationships, what *intention* we bring to them, and how willing we are to *change* as the relationship affects us. Across time and around the world, people of different religions have developed different techniques for quieting the mind and coming to a still, centered, place – what some would call *opening to*



the Spirit, others *Mindfulness*, or *moving toward Enlightenment*, and many others wouldn't care to name, but practice anyway. As Unitarian Universalists, we are free to explore different spiritual practices in search of disciplines that allow us to listen to the still, small voice within.

Related Unitarian Universalist Principle(s):

- Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations.
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Related Unitarian Universalist Source(s):

- All six

Unit 4: Leadership & Social Action

Leadership

Moving into adulthood means taking on leadership roles, and cultivating our ability to make things happen in the world. Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to action. Leadership makes things happen. Making things happen in the world requires a variety of important skills, including breaking a complicated process into smaller steps, figuring out what resources are needed and available, and inspiring and working with other people to achieve your goal. Good leadership involves personal responsibility for the welfare of the group.

Related Unitarian Universalist Principle(s):

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

Related Unitarian Universalist Source(s):

- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with compassion and the transforming power of love.

Social Action

Unitarian Universalists believe that we have the power to make a difference in the world and that human beings are most fulfilled—most fully human—when we are working for the greater good. Social action can take shape as *social service*, doing something immediate to make someone's life easier or happier; *social justice*, working to change the structures of society for the better; or *social advocacy*, speaking up for and lobbying in solidarity with groups who are oppressed or ignored by society.

Related Unitarian Universalist Principle(s):

- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.



Related Unitarian Universalist Source(s):

- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with compassion and the transforming power of love.

Unit 5

Worship & Credo

In the Unitarian tradition, worship is most often a celebration of life itself, rather than adoration of a deity. Worship means “to shape things of worth”. Worship is the way we shape words, silence, and music into a shared experience of meaning. You are absolutely a “thing of worth,” and your Credo is an expression of that worth. This unit celebrates *you*. Here is your opportunity to present yourself to, and create a meaningful ceremony for our whole church community. Coming of Age is a rite of passage—it’s a public celebration and acknowledgment of growing up—and in this context—of welcome into a more intentional relationship with our church and our faith community.

Related Unitarian Universalist Principle(s):

- Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations.

Related Unitarian Universalist Source(s):

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life.

Credo means “*what I set my heart to*” (Millspaugh, 2009, p. 76). At UUCY, our credos emphasize “*what I set my heart to*” rather than “*what do I believe?*” How shall I *live* a life of faith? How will I *act*? How will I stay in *right relationship* with myself, with others, and with the wider world? More than most faith traditions, Unitarian Universalism is just as comfortable with the quest/question, as it is with the destination/answer. A credo positions you on a pathway to a life of faith. What is your path? Tell us about it; about you.

Related Unitarian Universalist Principle(s):

All seven of them.

Related Unitarian Universalist Source(s):

All six of them.



Children, Youth and Adult Safety Guidelines

Emergency Contacts

Emergency Phone Numbers:

911- Police, Fire, Ambulance,
Poison Control 1-800-222-1222

You are located at:

Jefferson Unitarian Church
13350 W 32nd Ave Golden CO 80401
(303) 279-5282

JUC Contact:

Jules Jaramillo

Director of Religious Education
E-mail: julesjaramillo@jeffersonunitarian.org



In Case of an Emergency

In case of evacuation due to fire or fire drill:

- **Take your sign-in sheet with you.** Then evacuate, notify adjoining classrooms to evacuate immediately to your designated waiting area.
- Confirm you all the children or youth on your attendance clipboard.
- Notify the fire/rescue personnel and the DRE immediately if a child is missing.
- Fire extinguishers are not in the classroom. They are in white cases at the beginning of the RE hall and at the door from the patio to the Mills building.
- Children will be released to a parent/guardian from the designated waiting area.

In case of evacuation due to other emergencies:

- **Take your attendance clipboard with you.** Then evacuate, notify adjoining classrooms to evacuate to Maple Grove Park (½ block east) near playground.
 - Exit the building
 - Travel by foot to the park
 - Meet children by the park
- Check to be sure that you have with you all the children on your attendance clipboard.
- Wait for further instructions
- Children will be released to a parent/guardian from the designated waiting area.

