

Advertiser's Handbook

published by

LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH
16 Beacon Street
Boston 8, Massachusetts

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The Adviser's Handbook was a major project of the Joint Youth Activities Committee (American Unitarian Association - Universalist Church of America) during the 1954-55 year. The contributions came from many sources, but the following actually took part in the writing of the Handbook:

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In preparing future revisions of the Handbook, it would be helpful to have the suggestions of local group advisers. Please send your comments and criticisms to LRY Headquarters, 16 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Mass.

Peter Raible, Editor
LRY Adviser's Handbook

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the philosophy of advisership in LRY

What is Liberal Religious Youth?

Liberal Religious Youth is made up of Universalist and Unitarian young people in the United States and Canada between the ages of 14 and 25, inclusive. LRY seeks to conduct a program which will help our youth develop into responsible and mature churchmen and citizens. The organization maintains a program for youth, which is planned, directed, and executed by youth themselves. The philosophy of LRY from the local group to the continental organization requires a youth-run program.

The role of the adult

The role of the adult in the LRY program is a delicate one. The pathway the adult must follow is often narrow with twists and turns. In general terms the adult must avoid the abysses on both sides of the road -- the pitfall of attempting to be "one of the gang," to try to be a youth himself; and the other cavern of becoming the dictator to the youth group. Youth resent interference from adults and are often suspicious of even the best-meant attempt to help; for young people are seeking to establish themselves more and more as independent individuals, free from adult control. LRY believes that whatever failures youth may incur in directing their own program that such mistakes can be learning experiences. The long-run effect of this youth-run approach is far better, both in personal growth and direct results, than the expedient of an adult run program.



The role of the adviser

The word "adviser" summarizes well the relation of the adult to the youth group. The word is not supervisor, director, chaperone, manager, or any term denoting a position of command. The adviser gives advice; but the youth themselves make the decisions. By governing themselves in their own youth group, young people may gain insight into the governing of self, as well as learning the responsibilities of group life. In LRY, too, youth become aware of their relationship to the church and larger community.

How the adviser works

The first job for the new adviser is to become the friend of the young people. If this first objective can be accomplished the other duties come naturally. Youth wish to be free from adult domination; but once they feel that the adviser does not wish to control them, they will seek what is their basic need and desire, a relationship with an adult based on friendship.

There is no one set successful "adviser type." In broadest terms the best advisers are those who do not hesitate to give advice but who can

stand to be over-ruled and still assist in work, which he -- the adviser -- opposed. An adviser can often be extremely helpful to individuals in the group in assisting them with personal problems. He should have a stock of ready suggestions, when the group bogs down on program ideas or hits periodic slumps in enthusiasm. The adviser should be a recipient as well as a "giver" in his work with youth, keeping his ideas flexible and his mind open (though not at both ends). The adviser will learn, if he doesn't already know it, that youth can be constructive and responsible with initiative, insight, and capabilities. A successful advisership with you can be one of the most rewarding experiences any adult can have.

* * * * *

A leader is best
When people barely know that he exists,
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him,
Worst when they despise him.

Fail to honor people,
They will fail to honor you.

But of a good leader, who talks little,
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
They will say, 'We did it ourselves.'

Lao-tze



personal qualifications and training for advisership

Qualities of a good leader. (from "A Manual for Leaders of High School Groups" by Virginia McGill, A CLC-LRY publication)

1. Above all else, deep sincerity and strong religious convictions of his own.
2. A sense of humor which can see events and people in their proper perspective.
3. An unselfishness which prompts one to share with and to create leadership in others and to get satisfaction from their achievements.
4. An ability to see and create opportunities which encourage young people to develop and use their talents creatively.
5. Flexibility and imagination.
6. Contagious enthusiasm.
7. A real respect for and love for young people and their potential growth.
8. A true understanding of the growth and learning processes and of the special needs and ways of teen-agers.

Prior experience

Experience in education or group work can be useful, if the experiences have led to a sympathy with youth-run organizations. In any case, experience is no substitute for the attitudes noted above. In youth work all prior experience can be useful, as versatility is the order of the day! Still, youth advisers are not supermen* but individuals with a willingness to learn and basic adaptability.



Some of the best youth advisers are those who grew up in a successful youth group and who want now to share with the new generation of young people the thrills and satisfactions and personal growth that advisers know a youth group can give. Some advisers are parents, who through trial and error have discovered techniques of effective work with youth.

*For ease we use the masculine nouns and pronouns; but everything also implies to the feminine sex. Be it reason of "natural superiority" or hard work, many of our best advisers are women.



Training oneself

Training for church school teachers has long been accepted as a basic need in a church's program. Slowly this same need is being recognized for youth advisers. As yet, however, opportunities for group training for advisers are limited. Still church leaders and advisers should be on the lookout for the occasional workshop for advisers at summer conferences or youth institutes. Often opportunities are available for a "general type" training locally through extension courses and laboratory schools. For specific LRY adviser-training, we encourage you to initiate programs in your own conference area. The LRY office will be glad to help and can often suggest helpful material and tips both for conferences and "home study" courses. Periodic conferences with the minister and the committee of the church responsible for youth work can also be helpful. But in the final analysis, adviser training is on the "firing line" in the work with the young people themselves and in the experiences and knowledge the adviser gains from this work.

What must the adviser be prepared to give?

In basic terms the adviser must give time, leadership, ideas, and guidance. Perhaps the most important question to the adviser is the time required. Even the best youth adviser cannot do an adequate job, if he cannot attend meetings, work with committees, etc. One high schooler summarized the qualifications for an adviser as "someone who has time to be with us in our various activities, and someone who has a genuine love for young people."

Many churches do themselves a disservice in not making clear that the adviser's work can be time-consuming. The job should not be "sold" on the basis, "it won't take much time" or "you only need to drop in on meetings occasionally." The honest need for an adult who can regularly attend and be with the young people should be acknowledged and met. Whether this means one hour a week or six, will depend largely on the size and type of activities of the group.

Leadership, ideas, and guidance are less tangible attributes. These qualities depend on the personality of the adviser and his willingness to learn and train himself in these areas. The rest of this guide may be helpful on the application of these general terms to particular problems.



As almost a footnote, we might add that it does seem unfair to require an adviser to give of his food, gasoline and car, and to provide supplies for the youth group, as well as giving his time. Churches should provide, even though a modest sum, from their budgets for some of the expenses of an adviser.

what is youth?

