



ACTIVITIES FOR COMING OF AGE - Let's have fun!

(Complete at least 10 individual and group activities during the upcoming school year)

Dear COA Student,

It is our hope that you will balance your time exploring each of the following three areas with your Mentor's support:

1. Spiritual Journeys and Exploring Unity
2. Service Within and Beyond Unity
3. Relationships

The activities are designed to help you explore your beliefs and to gain an understanding of our Columbine Spiritual Center community. For some of the activities, Mentors may be involved directly, whereas some may be done independently.

You are welcome to create an activity of your own and substitute it for an activity on the attached list. Please discuss any activity substitution with me first before starting.

You and your Mentor will be guided in setting up an appropriate plan. You are encouraged to discuss and to generate ideas about how you can fulfill these experiences. The following menu of activities that others have used in the past will help you in your choices.

We would like you to share your personal Credo (a set of beliefs that guide you) at the end of the program which will be during May 2015.

Blessings,

Joyce Swartz

Coming of Age Program Coordinator

cc: Anne Rogers, Youth Education Director

Spiritual Journeys and Exploring Unity

“Knowing others is wisdom; knowing the self is enlightenment.”

Tao Te Ching

“The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mystical.”

Albert Einstein

Complete all three (3) required activities

1. **Choose one of the Unity principles that you would like to personally experience this year. Talk about how you want to live, or would like to live, this principle in your life. Discuss with other COA students and your Mentor.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

2. **Interview your Mentor about her/his religious and spiritual history.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

3. **Visit other churches/temples/or places of worship with the COA group and discuss.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

Complete two (2) activities of your own interest

1. **Keep a journal in order to gather your thoughts for creating your Credo. Include your reactions after each visit to a Church, Temple, etc. Discuss with your Mentor regularly.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

2. **Write or tape record your ideas about God and how these have changed since you were little. Share with your Mentor.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

3. **Select a song or a reading that has meaning for you from Unity. Discuss why you selected it. Share with your Mentor.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

4. **Write a poem or a song, or design a poster, that makes a statement about Unity or about being a Coming of Age participant. This can be a group activity. Share with your Mentor.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

5. **Interview your own family about their religious journeys and how they came to Unity.**

Date _____ Parent Signature _____

6. **Pick a song or poem that can be related to Unity principles and discuss with other COA students. Share with your Mentor.**
Date _____ Mentor Signature _____ **Learn a passage or a story from the writings of a major religion, and talk about how it applies to your life today with other COA students. Share with your Mentor.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

7. **Compare the Unity celebration of a religious holiday with that of another religion. Talk about it with other COA students. Share with your Mentor.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

Service Within and Beyond Columbine Spiritual Center

“Small service is true service . . .

The daisy, by the shadow that it casts, protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun.”

William Wordsworth

Complete two (2) required activities.

- 1.a Sign up for a shift at Community Table in Boulder. You can join other people from Unity who volunteer for it. (1.a, 1.b or 1.c Required)**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

- 1.b Participate in caroling at a nursing home or hospital during the Holidays with our church or a friend’s church, or both. (1.a, 1.b or 1.c Required)**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

- 1.c Volunteer to help at a Community Food Share. (1.a, 1.b or 1.c Required)**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

- 2. Participate in a worship service, e.g. ushering, lighting candle, reading, service assistant, etc. (Required)**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

Complete one (1) activity of your own interest.

- 1. Make an artistic arrangement to be used in the sanctuary for the altar. Coordinate this with your Mentor.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

- 2. Create and/or teach a game for Unity kids to play in Children’s Church. It can be a board game or one for outdoors.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

- 3. Share your talent with the congregation by taking part in a Spirit Share (Talent Show), choir program, skit, or holiday play. (1.a, 1.b “or” 1.c Required)**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

- 4. Volunteer your service to another Unity member who is in need. (for example: shoveling snow for an elderly person; taking a meal or baking cookies for someone who is healing)**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

- 5. One of the of the activities not completed under required activities.**

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

Relationships

*“For he who has not known himself has known nothing,
but he who has known himself has at the same time already achieved knowledge about the depth of All.”
Jesus*

*“To Thine Own Self Be True.”
William Shakespeare*

Complete the following required activity.

Chair a family meeting covering an agenda of things you think are important aspects of family life. Consider topics that were discussed (e.g. division of family responsibilities and household tasks, allowances, planning family vacations, family rituals, contact with relatives, discipline, etc.) and describe the interview (e.g. who was there, where it was conducted) and your feelings about how the family meeting went. Discuss with COA students and with your Mentor. (Required)

Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

Complete one (1) activity of your own interest.