Children's Health and Medical Concerns:

- Children's health concerns will be noted in the classroom binders.
- We ask that parents/guardians whose children are on specific medications or have medical conditions alert their child's teachers to their needs as they see fit.
- **Children are not allowed in RE with fever, flu, or communicable illnesses such as chickenpox, conjunctivitis, etc.**
- Bandages and minor medical supplies are located in the classrooms and in the RE supply closet.

Notify the DRE of all incidents requiring first aid attention before the family leaves the grounds. Fill out the Incident Report Form (located in each classroom and the RE closet files) and bring to the DRE or RE Coordinator. Always use rubber gloves to clean up vomit, urine, blood and/or other bodily fluids.



Safety Guidelines

The following guidelines are for the protection of our children, youth, and adult volunteers.

While at Jefferson Unitarian Church

Arrival and Departure

- Take attendance each Sunday on the clipboard for emergency procedures.
- Children may be released only to their parents/guardians unless they have made prior arrangements directly with the teacher.
- At the end of class, please check the attendance sheet to verify that all children have been picked up by their parent or guardian.
- Children's Religious Education is concluded at 10:00 AM for first service classes and at noon for the second service classes. Parents/guardians are to pick up their children on time. Please alert the RE staff if parents/guardians are chronically late.

Rule of Three Guidelines

- Any time a child or children are present, other than your own, Rule of Three must be followed. This includes classrooms, playgrounds, and field trips. (Adults who are married or in committed relationships are considered to be "ONE" adult.)
RULE OF THREE
 - one adult and two children
 - two unrelated adults and one child
- Please tell the DRE or RE Coordinator if another adult is needed.
- Check with the DRE or RE Coordinator when arranging trips, outside activities or recruiting chaperones.
- When you are in the bathroom with a child, make sure your co-teacher knows where you are.
- Make sure two adults are present during dismissal. Do not stay in a classroom with just one child while waiting for parents to arrive.

Playground Guidelines

- Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their own children on the playground after they pick them up from Sunday school.
- Do not allow children to use the equipment in ways it was not intended.
- Please put all the toys back in their proper places.
- Report any safety concerns regarding grounds and equipment to the RE office ASAP.



Snacks

- Parents/guardians should let the teachers know of any food allergies or special dietary needs for their children on the registration form and in person.
- **No peanut products are allowed in the classrooms for snacks or for crafts.**

Digital & Social Media

When adults and youth are communicating digitally, pairs must copy an assigned advisor, teacher, mentor or designated church staff member. Adults must always copy another adult or a designated church staff member when communicating with a young person. If a teen initiates communication, the adult on the receiving end should reply and copy the appropriate person. Digital communication is preferred over voice communication as it provides an archivable record. If communication occurs which is not shared with an additional designated adult, the mentor is expected to notify the designated adult as soon as possible and not repeat the action. (If a voice phone conversation is needed, approved adults will call the parent phone number and ask the parent to hand the phone to the teen.)

Adults should not initiate “friend” requests with anyone in our church community under the age of 18 years, including their mentee. Teens may send “friend” requests to adults and adults should discern the level of contact they want to maintain with the teen prior to responding to these requests.

Adults are role models and your behavior and choices will influence your mentee and any other young people you include in your social media/social circle. “Friend” a young person only if you accept responsibility for what they will be exposed to on your social media accounts. This responsibility extends for the full length of time you are in contact with the young person, not simply the months you are volunteering in a youth program.

Obtain parental permission before offering advice about how to access or improve access to social media. Parents often object to their children using social media and we must abide by their wishes.

While Off-Site of Jefferson Unitarian Church

Field Trips

- When planning church-sponsored trips, whether around the church or away from the church, please alert the DRE and parents/guardians as far in advance as possible.
- All drivers must be 25 years of age (unless prior arrangements have been made), have a current driver’s license, be able to show proof of current insurance, **and have submitted to a criminal background check at least 2 weeks prior to the field trip.**
- When children are to be taken off the church grounds, the parent/guardian’s permission must be obtained and a liability/medical release form must be in the



possession of the lead teacher in case of emergency. (Unless location otherwise approved by DRE)

- If there is no release from signed, the child may not participate in the field trip. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- A minimum of two adults must be present with the children on trips, and there should be one adult per eight children/youth. This includes transporting children to/from church events.
- When it is not possible to provide two adult chaperones, parents/guardians must be informed **IN WRITING, IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT** that only one adult will be supervising their child. Parents/guardians must sign a consent form outlining the details of the event including the number and names of chaperones.