There is no "average youth," any more than there is an average Universalist or Unitarian, or an average American. When we speak of beliefs and attitudes among youth in general, we mean just that. The general attitude may not be that of a given youth or even a given youth group. Nonetheless, there are general attitude patterns among youth, which the LRY adviser may find it helpful to know about.

Youth is unsettled

Sure, all life is unsettled; but probably life is more so for the young person. The youth stands at some indefinite point on the "teeter-totter" between childhood and adulthood — the balance is delicate, and the up and down swings of the board pronounced. It has become fashionable to blame the state of the world for the disrupted life of youth; but the problem is much larger. It involves choice of career, the opposite sex, group acceptance, school, etc. In each area the young person seeks to find his norm. This involves experimentation; it involves what adults may consider erratic behavior; it often involves personal peculiarities from one day to the next — the youth acting like a mature individual at one point and like a child the next day.

Youth's relation to authority

Youth plunges on toward adulthood, attempting to carve an independent niche in life. This involves what writers are fond of calling "the adolescent revolt." Parents, in particular, and to a degree, all adults, become authority figures. As such, adults should be circumvented, wheedled, avoided, and rejected whenever possible. The youth adviser must be particularly conscious of this attitude. He must not allow himself to be trapped into the playing the authoritarian role with the youth group. Despite these attitudes most young



people desire a friendly, give-and-take relationship with an adult, all the more so when a youth's stress with his own parents is greatest. An adviser is in an advantageous spot to provide adult support for youth.

While youth respond negatively to adult authority they tend to react positively to authority exerted by their own age group. LRY with its youth-run program, therefore, has an excellent opportunity to provide youth with a positive outlet for the young person's desire to be self-

determining. The youth group can be encouraged to make its own rules and then to enforce them, themselves. This removes the adviser from the "policeman" role and allows him to do his real job, namely, to advise and help individuals and the total group in program and problem areas.

The adviser should assist the young people to take as much responsibility, as they are mature enough to carry. When the youth group fails to live up to its goals the adviser can help or break the group. If the adviser takes the attitude that the failure shows that youth are irresponsible and attempts to clamp on controls, both he and the youth group have failed. If, however, the adviser makes failures an opportunity for growth and learning, he can help strengthen the group. Often by sitting down with the officers or the entire group and evaluating what went wrong, and how such failures can be prevented in the future, a positive result can come from the original failure.



Building internal authority into the group and the individuals in the group will often seem like a slow, thankless task. Yet, one of the continuing traditions in liberal religion has been the change over a period of centuries from outward authority, in the form of law, creed and ritual, over the mind of man to inward authority of the individual, based on responsibility, conscience, mutual respect and cooperation, and a deep personal religion. The LRY adviser can help the young person and the youth group to learn by their own experience this fundamental tenet of our free religion.

Youth and responsibility.

Often adults charge that young people are irresponsible; and indeed, they often are. Generally, though, this charge of irresponsibility is made without looking at the reasons why it may be so. If a youth group is irresponsible, then why? Does it have poor leadership, an inadequate adviser, clique divisions within the group, or just what? Irresponsibility is an effect, not a cause. It is not an instinctive experience with youth that no group can be more responsible than a dynamic, energetic, going youth group. When charges of irresponsibility are made by adults, he can attempt to initiate steps to overcome the particular problem.

Youth respond to challenge

One of the rewards in working with youth is the forthright way young people respond to problems. Yes, they're over-zealous on occasions and you, as adviser, will have to help them think matters through before they charge off in all directions. But when young people set about doing a project, which they really want to do, they tear into it. The adviser should find the areas of interest in the local youth group and then suggest ways of working in these areas.

Youth is energetic

This is news to no one, at least to no one who has ever worked with youth. The average young person has an amazing energy output. Tap this energy with the right challenges and watch the result! Whether in discussion, recreation, or service project, the drive can be tremendous. What more need be said?



Youth is still physically, emotionally, socially developing

Youth are youth and not adults or we would not have youth groups. Almost rule #1 for advisers is remember this development pattern, but never mention it to the young person. For allusions to this growth pattern often seem patronizing and close to remarks like, "George, you know you need your sleep." The good adviser can be tactfully helpful in these areas. For instance, most young people still get easily embarrassed, don't know how to act in a new situation ("how do you ask a girl for a first date, anyway?"), or feel shy with others. As an adviser, look behind the "loud-mouth," the cynic, the "wall flower," the discussion-dominator, and try to find the real individual underneath. Here, in relation to particular individuals, the adviser can often be the most helpful.

Much of what seems most peculiar to adults about youth stems from the development pattern of youth. The youth, let us remember, is attempting to find a satisfactory norm in living with his own and other age groups, within the limitations and drives of his own mind and body, personality, and emotional make-up. The open, friendly adult can be of great help to the young person.

Youth is pressured

Mr. Adviser, don't forget that the youth group of the church is merely one facet in the life of a young person. It must compete with dates, school work, part-time jobs, hobbies, social groups, and so forth. Even the most stable youth often feels tremendously under pressure. Often young people do not know their own limits and will take on more jobs and activities than they can adequately handle. Such over-loaded youths will do jobs sloppily or not at all. It may be necessary for the adviser to sit down with a local group officer and suggest that he is involved in too much and should replan his commitments. In any case, the adviser should remember these pressures before suggesting that the youth group put on a three act play or completely repaint the parish house.

Youth is oft-confused

Who isn't? It might well be argued that in many ways young people are often far less confused than adults. Still, there are patterns peculiar

to youth, which are apt to be confusing. The youth begins to realize for the first time that the patterns of his home are not universal, that other families have different ways ("Gee, Clara's parents allow her to stay out until midnight.") On a wider scale, the youth comes to realize that ideas of living may vary from class to class, community to community, and country to country. Often, too, the youth is caught between the conflicting standards set down by his home, on the one hand, and his own age group, on the other.



Youth is constantly bombarded with new ideas -- far more than can be readily absorbed. Thorough information on a topic may exist side by side with prejudice or lack of information. A youth, for instance, might be open and friendly with Jews and know all about the fallacy of a "Jewish race" and yet know nothing of the holidays, liturgy, and beliefs of the synagogue. The adviser can help straighten out matters of fact, either directly or by raising appropriate questions. He can also assist in the program planning to try to guard against their containing too much information. The adviser might well question certain program suggestions (e.g. "Can we get enough information to discuss the relations between Israel and the Arab states?") and thus help the youth group either to prepare for or to avoid programs that involve a great deal of background information.

