

In April of 2008 a Youth Caucus was held and the attendees voted to dissolve YRUU.

BEACON was formed and in 2009 new organizational bylaws and guidelines were developed to ensure a safe, healthy, and thriving Unitarian Universalist youth community for District wide events.

CONS and District-wide events are open to youth from 12 to 20 years of age. This age range allows youth to model leadership skills and mentor to younger youth.

Each church formats their individual youth group meetings based on congregational and youth needs.



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Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment is the foundation and guiding principle of youth ministry.

- **Youth Empowerment is...a youth on the board or governing bodies to ensure the youth community has a say in things.**
- **Youth Empowerment is...youth being trusted and knowing it.**
- **Youth Empowerment is...about supporting others in finding their own power.**
- **Youth Empowerment is...providing youth a chance to participate in the discussions that impact their experiences.**
- **Youth Empowerment is...supporting, encouraging and supplying youth with tools, resources, and opportunities.**
- **Youth empowerment does not equal adult abandonment. Empowering youth must be an intentional goal and must have active adults working with youth to make it happen.**
- **Youth empowerment is a living partnership between youth and adults, one in which power is shared and in which adults recognize the power they bring into the relationship.**



Unitarian Universalist
Organization of Youth

Critical Components of Youth Ministry include community building, spirituality, learning, social action, youth empowerment, leadership, and good youth-adult relations.

BEACON is a Youth community founded in the Florida District based on these key elements listed above.

CON 101

Youth Safety is Essential and Inherent

During CONS and other youth events, rules are in place to ensure a safe and peaceful environment conducive to community building. You will find the following rules on the notarized permission forms needed for CON attendance:

Youth conferences known as CONS are held throughout the state of Florida.

CONS are organized and designed by a host church or a committee. Hosting a CON provides youth with both leadership and planning opportunities.

After a youth attends a CON, you will notice he or she can't wait for the next one.

CONS include activities such as icebreakers, games, and workshops. Workshops can be fun activities like craft projects, drumming, juggling, drawing, etc. Workshops sometimes involve expert speakers on a variety of topics.

“Coffee House” is a open mic event which showcases youth talent like rap or poetry performances. Skits, songs or jokes are favorite activities.

Spiritual worship services are organized, created and facilitated by youth at each conference.

Parental involvement is important. Any off site activities or workshops requiring parent consideration will be explained on permission forms.

- Community breaking behaviors, such as sexual activity, destructive actions or attitudes are prohibited.
- No tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons, or fireworks are allowed.
- If a youth is taking prescription drugs or has a medical condition, he or she must inform his or her advisor.
- Quiet, same gender and coed sleeping must be made available at all conferences, and an advisor must stay in any sleeping area where there are two or more people.
- All conference attendees must remain onsite. In order to leave the premises, one must receive permission from his or her advisor and inform a designated advisor from the hosting church.
- All attending an the conference, regardless of age, must abide by these rules, understanding that they may have to forego some of their usual privileges.
- Additional rules may be set by the hosting group.

The above rules are restated at the opening circle of every CON. A Trespass Committee is established for each CON, consisting of two youth and two advisers. The role of the Trespass Committee is to meet and determine appropriate sanctions if any rules are violated. It is rare for the Trespass Committee to convene as the youth encourage each other to behave in ways that are community building.

ADVISORS

There are guidelines to ensure the safety and supervision of the youth.

Advisors must ensure that one youth and one advisor are never in a room alone and out of sight. No two youth, regardless of gender, are to be out of sight alone together. There must be an advisor for every 8 youth attending at the CON site.

All advisors attending CONS must have completed Advisor Training. Or made arrangements with the Adult co-chair to receive training at the CON.

Advisor training covers issues including:

- Maintaining appropriate boundaries.
- Keeping the youth group safe – physically, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually.
- building community within the group.

Advisors are mandated to report issues of health and safety risks to parents or other required