Housing and Nighttime Supervision

Events are held in congregational buildings:

- Our programs will follow congregational policies in addition to those set forth in these Youth Guidelines.
- We will follow building rules

Nighttime Supervision and Sleeping in Congregations

- The sleeping policy will be shared with parents and guardians.
- Staff and/or volunteers responsible for the event will determine the implementation of these policies:
 - Each youth must have their own bedding. The floor must be visible between youth in the sleeping areas.
 - Youth leaders are expected to distribute themselves among the youth rather than self-segregating. Any leader who might need to be found at night, such as peer chaplains or those responsible for the community covenant, should have their sleeping space clearly marked. (i.e. with a colored plastic cone or other objects the community assigns to this role).
 - At all points during an event, any unneeded spaces which can be locked should be locked. Spaces which youth should not be in and cannot be locked will be clearly marked. Spaces which are used for daytime programming, but not for sleeping, should be locked at night if possible.
 - Single-gender and all-gender sleeping spaces will be provided if space and numbers allow. All-gender sleeping spaces are provided for the reasons detailed in the Inclusion section.
 - Since consent can only be given and received while awake, touch can only happen while youth are awake and in supervised space. (See Sexuality, Sexual Conduct and Boundaries section).

When youth have the option to stay awake

- Adults will be housed in adult-only spaces.
- After the end of programming, adults not on overnight supervision duty are expected to be in the “awake” hangout room or in their sleeping room except for trips to the



bathroom, to attend to personal necessity, or if needed by a youth they are sponsoring.

- Adults are not to wander the building alone at night.
- After the end of programming, youth will be expected to be in the “awake” hangout room or in a youth sleeping space except for trips to the bathroom or to attend to personal necessity.
- Not being in one of these spaces will be considered a violation of covenant in terms of exclusive behavior.
- Youth sleeping spaces will be provided such that the sleeping spaces are near each other and can be patrolled in a minimum amount of time.
- Each youth room must have at least three youth sleeping in it with a preference for larger numbers.
- Preferably, youth will be housed in the smallest number of spaces that will accommodate them for shorter patrol times.
- Supervision will be provided by two continually roving pairs, a pair of adults and a pair of youth leaders. The pair of adults and pair of youth will take turns “sweeping” the building with the other pair remaining in the “awake” space.
- Adults will organize their shifts in such a way as to minimize interference with drivers’ abilities after the event.

When youth are expected to sleep:

- When there is a curfew as part of the rules/expectations and covenant staff or volunteers can approve the following policy in lieu of the “awake all night” supervision policy (above):
 - Congregations will provide sleeping spaces for youth and adults such that at least two adults sleep in each youth sleeping space positioned strategically for awareness of youth activity.
 - When numbers of adults permit, single-gender rooms will be offered in addition to the all-gender sleeping room.
 - Leaders should create a plan to wake up to check (in pairs) overnight at times not pre-announced to see that everyone is in their own bedspace and that boundaries are maintained.
 - Youth out of this space (for reasons other than trips to the bathroom or to attend to personal necessity) is a significant violation of the trust we place in youth and will have consequences. Such violations of curfew will be immediately reported to the right relationship team (group assigned to monitor the community well-being) and consequences may involve being sent home.
 - Adult leaders and sponsors will organize their shifts in such a way as to minimize interference with drivers’ abilities after the event.

Cabins and Camp Facilities

When events are held at camp facilities:

- Camp facilities should be appropriately licensed for their state
- Events will follow all necessary rules to comply with state laws



Nighttime Supervision and Housing in Cabins

- Events, where sleeping occurs in camps with cabins, will assign sleeping spaces by self-identified gender identity.
- Awake adult supervision is provided until curfew, after which youth are expected to be in their bunks, in their own bed, and asleep.
- If sleeping accommodations do not allow single beds, teens may share a bed as long as they have their own sleep bedding (individual blankets or sleeping bags).
- All cabins will have two adult counselors sleeping in the cabin for overnight supervision- unless it interferes with drivers' abilities after the event.
- Adults need to be mindful to never be alone in the cabin with a youth camper (See Rule of Three).
- Youth should be asked if they need alternative accommodations and any requests for singles or other configurations based on orientation, gender identity, medical issues, etc. should be met if possible.
- Only individuals assigned to a cabin are allowed in the cabin during overnight or quiet hours.
- Violations of these boundaries or curfew will be immediately reported to the group assigned to monitor the community well-being and consequences may involve being sent home.