From time to time, members of the youth group will attend summer youth conferences. To the casual onlooker, it may seem that the youth return only confused and worn out. Often, however, this shaking of the youth's own ideas and the temporary confusion can lead to further growth and a more profound thinking-through of an individual's own ideas. When a youth strikes those "confused periods" from whatever cause, the adviser should recognize the process (some call it, "integration at a higher level!!") and try to help the youth re-clarify his beliefs.

Youth and the world

Young people are vitally concerned about the world in which we live. Sometimes this concern is expressed in rather cynical or pessimistic attitudes. Yet, youth has idealism and an interest in the world and its problems, as well as a desire to discuss and act in particular areas of these problems. This is particularly true from the older high school age on up. The adviser can help youth to question and, in turn, to meet basic questions (e.g. "What about military service?") as they relate to the particular needs of youth.

Youth and religion

From time to time an adviser may be asked, "What do the activities of the LRY group have to do with religion?" Of course, to answer this question adequately, the adviser must know what the questioner means by

religion. We attempt, however, a general statement in terms of this familiar question.

Formal religious services often become less and less meaningful to the young person. At this particular stage in life the more traditional aspects of church life may fail to meet youth's needs. Time and time again, teen-agers flock away from the church and church school in droves. Without trying to analyze here the "whys" of this rejection of the church, it can be said that a youth's relationship to the LRY group is often as positive as is his negative reaction to other aspects of the church.



The youth group, then, plays a major role in fulfilling the religious needs of young people in an organized form. The LRY group is, however, more than a "teen-age holding corporation" to keep youth in the church. A good youth group plays an important part in the life of its members -- in their ethical thinking, their basic attitudes toward life, their feeling toward worship, their relationship to other people, their ability to stand as self-thinking, growing individuals -- in short in their religion. These factors are what make your job as a religious youth group adviser important, challenging, and, we hope, rewarding.

bibliography of pamphlets and books

So You're Going to Teach Teen-Agers by Virginia McGill (pamphlet) Liberal Religious Youth or Council of Liberal Churches. Ten pages of good general information on young people, particularly from a liberal religious vantage point.

Elmtown's Youth by Richard Havinghurst. A sociological study of a mid-western community. The section on religion and youth should be extremely revealing to any adult.

Leadership of Teen Age Groups by Dorothy M. Roberts (Association Press). A helpful handbook for the adviser in his work with youth.

Young People in Your Church by Herbert C. Mayer (Revell). Discussion of the role and place of youth in the church.

Religious Values of Youth -- a study by the YMCA (Association Press). While written from an orthodox vantage point, the book is a questionnaire analysis of young people's attitudes about religion. As such, it has value for advisers.

"But You Don't Understand" by Frances B. Strain (Appleton-Century). A dramatic series of teen-age predicaments, which attempt to bring closer understanding between youth and adults. Possibly a little "pat," but useful in certain problem areas.

The Adolescent by Marynia F. Farnham (Harper Brothers). An attempt to answer the old question, "What makes teen-agers tick?" Particular emphasis on biological and psychological aspects of youth. Written for parents by a physician.

The Adolescent by Ada H. Arlitt (McGraw-Hill). Somewhat like the Farnham book (above), although older and perhaps of more limited usefulness

Adult Leadership (magazine). Although written for adults the magazine is generally useful in group techniques and should be helpful to the youth adviser in discussion and group work techniques. See particularly the "Workshop on Youth" in the June, 1955 issue, which contains several articles on youth and suggested supplementary materials. Three pamphlets published by the Adult Education Association (743 North Wabash Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.) may be particularly helpful: How to Lead Discussions, Planning Better Programs, and Taking Action in the Community (60¢ a piece, two for \$1.00, three for \$1.20).

LRY PUBLICATIONS: While these vary from time to time, manuals, pamphlets and publications of the LRY in particular areas are extremely helpful. The adviser should keep a file of these materials.

denominational aid for advisers

The Liberal Religious Youth staff is always on call for the needs of local youth programs. Sometimes it is possible for one of the staff members to make a field trip to your local group. In arranging field trips, however, matters of budget and staff time are major factors. If you wish a field trip to your group during the year it is wise to contact the LRY office well in advance. Often, your questions can be answered by consulting with the staff via mail. Every letter will receive individual attention and an attempt made to deal with problems, provide appropriate resource material, and suggest contacts in your local area. Currently, the continental LRY staff is composed of three individuals: an Executive Director, an Associate Director for high school work, and an Associate Director for Channing-Murray Foundation (college age) work. Any of these individuals may be contacted by writing to: Liberal Religious Youth, 16 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Mass.

local aid for advisers

Often it is not possible to have your questions adequately answered by mail or to arrange a field trip by the LRY staff. Then, too, a staff member is generally not as well acquainted with the particular local needs of your youth group as an individual in your church, community, or regional area. The following sources may be helpful to you in your local situation:

1. LRY Council Member Each area of the continent is represented by one or more Council Members. These Council Members are young people chosen by the youth groups in their region. Council Members have a travel allowance and are "on call" to field trip the youth groups in the area, discuss problems with the minister, parents, youth and advisers. If you do not know the name of your present Council Member you may obtain it from LRY Headquarters.

2. The Minister As ministers themselves would admit, they vary tremendously in their competence and attitudes toward youth work. Some ministers do not feel qualified in youth work and would prefer not to be involved directly. Others have had a wider background in youth work. The adviser and local church members are in the best position to judge the potential helpfulness of the minister in a given area. No matter what role the minister takes in the youth work of the church, however, the adviser should make sure that he is kept

informed on what the youth group is doing and his advice is sought on major contemplated projects. The minister is the person generally in the best position to integrate the youth program into the total life of



the church. For instance, it would be unfortunate to find that the youth group and the Boy Scouts both planned a paper drive for the same weekend. Often ministers complain that they never know what is going on in the youth group until a sudden crisis confronts them. As an adviser, use your minister for help if you can and if for various reasons, you cannot, keep him informed of the work of the group.

3. Other adults In your local church or area there are undoubtedly ministers or laymen with particular skills in youth work. The minister, who is adviser to the regional youth conference, is often a helpful man to contact. In asking the assistance of ministers, who are not settled in your local church, it is important as a professional courtesy to inform your own minister and to gain his approval before inviting the outside minister to visit your group.