- 1. Take a leadership role in the Uniteen service project, Chandra’s Gift, learning about what it means and helping others to understand and participate.**
Date _____ Uniteen Sponsor Signature _____
- 2. Interview 2 members of our church and find out why they first came to Columbine and what they like most about it. Also ask about their concerns. Discuss with COA students and your Mentor.**
Date _____ Mentor Signature _____
- 3. With your Mentor, plan a 10 minute interview with a Board member concerning the tasks and responsibilities that come with that position. Ask for some examples of what the Board member has done during the last month. Discuss with COA students and your Mentor.**
Date _____ Mentor Signature _____
- 4. Write a paragraph for the newsletter about the Coming of Age Program or a social concern that has been on your mind.**
Date _____ Mentor Signature _____

Coming of Age Program Program Description **2014 - 2015**

*“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”*

T.S. Eliot

COMING OF AGE PROGRAM 2014 - 2015

“Poetry and math help me decide my beliefs. Poetry is my light into visions, miracles, and the unknown, while math takes me in the opposite direction to believing in what has been proven.”

COA Student from another church

Welcome COA Student,

Welcome to the Coming of Age Program for 8th graders. This program is intended to be a very special passage in your spiritual education and in your life. Each of you will have the opportunity to develop a sense of self as part of Columbine Spiritual Center within the context of our larger world. Coming of Age is a unique passage - be present for it, have fun and experience a wonderful year!

Purpose of this Coming of Age Program:

- To provide resources and tools for adulthood, including continuing education in the principles and sources of Unity;
- To provide a grounding in spiritual, social and environmental (service) principles;
- To provide experience of the personal and evolving nature of one's Credo, a set of beliefs that guide you;
- To provide a meaningful discussion about ethics and responsibility;
- To facilitate a sense of connection with caring adults, peers, the Unity community, society at large and the natural world; and
- To celebrate the transition from childhood as a major milestone with a public rite of passage.

Goals:

- To know oneself as a whole being;
- To know oneself as part of a greater universe; and
- To be recognized by the community.

Introduction

The syllabus you are holding is a guidebook and a journal that will help you navigate throughout the year. It includes activities and events and outlines Students' and Mentors' responsibilities. Look through it to make sure you understand the program and requirements, and **return the enclosed statements of commitment**. You may want to record scheduled events on the family calendar. Keep the syllabus in a safe place; you will need to refer to it throughout the year. Your Mentor will also receive a copy.

“We have had to learn how to get along and forgive each other’s faults, give each other room to grow but always remember that we are not alone, we are together.”

COA Student from another church.

Program Overview

Coming of Age Students will participate in the traditional Uniteen program in the following ways:

- Take part in the Uniteens classrooms throughout the year;
- Attend planned Uniteen & Youth events, such as team building, social events, and fund-raising;
- Be a greeter on scheduled Uniteen Sundays throughout the year, performing service in the community while fulfilling a COA requirement; and
- Dedicate one Sunday of each month (the 3rd Sunday, but subject to change) as a special COA day of learning, exploration, activities and visits to other places of worship.

In addition, COA Students will have:

- Discussions on different spiritual beliefs, metaphysical interpretation, peer relationships and ethics, and finally, balanced lifestyle (body, mind and spirit); and
- Activities outside of class. These will include social service projects, getting to know the Columbine community, and exploring your own personal beliefs and spirituality in order to create your own individual Credo. Many choices are available from which you can set up your individual program (see Activities for Coming of Age)

History

“ I know I can make a difference in the world.” COA Student

This is Columbine Spiritual Center’s seventh Coming of Age program. Our staff and volunteers have studied programs used by other organizations before deciding on this particular one. We are grateful to a number of Unity churches and the First Unitarian Society of Newton for their input as we created this program. This is a work in progress, inviting the participants’ individual energies to make it their own.

Our purpose is to provide our 8th grade Students with a spiritual context within which to express and celebrate their growth toward adulthood.

The program will culminate in a Coming of Age graduation in the Sanctuary in May of 2015. During the ceremony, each Student will present a personal statement of spiritual beliefs, a Credo. Our minister, youth director, Uniteen sponsors, graduates’ families, friends, Mentors, and the congregation will participate in the ceremony honoring the graduates.

We realize that Students are busy people. The demands of school, sports, music and other activities can be daunting. We therefore have designed this program to be more fun and flexible and experiential, and less academic. Your feedback is always welcome. We ask for your commitment to fully participate and complete the Coming of Age Program.

Mentors' Responsibilities

"If a child is to keep his or her inborn sense of wonder, she or he needs the companionship of at least one adult who shares it, rediscovering the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."