Dormitories

- Dormitories are used when programs are on college/university campuses, some retreat centers, and hostels. They typically have 2 or more beds with either shared or en-suite bathroom facilities.
- A designated staff person (or equivalent responsible adult) must be available by predetermined means at all times in the building where youth are staying.
- Training events held in dormitories will house youth by self-identified gender identity. Youth with non-binary gender identity will be housed on a case by case basis, such as housed with another youth known to be supportive and affirming. Awake adult supervision is provided until curfew, after which youth are expected to be in their rooms, in their own bed, and asleep.
- Youth under 18 will not be roomed with youth 18 or older, to avoid putting youth over 18 into a legally unequal situation. Participants attending as youth will never be housed with participants attending as young adults.
- Youth should be asked if they need alternative accommodations and any requests for singles or other configurations based on orientation, gender identity, medical issues, etc. should be met if possible.
- Only individuals assigned to a room are allowed in the room when the door is closed.
- Violations of these boundaries or curfew will be immediately reported to the group assigned to monitor the community well-being and consequences may involve being sent home.



Hotels and Convention Centers

NOTE: This does not apply to multigenerational events such as General Assembly where youth are the responsibility of their parent/guardian or Sponsor.

- Hotel-based programs or programs with hotel housing are rare for youth ministry events and have their own challenges. Hotel rooms typically have one or two beds with an option to get a cot and an en-suite bathroom. Some hotel rooms may be connected to other rooms directly.
- A designated staff person (or equivalent responsible adult) must be available by predetermined means at all times in the building where youth are staying.
- Under no circumstances should non-familial youth and adults be rooming together in a small room (e.g. hotel).
- Youth under 18 will not be roomed with youth 18 or older, to avoid putting youth over 18 into a legally unequal situation. Participants attending as youth will never be housed with participants attending as young adults.
- Every youth must have their own bed.
- When multiple youths are present, they are typically placed in single rooms or in same-gender double rooms based on the self-identified gender that youth indicate on their registration forms.
- Youth should also be asked if they need alternative accommodations and any requests for singles or other configurations based on orientation, gender identity, medical issues, etc. should be met if possible.
- Only individuals assigned to a room are allowed in the room when the door is closed. Violations of these boundaries or curfew will be immediately reported to the group assigned to monitor the community well-being and consequences may involve being sent home.
- NOTE: Most private hotels will not allow minors, or often those under 21, to register for or check into a room by themselves. UUA staff usually have to co-sign room registrations with youth.

Medications

A designated adult will be in charge of administering medications during field trips and retreats to ensure medications are secure and taken when prescribed.

Expectations for Working with Children and Youth

Adults and older youth working with children and youth in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role. To help our children grow up to be caring and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person. It is important to recognize that this role carries with it both



power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, child-care worker, teacher, minister, mentor, or any other role, the adult has a responsibility in interacting with our young people in ways that are affirming and inspiring to the young people and to the adult. Adults who work with children and youth at Jefferson Unitarian Church events are expected to always have the best interests of child or youth at heart.

Adults are expected to nurture the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth of children and youth by fostering an environment of kindness, trust, respect, and fun. Our charge to adults working with children and youth is to encourage kindness and genuineness among the children and youth and to discourage unkindness and falseness. We intend to create an environment in which children and youth will be able to explore the spiritual and religious nature of their lives, both as individuals and communities. We expect that one person's enjoyment will not be at the expense of another person's health or self-esteem. In light of this, there are some specific expectations that JUC has of adults working with children and youth.