Teachers, personnel workers, social workers, psychologists in your own church may have a particular gift for working with youth. Don't overlook other occupations, though. Many competent youth workers have jobs in fields which may have little direct relationship to youth work. Try to think of the people in the church, who would seem good possibilities for youth work, then find out more about them. Neighboring youth groups may have qualified advisers who can be helpful to your youth program.

4. Church committees There is a growing feeling that the youth program needs to be bound into the structure of the church. Generally this is done by making the Religious Education Committee responsible for youth work. Many times, though, the R.E. Committee has more than it can handle in caring for the church school program. An increasing trend is the setting up of church youth work committees. These committees have as their sole responsibility the youth work of the church and serve as a liaison between the church and the youth group(s). As a rule, these youth work committees have an officer from each of the youth groups in the church as full voting members of the committee. The Youth Work Committee can be helpful to the adviser in discussing problems and in gaining support for the youth program. The role of the Youth Work Committee is a delicate one, as it must stand ready to advise, assist and help the youth without attempting to control, dictate, or usurp the functions of the youth group itself.

5. Community resources. Sometimes an adviser is able to find a person in his community, who while not a member of the church, has skills in youth work. One potential danger is that such individuals do not understand the LRY philosophy of a self-run youth organization. Before involving people from outside the church it is wise to assure yourself about their basic attitude toward youth work.

worship



Do not come (to a worship service) from a cold sense of duty, to quiet the conscience with the thought of having paid a debt to God. Do not come to perform a present task to insure a future heaven. Come to find heaven now, to anticipate the happiness of that better world by breathing its spirit.

William E. Channing



In these words William Ellery Channing has defined the animating spirit of a liberal service of worship. No part of it is sacrosanct; it has no unalterable sequence, no necessary ceremonies. It directs the worshipper's attention to God or his own highest capabilities in order to help him recognize the divine or greatest that is within him. In contrast to ritualistic services, its form, as its content, is free and is determined solely by the requirements of the individuals who participate.

The Worshipper.

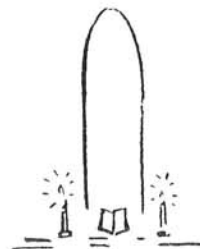
The primary concern of the liberal religious service is the worshipper — what does he take with him when he leaves the service, how has it changed or added something to the being he is? Does he carry away a feeling of spiritual elevation, does he receive from the service a deeper insight? Does he take from it profounder sense of basic values and ultimate ideals? Does the service help him forge a stronger bond with his fellows? Does it inspire him with some wisdom from past or present life? Does it help enhance his conception of man? If questions such as these are answered affirmatively, then the worshipper has been enriched by the experience; the service has served its purpose and may be regarded as successful and worthwhile.

Types of Service

The type of service -- the forms used, the sequence followed, the ceremonies included -- depend entirely on the nature of the participating individuals -- their backgrounds, biases, and talents. The service of worship should start with individuals as they are; it should contain no element which may be annoying or irritating and so distract attention from the theme presented.



The use of music depends, of course, on available talent. If possible it should be bound in with the rest of the worship service. It is usually preferable to include some familiar hymn at the same time that one introduces a new one. Doing this preserves a sense of contact with what is going on.



The group may prefer the composite service of reading, hymns, music, prayer or meditation, and a talk. This has generally proved satisfactory and is most widely used because it offers a variety of approaches for individual tastes. Often a period of silent meditation may be effective. Occasionally the group may want to have a communion service (either traditional or modern in form), or possibly experiment with new worship ideas such as the "liturgical dance" or "play pantomime" services (See LRY Worship Manual).

Preparation

Although no individual should be forced to help lead a service, the widest possible participation should be encouraged. In smaller groups one or two interested individuals might be charged with the responsibility of leading the service, rotating the function around the group. In larger groups it might be better to have a standing committee on Worship.

One of the most important factors in presenting a meaningful worship service is practice. Mumbled or misread readings, chaotic interchange of parts, and a fumbling introduction of music can destroy even the most beautiful worship setting. Leading worship is an art and to achieve success, careful practice must take place before the actual service. It is wise to have a practice session either during the week or before (not during!) the scheduled meeting.

Those who have not helped conduct worship services should be aided in selecting appropriate hymns, readings, etc. The church hymnal in most general use, Hymns of the Spirit, contains excellent indices for use in picking hymns, prayers, and responsive readings. Other books which have proven to be excellent resources are Great Companions (ed. by Robert French Leavens, Beacon Press), The Prophet (Kahlil Gibran, Knopf), and such recent Beacon Press publications as The Jefferson Bible, Channing Day-by-Day, and the various volumes in the Wit and Wisdom series (John Dewey, Gandhi, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Franklin Roosevelt, Bertrand Russell, Albert Schweitzer, and Alfred North Whitehead). Also not to be overlooked is the annual Lenten Manual published by the Beacon Press. Your local minister can also be helpful in suggesting appropriate worship material. If an individual wants to use some passage from the biography of some favorite personage or a reading of deep meaning to himself, this is to be encouraged, as it ties the service into his own personal experience.



Advisers will generally find a reluctance on the part of the youth to present their own thoughts in the form of a prayer or sermonette. Yet,

if this initial reluctance can be overcome, some amazingly good material will be forthcoming. A youth's own writing expresses his own convictions in his own terms and, therefore, enhances the presentation and meaning of the worship service.



Integrating the Service

In order for the service to have real meaning for all, it should have unity, it should be directed to some central purpose — the expression of some idea, the evocation of a mood, the honoring of some historic personality, etc. It is best to select the theme first; and then whatever hymns, readings, and talks which make up the service can be chosen in the light of the theme. The adviser can be helpful in aiding those in charge of the service to avoid a hodgepodge affair. He should quietly help make it a meaningful thing — something to which the group members look forward -- and not merely a scheduled item of routine nature. But, almost needless to say, the service no matter how inspiring or meaningful it may succeed in becoming, falls short of its larger purpose if it does not develop the individuals leading it, if it does not enable them to express themselves as they feel best able to do. The service should be not merely for the group, but of and by the group as well. It should start with the group, serve as a vehicle for the expression of the members' aspirations in those ways which they find most meaningful.



