

Proposal for Youth and Young Adult Ministry Competencies as part of MFC process

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Background:

Although the Ministerial Fellowship Committee requires its candidates to be competent in many areas of ministry, there are no requirements that specifically relate to Youth and Young Adult ministry. These unique ministries are partially included in RE and human development areas, however, most ministers are not given the message that Youth and Young Adult ministries are important pieces of either of these competency areas, nor, for that matter, are they important to UU ministry as a whole.

Consequently, Youth and Young Adults are historically underserved by our denomination and the professional ministry. It is my belief that ministers do not do this work because they believe that it is not their job. Part of what the MFC does is set standards for what a minister's job is, and therefore part of our responsibility to the Youth and Young Adults of our movement, I believe, is to convey to ministers that they are at least partially responsible for Youth and Young Adult ministries.

I've looked at a number of "points of intervention" to the fellowshiping process where some changes could be made to express to ministerial candidates, and ministers who are not yet in final fellowship, that Youth and Young Adult ministries need to be part of what all UU ministers do. The points I have identified, with the input from Ellen Brandenburg and the Youth and Young Adult offices and communities are as follows:

- Interview Questions
- Required reading list
- Initial informational materials for candidates
- Ministerial Internship
- Statements of competency required for MFC packet
- Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy
- Fellowship Renewal Process

Interview Questions:

The easiest and most immediate place to intervene is in the questions we ask candidates during their interview with us. While a good deal of us know what kind of questions to ask about youth ministry, I think nearly all of us would be shaky as to questions about young adult ministry. Besides this problem, it is somewhat unfair of us to expect competency in areas that have not been touched on in any materials candidates receive previous to their meeting with us.

Reading List:

Another fairly easy place to change is the reading list. There are few, if any UU books about Youth and Young Adult ministry, however. It might be possible to add a requirement that candidates read a curriculum for Youth (already sort of a requirement) and Young Adults, however the infrastructure for Youth and Young Adult curricula and/or other reading list material is not currently there. While a few books/reports such as the Youth Advisor Handbook the Youth Advisor

Task Force are available, neither of them truly address Youth Ministry or the role of the Parish, RE or Community Minister in youth ministry. And, while there are a few good books about young adult ministry, none of them truly address Young Adult Ministry as it is part of the liberal religious tradition. Another problem with the idea of only requiring a curricula for each age group is that ministry to youth as well as young adults is not simply programmatic; many/most Youth and Young Adult groups do not use curricula in their primary time together, nor are these groups necessarily the most effective way ministers should be involved in Youth and Young Adult ministry.

Initial Informational Materials for Candidates: (p. 8-9)

A third easy place to make change is in the “Information for Candidates” packet. This includes short descriptions of what the MFC looks for in candidates and what is required of them for fellowship. This whole little manual is being revised this summer, and my sense is that we could easily change the language of the manual to reflect Youth and Young Adult Ministry as a significant part of the competency areas that already exist (e.g. RE and Human Development).

Ministerial Internship: (p. 15, 36-37)

Along with the “Information for candidates” packet is the “Ministerial Internship manual” which could be changed to reflect a suggestion about doing some Youth and Young Adult ministry during internships. There could easily be changes in the sections about RE opportunities, in the language of the suggested areas of the Learning/Service agreement, and the midpoint evaluation sheet.

Statements of Competency:

Two options related to the statements of competency are:

- 1) revising current statements of competency so they explicitly include Youth and Young Adult ministry within their sub-categories
- 2) 2) creating one or two statements of competency on Youth and Young Adult ministry.

Considerations to take into account about this point of possible change are:

- a) Youth and Young Adult ministry cannot be fully addressed simply as part of RE and/or Human/Life Development (nor any of the existing statements of competency)
- b) perhaps Youth and Young Adult ministry should be incorporated throughout the requirements so it is not separated (either in our literature or in minister’s minds) from the other aspects of ministry.

RSCCs:

Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy (RSCCs) are another place that should be changed along with any changes the MFC decides to make. This would possibly take the form of the RSCCs asking questions to candidates about Youth and Young Adult ministry at an earlier point in a candidate’s process than the MFC interview, the RSCCs materials reflecting a commitment to Youth and Young Adult ministry, as well as each sub-committee seeing Youth and Young Adult ministry as a priority.

Renewal Process:

This might be a place that would be appropriate for candidates to learn more about Youth and Young Adult ministries within their chosen ministerial setting. I don’t exactly know how this would work, but maybe we can keep it in mind during our conversations about redesigning the renewal process.

Recommendations from the Candidacy Working Group:

- 1) That the “Human Development/Family Life Education” Statement of Competency be changed to the “Human Development/Family Life Education/**Ministry with Youth and Young Adults**” Statement of Competency and that the description of the competency in the “Information for Candidates” Packet would be changed to the following (**new text in bold**):

Candidates are expected to be knowledgeable about theories and research in human development and how these theories relate to issues such as aging, adolescence, parenting and death. **In addition, candidates should be familiar with issues, programs, and resources for ministry with youth and young adults.**

- 2) That the Ministerial Education Office incorporate ministry with youth and young adults as an important area of ministry in the language of both the “Information for Candidates” and “Ministerial Internships” manual wherever possible in their upcoming revision of these manuals.
- 3) That the Ministerial Education Office research books on ministry with youth and young adults to possibly add to the MFC required reading list.

Passed, May 2002