They are as follows:

- **“Friendship” with Youth** – Although we hope that youth and adults will have a genuine fondness for one another, any adult who looks to youth for “friendship” is not sufficiently mature to be in a position of responsibility over them. A “friendship” is reciprocal, where neither person has more responsibility for the health of the relationship than the other. This is antithetical to the adult/youth relationship, where the adult is the one who assumes primary responsibility for maintaining appropriate boundaries and cultivating an atmosphere of health and trust. It is expected that any relationships that an adult has with youth who have grown to adulthood will not become exploitative.
- **Sexualized behavior** – Adults play an important part in helping our youth develop healthy identities as sexual beings. Children, youth, and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care. **It is never appropriate to engage in any manner of sexual behavior around or with a child or youth.** This refers not only to explicitly sexual behavior but also to sexually provocative behavior or language. It is not appropriate to tell jokes with sexual content, for example, or to make “double entendres.” This also includes displaying or engaging in this behavior with other adults around children or youth as well. Physical expressions of affection such as hugs have their place, but it is best to allow the child or youth to initiate them, and the adult must be sensitive not to allow them to be prolonged.
- **Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting** – Adults who work with children and youth under the age of 18 within the church are responsible not only to the children and youth but are accountable to the church as well. **Remember: you are acting both ethically and legally as an agent of JUC.** Sometimes you will learn that a child or youth is the victim of abuse, is suicidal, has a serious drug problem, etc. For this reason, please try never to give children or youth the impression that you will keep secrets for them. **If a child or youth asks you to keep something confidential- remember that you may not be able to do that in order to protect someone from harm.** A covenant of confidentiality will mean that you do not repeat information told to you in confidence, but when the



information is of a major crisis nature, encourage the child or youth to seek help from a parent or other authority figure. Then, if you believe or suspect the child to be in danger of being harmed or of harming themselves, you, the person that it was reported to, should be the person to call Jefferson County Human Services at **303-271-HELP (4357)**. In addition, consult with a person in a position of greater authority in the church, which is the DRE or the minister about an appropriate course of action.

CODE OF ETHICS for Persons Working with Children and Youth

Adults working with young people in the context of our Unitarian Universalist faith have a crucial and privileged role, one that carries with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, child-care worker, teacher, minister, registrant at a youth-adult conference or in any other role, the adult has a responsibility to interact with our young people in ways which are affirming and inspiring to the young people and the adult. Adults can be mentors to, role models for, and trusted companions of children and youth. To help our children grow to be caring and responsible adults can be a meaningful and joyful experience for the adult and a lifetime benefit to the young person.

While it is important that adults be capable of maintaining meaningful friendships with the young people with whom they work, adults must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with children and youth and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with adults and may find it difficult to speak out about the inappropriate behavior of adults.

Adult leaders need to possess a special dedication to working with our young people in ways that will affirm the Unitarian Universalist's Principles. Good communication skills, self-awareness, understanding of others, sensitivity, problem-solving and decision-making skills, and a positive attitude are all important attributes.

Additionally, leaders should have a social network outside their religious education responsibility in which to meet their own needs for friendship, affirmation, and self-esteem; and be willing and able to seek assistance from colleagues and religious professionals when they become aware of a situation requiring expert help or intervention. It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire church community, not just those in leadership positions, to create and maintain a climate that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth.

Adults who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and have a role in fostering the spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility. The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized.



There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Sexual conduct of any kind between adults and children or youth is unethical and severely injurious. Therefore, leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior around or with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior around or with children and youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

All compensated and volunteer staff are expected to adhere to the following behavior:

- Religious Education workers and volunteers shall not engage in behavior around or with children or youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse; this includes behavior or language that is personally threatening or demeaning.
- Religious Education workers and volunteers shall neither indulge in sexually harassing behavior nor engage in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior around or with children or youth.
- Religious Education workers and volunteers shall not allow the use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol or any illegal activities around or among children or youth.
- Religious Education workers and volunteers shall never consume alcoholic beverages during activities in which they are supervising minors. Alcoholic beverages left from a previous adult event must either be removed from the premises or remain locked up and out of sight.

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**Please sign and return to the Director of Religious Education.**

***Statement of Agreement:*** I have read and understand the **Expectations for Working with Children and Youth** and **CODE OF ETHICS for Persons Working with Children and Youth**. I agree to honor and preserve the trust placed in me by the members of this congregation.

Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





# Restorative Process

## In case of a Breach of Children & Youth Safety Policy

The purpose of offering restorative practices if there is a significant breach in the Children and Youth Safety Policy is to create a safer and less punitive approach in our faith community. We hope that this process will create trust and repair relationships between people in our community. The intention of a restorative process at JUC is to build a stronger community by repairing harm if it caused and restoring relationships if ones are broken.

With that said, if the immediate serious health or safety of any person is at risk, law enforcement shall be contacted. Anyone threatening another person shall be instructed to leave the church immediately. A subsequent conversation shall be scheduled between the senior minister and/or their designee to communicate with those involved about when or if the person who has posed such a threat may return to the church.