Some sense of balance should be encouraged among hymns, readings, and other forms. Doing so not only increases the appeal of the service but also aids the maturation of the participating individuals. A healthy respect for sound tradition should be coupled with an interest in experimentation with new forms.

But balance cannot be imposed from the top. The adviser's role is to help the member of the group attain the balanced service by development within themselves. From time to time the whole group should be encouraged to evaluate the worship service and to make changes in it, which seem to meet the needs of the group. The individuals leading and participating must be encouraged to develop themselves. The worship service is a continuing contribution to their growth. But, though they should receive counsel, they cannot be forced into predetermined molds. They should be allowed and encouraged to read and express their own feelings, their own experiences in the terms that are most meaningful to them. Encouraged to grow, they should develop for themselves the forms and the manner in which their aspirations can be most succinctly expressed. Striking out toward spiritual as well as intellectual self-reliance, they will be on the road to becoming spiritually mature human beings.

education



Thou shalt not profess that which thou dost not believe. Thou shalt not heed the voice of man when it agrees not with the voice of God within thine own soul.

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Ralph W. Emerson

Philosophy

The Unitarian-Universalist ideal in education, as succinctly expressed in Emerson's words above, has been the development of the intellectually self-reliant individual. In our churches we talk a great deal about the ideal of the "free mind." This does not merely mean a mind free from dogmatic tradition. It serves little purpose to repudiate one form of intellectual tyranny only to accept another.



When we talk about developing "free minds," we mean precisely that. We mean minds which can't think through problems, questions, answers for themselves. We mean minds that deny the principle that "truth is decided by majority vote." We mean minds that show no greater hesitancy in standing alone for an unpopular conclusion than demonstrating humility when finding oneself in a majority position. The "free mind" principle means also acceptance of a belief in the importance of individual thinking, not only one's own thinking, but the results of others' individual thinking as well.

Yet, there is something more. As Emerson tried to show, a true individual is a social being. He receives from society; he must give back to it. Although truth cannot be decided by a majority, a decision concerning how a group of people shall act together must be. Loyalty to the democratic process requires cooperation with a course of action, decided by the majority. Provided, of course, the action does not violate the individual conscience and that the majority respects the position of any minorities among them.

This brings us to the two-point goal of an educational program in LRY group undertaking: the development of socially responsible and intellectually self-reliant individuals.

Types of Program

An educational program has an almost infinite range of possibilities. Most projects, however, can be classified under one of four headings:

1. Discussion Programs This is the best type of basic educational program because it encourages the greatest participation of individual thinking. Moreover, it is perhaps most effective in drawing out the more retiring members of the group. Its success or failure, however, largely depends on the ability of the discussion leader. In planning such a program these factors should be kept in mind:

- A. The choice of subject should be of interest to the group — general enough to permit a variety of approaches and yet limited to the extent necessary to keep the discussion from wandering.
- B. The subject should be one where some knowledge of the "facts" involved is all that is needed for participation and the development of a point-of-view. Too many discussions, bravely planned, flounder hopelessly because they get involved in a mass of technical data (e.g. "Under the McCarran Act the number of Italians that can be admitted is.....") or specialized information (e.g. "The workings of the internal combustion engine must be understood in order to discuss inter-stellar travel."). The result of such discussion is that most participants quietly drop out and come to the conclusion that this matter is best left to the experts.
- C. If a factual background is required the discussion leader can present the facts simply and concisely at the beginning, but should rapidly proceed to encourage group participation by ending his summary with a provocative question or two.
- D. Generally, a question which is more or less controversial in the eyes of the group is a good discussion subject. If the members can get excited without getting irate, so much the better.
- E. The discussion leader should try to emulate the free-and-open "bull session" method except (1) he should try to see to it without overt interference that the discussion has some direction; and (2) that everyone is encouraged to participate without unduly embarrassing the more silent members of the group.
- F. Discussion leaders should become familiar with the basic techniques of effective discussion leadership. A good pamphlet, such as *How to Lead Discussions* (See Bibliography, Page 10), will be helpful.

G. One good twist to the ordinary discussion is to have a short debate. Let the discussion start with a short statement, say 5 minutes by each participant. Three individuals, who have had some advance preparation, might participate, presenting a pro, con and middle position on the topic. A brief question period might follow and then the discussion opened to the group with a discussion leader (not one of the debaters) moderating.

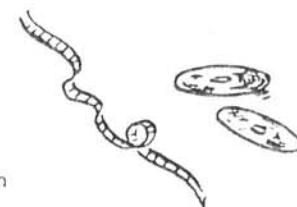
H. A successful discussion requires that every opinion, no matter how conservative or radical, have a respectful hearing. No individual should be afraid of speaking his thoughts because of the fear of ridicule. If such begins to take place, the leader might gently aid the position being ridiculed; so that the other members are encouraged to combat the position by thought and not merely emotion.

2. Speakers As variety, it is good to get an outside speaker every once in a while. In addition to enlivening the program this encourages group members to bring friends out of group pride in having a "decent" audience for the speaker. It also serves an educational value in providing a fresh and perhaps somewhat different point of view. A discussion period, formal or informal, should follow; but the speaker should be forewarned that a discussion session will follow the talk. A good program will provide speakers from varying points of view and of different interests. LRYers will tend to think through their own conclusions more validly if challenged occasionally by a capable representative of a quite different approach.

One word of caution: Often groups degenerate into always having a speaker. While an outside speaker can provide an excellent program, a variety in the type of program should be sought.

3. Audio-visual Techniques The growing list of materials of an audio-visual nature provides a fertile field for program enrichment. If your church possesses a film-strip or motion-picture projector you should collect a library of catalogs and listings. (If such equipment is not available and the church budget cannot provide it, many LRY groups have had success in raising the funds — often in cooperation with other groups in the church — to purchase a motion picture projector.) Local libraries and propaganda groups often have visual materials available for showings at a moderate cost or without charge.

Motion pictures, recordings, etc. are valuable sources for the dramatic and professionally effective presentation of information, creating an awareness of problems, etc. Too frequent use can be self-defeating, as some sense of novelty enhances the value of these mediums. Visual and audio material, carefully chosen, is an excellent "lead-in" to a discussion on a given subject. It is a good general policy to have a



discussion following the presentation of any audio-visual material to bring out further points, evaluate the effectiveness of the material, correct misinformation, etc. One further word to the wise: preview material before presenting it. A preview will not only allow the discussion leader to gain needed information; but will also show defective equipment, broken film, etc., and give an idea of the length of the presentation.