Rachel Carson

In our COA program each Student is paired with an adult Mentor, someone active in our church. The Mentors and Students meet throughout the program to share experiences, adventures, feelings, thoughts and ideas, and sometimes to work on completing program requirements. We ask each Mentor to do the following:

1. Join her/his Student in an open and supportive relationship in which good fellowship, enjoyment and fun are central. Plan to spend at least four hours per month with your Student, which can include the scheduled large-group activities. Also, be aware that doing things with one or more other pairs of Mentors/Students can be really fun.
2. Oversee the Student's progress in the program, and support the Student in finding answers to any questions he/she may have about the program.
3. Start an ongoing dialogue with your Student regarding our Unity faith and their beliefs, and facilitate the development of a Credo.
4. Support the Student in overcoming barriers such as transportation problems, time conflicts, and fears and concerns about fulfilling any of the requirements of the Coming of Age program.
5. Participate in the Coming of Age graduation ceremony in May 2015.
6. Communicate with the Program Coordinator about questions and/or concerns regarding any aspects of the program.

The most important part of being a good Mentor is being a good listener!



"I believe that each new generation arrives bearing a message that it must deliver; our role is to help that delivery."

Andre Gide

Student's Responsibilities

"Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it.

Boldness has genius, power, and magic to it."

Johan Wolfgang Von Goethe

- Attend Uniteen classes and visits to other worship services regularly;
- Maintain a relationship with your Mentor. You are expected to meet with your Mentor at least four hours per month. Some of this time will be experiences with other Mentors and 8th grade Students, such as social activities. Other times will be the two of you doing something together or progressing through the experiences found in the Activities manual;
- Each Student and Mentor will design an individualized program taken from the accompanying activities manual. Three categories in the manual to choose from are: ***Spiritual Journeys and Exploring Unity; Service Within and Beyond Unity; Relationships***. Some activities are required as indicated on the Activities lists;
- Regularly check in with the Program Director concerning your progress through the COA program. Check-ins will be done intermittently, but you should plan the following:

January..... Completion of 3 activities
February..... Completion of 5 activities
March..... Completion of 7 activities
April..... Completion of 9 activities
May..... Completion of 10 activities

- Attend team building days;
- Attend scheduled COA activities and those with Mentor;
- Serve as a greeter with the Uniteens at Columbine during the year;
- Regularly discuss your evolving beliefs with your Mentor so that you will be prepared to write your Credo (during the spring);
- Attend Credo writing workshops in March/April/May (dates to be announced);
- Prepare a Credo of your personal spiritual beliefs;
- Participate in the creation of a graduation ceremony that pays respect to all the work you have accomplished this year; and
- Support other Students on this journey you are all taking. Use the power of your imagination, and develop more clarity about your values, purpose, and direction.

Enjoy yourself and have a wonderful year!

Parent Involvement

Parents, please:

1. Be aware of what is happening in the program. *Any scheduling changes will be e-mailed.* Help your child with transportation if necessary, support the attendance requirement and help the Mentor make connections if needed;
2. Let your child's Mentor know of any concerns or ideas you have while supporting the development of your child and Mentor's independent relationship;
3. Attend parent meetings;
4. Volunteer to help with some activity, e.g. drive members of the group to or from a scheduled location;
5. Communicate with the Program Coordinator, Uniteen sponsors or parent liaison about any concerns you have during the year;
6. Volunteer some time for the preparation and organization of graduation celebrations;
7. Provide food/drinks for special occasions; and
8. Sign and return permission/release forms (*see attached*).

This program is a living creature - it changes every year - more like an ongoing conversation between and among our Youth and Columbine Spiritual Center.

Our hope is that it continues to get richer and deeper.

We welcome ideas, comments and suggestions.



PERMISSION AND RELEASE FOR COMING OF AGE PROGRAM

I, _____, (parent/guardian) give permission to my daughter/son _____, to participate in any field trips and activities sponsored by the Columbine Spiritual Center Coming of Age program during the 2013 - 2014 year. In addition, I release Columbine Spiritual Center, its trustees, officers, employees, volunteers, and chaperones from any liability arising out of such activities.

I give permission to the chaperone to seek medical attention for my child should she/he be injured or become ill during an outing. Any medical conditions that the chaperone should be aware of are listed below. Emergency telephone numbers where I am likely to be reached and health insurance information needed in an emergency is given below.

_____ Date _____ Signature of parent/guardian

In case of emergency, call:

1. _____
Name/telephone no.

2. _____
Name/telephone no.

_____ FAMILY HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

_____ POLICY NO.

Please list all allergies to food, medication, insect bites, or past/present medical conditions we should be aware of:

Please list any medication your child will be taking during any outing: (If critical to child's health, please attach a copy of the prescription.