If serious safety policies are broken **and involve a minor**, they must be reported to the Director of Religious Education, Senior Minister or the Associate Ministers, immediately. If safety policies are broken and do not involve minors, and it is safe to do so, parties involved in the incident are encouraged to first engage in direct communication with the person(s) involved to resolve the problem.

If the parties to the conflict cannot resolve the situation between themselves, they may ask for assistance from the professional ministry team or other trusted individuals within the congregation to address the behavior. Responses should consider why the safety policy was broken, how to ensure it will be kept in the future, and what precautions need to be made. Possible solutions may include:

- Discussing the problem with those affected in a restorative process if possible
- Making a safety covenant with the individual(s)
- Limiting participation in certain events or activities
- Limiting participation with youth or supervision of youth
- Recommending to the Board that the individual(s) be removed from membership.

**Notification:** Timely notification of the incident shall be made initially to the Director of Religious Education who will report all necessary information to the ministry team including the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees President regardless of the resolution of the incident.

### Incident Reports

An incident report and actions taken will be kept in the church office. This file shall be kept by the church administrator with access restricted to the ministers and those they deem necessary to have access.





# Incident Report

Jefferson Unitarian Church  
13350 W 32 Ave Golden CO 80401  
303-279-5282

**Date/Time/Location of Incident:**

**Name of Person(s) Involved:**

**Reported by:**

**Incidence Category (Check Below):**

| Property                                                   | Threat                                                                                      | Health                                                                          | Other                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Church property, personal property, vandalism, theft, etc. | Actions that pose a concern for the safety of others: verbal threats, property threat, etc. | Injury/accident, communicable disease reported on-site, medical emergency, etc. | Suspicious item, improper or suspicious conduct, other. |

**Child Involved? Yes** \_\_\_ **No** \_\_\_ (Notify parent or guardian and obtain initials below)

**Chronology and Description of Incident** (attach more pages as needed):

**Immediate action** (attach more pages as needed):

**Follow-up** (Use back of form if needed):

**Other Follow up Needed/Next Steps** (Use back of form):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Incident witness (printed name) Initials Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Incident witness (printed name) Initials Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian (printed name) (if applicable) Initials Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Staff (printed name) Initials Date

*Please attach any other relevant documentation and file this report with a minister or RE staff within one week of the incident.*



# COA PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

We will use this form throughout the COA program.  
*This information will be shared with your child's mentor.*

| <u>Teen Information</u>                                                                                                                                                            | <u>Parent 1</u>         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Name:                                                                                                                                                                              | Name:                   |
| DOB:                                                                                                                                                                               | Cell Phone:             |
| Address:                                                                                                                                                                           | Email:                  |
| Cell #:                                                                                                                                                                            | Other contact phone #s: |
| E-mail:                                                                                                                                                                            | <u>Parent 2</u>         |
| Middle School Attending:                                                                                                                                                           | Name:                   |
| Sibling names/ages:                                                                                                                                                                | Cell Phone:             |
| List any regularly scheduled activities (regular days and times):                                                                                                                  | Email:                  |
| List any food allergies and the impact/s of exposure/consumption. Let us know if your child carries an EpiPen and any instructions about its use.                                  | Other contact phone #s: |
| Strong food dislikes/issues:                                                                                                                                                       | <u>Parent 3</u>         |
| Information about your schedule/activity concerns, visitation resulting from parent's divorce, medical restrictions, other concerns that the COA teacher and mentors need to know: | Name:                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Cell Phone:             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Email:                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Other contact phone #s: |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | <u>Parent 4</u>         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Name:                   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Cell Phone:             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Email:                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Other contact phone #s: |



# Permission to Transport & Seek Medical Care

*Additional Emergency Contact (in addition to any parents listed on page 1):*

**Name:**

**Phone:**

**Relationship:**

**Medical Insurance information:**

**Insurance Company and policy #** \_\_\_\_\_

I give the JUC COA teacher and mentors permission to seek emergency medical care for our son/daughter in my absence during any Jefferson Unitarian Church Coming of Age activities.

In addition, I give the COA teachers and mentors permission to transport my son/daughter while participating in the Jefferson Unitarian Church Coming of Age program.