4. Trips Virtually every community has scores of interesting things to see, that have incidental value. Periodic trips by the group to various places of interest in the surrounding community and its environs can be stimulating. It is urged that undue stress on seeing things alone be avoided and that emphasis instead be placed on meeting with the people at the place of interest. This may become clearer in the following suggestions (Other ideas will no doubt occur to you as you peruse this list):



Does your town have any industrial installation, a big factory or assembly plant? Try to arrange a tour through it; the group will get a better idea of the nature of industrialism from a factory tour than from many lectures about it. They might learn, too, a great deal about the nature of the chief economic mainstay of the community. After the group has had a chance to see the plant, arrange for an informal meeting with the management and, if possible, the labor union in the plant. This kind of dual experience will give the group some insight into the personnel problems of industry.

Is your group mainly from middle or upper-income families? Why not arrange a visit to one of the depressed areas in your city, perhaps meeting with one of the youth groups in the neighborhood. Related to this, a visit to a housing project and a talk by the civic official in charge of urban redevelopment might make a good program.

Is your group in a large city? They might like to see what a farm looks like. Perhaps one of the dairies in your city would be glad to arrange a tour. A good follow-up would be a trip to a local creamery. In this or another field, the group could make a project of following the product from source to consumer.

What about government in your community? Whether it be city council or state legislature or town meeting, your group could learn a great deal. Connected with such a visit, a meeting with party leaders in the government could be a dramatic project in grassroots political education.

Are there public institutions near you? A trip to a penitentiary or mental hospital or state home for children can be a meaningful

experience, particularly if followed up with an interview with a staff member from the institution.

Local, state, or national political campaign brewing? Why not invite a representative from each party to state his case before your group. This might also be a good time to invite parents, provided you don't allow them to monopolize the evening. As a kickoff point you might ask each party leader to state what his party offers youth. The group could follow through with an election night visit to each candidate's headquarters or the Election Board, where results are tabulated. Older youth might enjoy participating in the election through the party of their choice or by non-partisan poll watching.

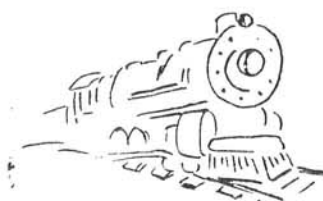
Does your community contain a large foreign element? If so, there are probably local prejudices about them, even in your own group. How about a meal in a restaurant of that nationality, followed by a meeting with a youth group from that section in one of the churches or community centers?



How much does your group know about other religions? As free religionists, who pride ourselves on tolerance of differing religious beliefs, we often fail to inform ourselves adequately about the churches and synagogues in our communities. The group will generally find other churches eager to have visits by the youth group. The LRY group might wish to make a continuing project of visits to other religious services and talks with the minister and/or leading laymen of these churches following the service.

Careful preparation should be made for field trips. The group should be briefed regarding the type of trip, the schedule, the meeting place, and how transportation will be handled. It would be wise, too, to call the

group's attention to the fact that they are visiting guests and will wish to be courteous representatives of their LRY group. The aim is not to seek silent or vocal agreement with the representatives of the groups visited; but rather an understanding of their work based on knowledge and not blind prejudice. Questions and even disagreements should not be avoided; but vindictive arguments and nasty comments should be discouraged.



service projects

One aspect of programming that has much to contribute to the total experience of the group is the area of service. There is a sound philosophy to doing an occasional project for the benefit of others and, more indirectly, the LRY group itself will gain from the experience.

Church Projects

Often the adviser has resources at his disposal beyond the knowledge of the group. These resources will suggest service activities. The adviser's work in the church may make him aware of areas where the group could make a contribution. A group may be needed to cater a church dinner, to take charge of Sunday ushering or coffee hours, or to provide baby-sitters during church, or to repair, paint, clean, or decorate rooms or furniture in the church. The opportunities for service in the local church are many. Some LRY groups make it a general policy to do at least one service project each year for their local church.

Community Projects

Within the community there are a number of things which the LRY group can do to help others. Members might volunteer services in a settlement house, hospital, or nursery school. There might be a need for service in a weekend workcamp in repairing tenements, along with the residents themselves, in slum areas. The group might wish to collect toys, books, or paper for distribution to an appropriate group.

The Wider Work

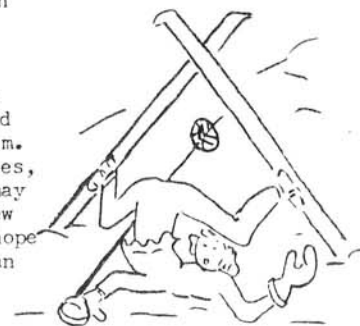
There are opportunities for service in the community or in larger areas with the national programs of the groups with which the LRY is affiliated. (These are discussed under Affiliations.) Both at home and abroad, the Unitarian Service Committee and the Universalist Service Committee are engaged in vital projects. The group might assist in gathering needed materials for one or more of these projects or in raising a scholarship fund to sponsor one of the LRY group's own members to one of the service workcamps sponsored each summer by the two service committees. Further information can be obtained from the Unitarian Service Committee, 9 Park Street, Boston 2, Massachusetts, or from the Universalist Service Committee, 16 Beacon Street, Boston 2, Mass.

In the service area the adviser's role is to suggest ideas from his wider experience and to help the group develop realistic plans to implement their ideas. In a flood of youthful enthusiasm the group may undertake more than they can handle. But let the adviser be careful in suggesting limitations — he may be surprised by what "youthful enthusiasm" can accomplish.



recreation

As a group adviser, you are probably already aware of the important role of recreation in the program of your particular LRY group. Relaxation and fun are a vital part of the life of a youth group as in the life of an individual. You can aid your group to make its recreational program more meaningful and to provide social growth through the program. Because groups differ in size, meeting places, and maturity, what goes well in one group may be a flop in another. Therefore, only a few general suggestions will be made with the hope that you and the group's recreation chairman and/or committee will find them helpful.



Recreation in the Program.

Some groups desire an organized recreation program, while others carry on a more casual setup. Both types, however, require preparation. The group should be encouraged to make a specific person responsible for recreation for a convenient period (e.g. a month of a school term) and that person should use his own creative ingenuity in planning the program. The recreation chairman and the program chairman should be in close liaison; so that recreation can fit into the time schedule and program for the evening.