COA Class activities will be well publicized and communicated in advance via email. Permission will be needed for each event via an on-line permission form (available to parents beginning in September).

**Parent signature/date**

**Print name of parent signing above**



# COA COMMITMENT FORM

I choose to be a participant in JUC's Coming of Age (COA) program from September through May.

I am choosing to be a member of a Coming of Age community including all of the teens in the program and the adult teachers and mentors who choose to be with us this year.

Our purpose is to support each other, learn about ourselves, explore our thoughts, challenge our beliefs, be a community, listen to others and give each other our most sincere effort. We will strive to find our place within our UU community and the world around us.

I will help to create a journey that is respectful, fun and celebrates myself, and every member of my community.

I will honor myself and my Coming of Age experience by agreeing to:

- Be considerate of other people's feelings
- Work out disagreements through communication rather than violence
- Help others and accept who they are, as I would like to be helped and accepted
- Respect each other's personal space and belongings
- Participate fully, to the very best of my abilities, in every activity
- Keep confidential thoughts shared by fellow participants in class discussions
- Refrain from using drugs, marijuana, tobacco and alcohol while participating in any JUC or COA activity.

I understand that I will be expected to attend the COA classes on the schedule (separate document) and participate fully in activities. Participation in the Retreat Weekend is required to participate in the COA Celebration Service.

I will respect the guidance of our teachers, parents, mentors and others who assist with the program.

I welcome working with a mentor from my church community and commit to participate fully in that relationship.

I freely choose to participate in the Coming of Age program and do not feel pressured to become a part of this program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teen signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As parents, we will support our teen by providing transportation, emotional and financial support, assisting with activities when needed and allowing them an opportunity to grow. Most importantly, we look forward to welcoming and celebrating our teen at the end of this journey with new eyes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s)



## MUTUALLY UNDERSTOOD RULES FOR THE COMING OF AGE RETREAT

This retreat is a milestone in your journey toward adulthood. Our time together will include scheduled activities that will require cooperation on the part of each teen and mentor.

Every person has inherent worth and dignity. We expect that all COA participants will honor each other by listening with respect; by treating each other with kindness, justice, and compassion; and by creating an environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Participants should be considerate of and respectful of the physical and emotional well being of our community and our gathering places. Offensive or inappropriate behavior is not conducive to community building. We avoid abusive and obscene language and verbal game playing towards others and ourselves.

1. No co-ed sleeping at the retreat.
2. No use of tobacco products, alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs will be tolerated. No possession of weapons will be tolerated. Any teen who is in possession of any of the items listed will be sent home, after consultation with parents.
3. No personal electronics: Cell phones can be used to contact parents on the ride home, but please leave them in the car or with your mentor. Should a teen bring an item deemed inappropriate by an adult, it will be confiscated.
4. Abusive or disruptive behavior may also result in being sent home.
5. Teens must have permission and be in the company of an adult to leave the cabin, group or retreat site.
5. All teens must go to their beds when it is "lights-out". Whispering is acceptable for 20 minutes after "lights-out" and then you will be expected to be quiet so everyone can sleep.

I understand and will abide by ALL GROUP RULES.

\_\_\_\_\_  
COA Teen Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# PERMISSION FORM

## Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Child/Youth Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Parent/Guardian 1 Name & Contact Information:

Parent/Guardian 2 Name & Contact Information:

Parent/Guardian 3 Name & Contact Information:

Parent/Guardian 4 Name & Contact Information:

If parent/guardians are not available, please contact:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Insurance Co. \_\_\_\_\_ Ins. # \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance phone to authorize treatment \_\_\_\_\_

## Medical Information

Health History:

Allergies:

My child has the following health concerns that need to be known:

I will send the following medications to the retreat for my child:



*A designated adult will be in charge of administering medications during field trips and retreats to ensure medications are secure and taken when prescribed.*

**Helpful Information**

If there is anything that we need to know to make sure your child has a positive experience, please write it below.

**Authorizations**

1) I hereby give my permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to attend

( \_\_\_\_\_ )

I understand that any young person who does not abide by the “Mutually Understood Rules” may be returned home after the parent or guardian is notified. This may involve asking a parent to come and collect young person.

2) I authorize any JUC Responsible Adult to give first aid to my teen and to obtain emergency medical care if needed. I agree to pay for expenses incurred. We will make every attempt to contact you if any medical emergency occurs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Person Signing