Ideally, recreation should be in balance with the other aspects of the group program. The sensitive adviser can help the recreation leader be aware of the atmosphere of the group and can help him to meet the moods of the group through flexibility in planning. One of the keys in recreational planning is to have alternate ideas; so that as soon as one project seems to wane in interest another game can be started. By a well-timed suggestion the adviser can also insure the inclusion of newcomers as a part of things. Often it is in the recreational program that the newcomer can be most easily included because of his past experience in other groups.

The Recreational Program

Occasionally, the whole program will be given over to recreation in the form of an outing or special event. The adviser can be of great help in planning such events. If the program is away from the regular meeting place does the group understand where and at what time they are to meet, when they are to return, is transportation set, have parents been informed, etc.? It is not the adviser's job to do these things; but he should aid in seeing that they are done. A good outing can provide a good change of pace in the group programming, particularly when the programs



have been "heavy" in recent weeks or the school term is drawing to a close. Suggested activities: beach parties, hikes, picnics, a camping or ski trip, cookouts, a cycling or canoe trip, splash parties, a mystery ride, visiting an amusement park, a trip to a museum or art gallery. If the group is small enough it may enjoy an "open house" at one of its member's home.

The adviser can help in suggesting place or by knowing people in the church, who might provide a summer cottage; or who would be willing to go along as host or hostess on such a project. This type of activity can also help stimulate adult interest through participation in the LRY group. Local or state part departments can inform you of recreational facilities in your area. The watchword for trips is to plan them early and spread the responsibility. The adviser should check that it is clearly understood who will bring the food, provide the cars, etc.



Criticism of Recreation

The adviser's role in the group's recreational program can be a crucial one. More often than not, when there is adverse criticism directed at the youth group it involves some phase of the recreation program. Worship and educational programs seldom arouse criticism (or much interest) among adults, but teen-age recreation is a much debated issue. The adviser can play a vital role as interpreter of youth to adults and adults to youth in this area.

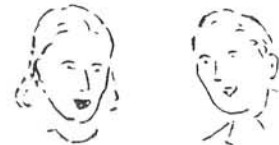
Recreational Ideas

The adviser will be asked from time to time to suggest recreational ideas or resources. The local library may be helpful on this. In wide use in LRY groups are the Handy booklets published by the Cooperative Recreation Service, Inc., Delaware, Ohio. A card to them will bring a list of materials and prices. The adviser might also keep a notebook on recreational activities -- good places for trips, ideas which have proved successful in the group, check-list needs for outings, etc. These will be valuable in planning the recreation program each year with the LRY recreational chairman or for turning over to a new adviser, just starting in with the group.

LRY organization

The local group

The meat and meaning of LRY begins and ends with the individuals in local youth groups. The local group functions as the main continuing interest of its members by its week-to-week program. Nonetheless, there are regional and continental organizations, which are based on the local group and which, in turn, can be extremely helpful to the local group. It is the local LRY groups which send delegates to the Annual LRY Convention to make basic policy. It is also the local groups which elect Council Members to carry on regional work, to aid local groups, as well as to assist in the work of the Continental Council between Conventions.



The Convention

Once a year local group delegates and observers come together from all over the United States and Canada for the purposes of education, recreation, and enacting LRY policy. The Convention delegates also elect the continental officers. Youth-led commissions meet daily to study and prepare resolutions for presentation to the total Convention. These commissions are generally in fields such as college and high school programming, affiliations with other organizations, denominational affairs, leadership and membership, and regional problems. Adult-led workshops provide an opportunity for the discussion of particular aspects of the Convention theme. Through the commissions, workshops, and creative worship services conducted by the young people, the Convention provides a balanced program of education, inspiration and fellowship.

Officers and Trustees

The four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) are elected each year to serve the specific functions suggested by their titles. The four trustees serve as continuity persons and are often assigned the responsibility for overseeing a particular part of the LRY program (e.g., committee chairmanship, committee coordination, or the editing of one of the LRY publications, such as the Youth Leader -- the official LRY publication).



The Council

The LRY Council consists of the 4 officers, the 4 trustees, and 20 regional representatives. The Council meets following the Convention and during the Christmas holiday to implement the policies set forth by the Convention.

Regional Representatives



The regional representative carries a large and responsible job. He is the organization's "tier-inner" or correlator. He is expected to have first hand information on all aspects of LRY, particularly on the state of and needs of his particular region. The regional representative helps start new youth groups and strengthen old ones. He field trips to local groups to help on programming and specific problems. He interprets continental LRY policy to the local groups in his region and, in turn represents the needs of his region on the Council and to the LRY Headquarters. The regional representative works closely with the regional officers on the conferences, program, and activities of his area.

Committees.

Through regional representatives, committee chairmen, letters to the LRY office, area conferences, and the Convention, local LRY groups make known their needs for specific aids and for program materials. Pamphlets and flyers are prepared by the various committees and sent to local group presidents and advisers through the regular LRY packets. Committee structure may vary from year to year but the following should be indicative of the general structure and function:

1. The Affiliations Committee relates the LRY to other national organizations with which the Convention voted to affiliate. Usually a pamphlet is prepared each year to inform the LRY membership of its affiliate organizations — who, what, and where they are, and how the local group can share in projects which they sponsor, such as Brotherhood Week, United Nations Day, and other "national notice" occasions.
2. The Service Projects Committee works with the Unitarian and Universalist Service Committees and keeps the LRY membership informed on workcamp and service opportunities sponsored by these committees, as well as giving ideas for local projects which might be undertaken in the local church or community.
3. The Worship Committee prepares materials for worship services and handles the suggested program for Youth Sunday (the last Sunday in January) at which time the young people in the local church assume the responsibility for the morning service.
4. The International Religious Fellowship Committee sponsors with groups from other IRF member countries, group and individual letter exchanges, publicizes the international IRF Conferences, promotes

Albert Schweitzer College, and encourages group study of foreign affairs and international relations. Each year a growing number of LRYers participate in the IRF summer program overseas.

5. The Channing-Murray Committee is the college age committee and is concerned with the entire programming for the many campus and church centered college age groups (18 to 25 years) in the United States and Canada. This committee also publishes the Liberal's Challenge, a college-age journal of opinion.
6. The Nominating Committee is elected by the Convention each year. During the year this committee seeks recommendations for officers and trustees and supervises the regional election of council representatives. The results of the regional elections and the nominees for officers and trustees are sent to the affiliated groups in the form of an absentee ballot so that groups not represented at the Convention by delegates may still vote. This absentee vote, plus the ballots cast by delegates at the Convention determines the LRY leadership for the coming year. Adequate procedures are provided in the LRY Constitution for the nomination of officers by petition.
7. The Convention Committee works closely with the LRY Council and staff in planning the annual Convention. This committee is concerned with finding the exact site, selecting workshop leaders, commission leaders, theme speakers, etc. For some years, the Convention has been held during the end-of-June-beginning-of-July week.

LRY Staff

LRY is youth-run. The Council employs a headquarters staff of adults who work full time at implementing the program laid down through the Conventions, Council meetings, LRY Committees, etc. Currently this continental staff is composed of an Executive Director, an Office Manager and a secretary. As soon as funds become available, associates to the Director will be appointed.



* * *

Joint Youth Activities Committee

In order to coordinate LRY work with the two adult groups — the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America — the JYAC was set up. Each adult denomination appoints four members and the LRY two members to this committee. The JYAC assists the LRY in crisis situations, provides a liaison with the two denominations, and assists in various projects (e.g., this handbook, which is the result of JYAC's work). The JYAC sends a representative to attend and observe the LRY Council Meetings and the Convention.

Regional Organizations

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The regional organizations of LRY go under many names -- conferences, federations, state organizations. Some of them are jointly Universalist-Unitarian, while others are not yet merged. The picture is further confused in New England by the existence of the New England Regional Committee of LRY which is composed of sub-regional federations. Without getting bogged down in the regional picture, however, a word about their work should be included.

Each regional organization has its own officers and sponsors its own activities such as weekend rallies, summer conferences, or work projects. These regions carry on their own activities and have their own meetings. The names of regional officers and advisers may be obtained from LRY Headquarters.

A final word

This, in brief (and we hope not confusion), is the organizational structure of LRY. It is not, however, the structure which counts; for it is only a framework through which our youth can further their growth and development in particular areas of interest -- be it personal or worldwide. To pass on this structure and "alphabet soup" of LRY is relatively easy; the harder job is to convey the fullest meaning of LRY. This is the responsibility of those of us concerned with young people.

other affiliations

Affiliations are activities in cooperation with other organizations. Cooperation with other groups, seeking similar aims and with similar philosophy, is natural in promoting our LRY program.

Your own church

First of all, the youth group should become acquainted with the other organizations within the local church. Although LRY members may be acquainted with some organizations, on the whole they know little about the other groups in the church. The adviser can play a key role in helping the youth to coordinate their work with the other church organizations. It might make an interesting program to spend an evening discussing the role and function of these other church groups and how they fit into the wider denominational picture. Or the various activity groups in the church (women's group, men's group, married couples' group, etc.) might want to have a joint meeting at which they informed each other of their work.



All churches have an annual meeting. At this time the various organizations within the local church are generally invited to report. Oftentimes the youth group is left out or does not ask for a place on the program. Yet, what better opportunity to explain to the whole church the work of the youth group?

A friendly relationship with other church groups can be beneficial to the youth group. Not only will it help in wider church understanding of the LRY program, but often these groups have assisted in the LRY work (e.g., by helping send delegates to summer conferences). In turn, the LRY group can sometimes give these other organizations a hand (e.g., putting on a coffee-dessert for the men's group).

Community Work



Young people take an interest in their community, particularly insofar as it affects them personally. Recreational facilities for youth may be inadequate or youth may be criticized generally for the destructive behavior of a minority. A good program, discussion, or project may be found in such a concern. The LRY group will probably find other youth and/or adult groups concerned with these problems too. Cooperative action is possible and may lead to community betterment and a better spirit of community cooperation.

When program plans for the year are drawn up, the adviser might suggest a community study. The group could build a whole series of programs around the community theme. Representatives from the planning committee, police and fire departments, labor and civic groups, etc. could appear before the group. Some particular need may become apparent as the result of such a series — a need, which the youth might care to explore further and perhaps help to remedy. Such projects, however, should grow out of the group and not be the adviser's pet idea or the idea of one or two members in the group. Unless a project has the whole-hearted backing of the vast majority in the group, it is bound to fail.

Wider Affiliations

The continental LRY is affiliated with a number of organizations nationally. They include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Collegiate Council for the United Nations (CCUN), the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), the Young Adult Council (YAC), the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice (UFSJ), the International Religious Fellowship (IRF), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Albert Schweitzer College.



Each year the continental LRY Convention votes to affiliate, reaffiliate or disaffiliate with these and new organizations. The work of these groups and LRY's relation to them are evaluated by the Convention before the vote for renewal of affiliation is taken.

The NAACP seeks to break the barriers of racial discrimination and segregation in public life. The CCUN is a college student organization dedicated to promoting UN activity on campuses. the NCCJ promotes wider understanding among Catholics, Protestants and Jews. YAC is the planning body for young adult organizations in the U.S. and is part of the National Social Welfare Assembly. WAY is the international organization of youth groups from all over the free world, of which YAC is a member.

The ACLU works to promote democracy by the preservation of civil liberties. The ADL of B'nai Brith promotes better human relations among Americans by education, public opinion, and social action. The UFSJ gives a Unitarian expression to the promotion of religious ideals in the fight against discrimination and social injustice. The IRF is an organization composed of liberal religious youth groups throughout the world, dedicated to an interchange of ideas and expression of a free religious faith. Albert Schweitzer College is an international college in Switzerland



sponsored by the IRF; its purpose is not only to educate but to provide young people from many countries with the experience of studying and working together. All of these organizations put out materials during the year explaining their activities and inviting their affiliates to assist them in promoting special projects, such as UN Week, Brotherhood Week, Race Relations Sunday, International Sunday, and Human Rights Day.



The adviser can help his local group keep informed about LRY affiliations and can suggest local projects and programs making use of the materials and suggestions produced by the Affiliations Committee of LRY. If you desire further information about LRY affiliations contact: Affiliations Committee Chairman, Liberal Religious Youth, 16 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts.

choosing an adviser

Each church may have its own way of picking an adviser; but many churches have asked for information on how to choose an adviser. These thoughts may prove helpful in this process.

Policy

1. What is an adviser? Before approaching prospective advisers, a job description should be drawn up. How much time is required; what commitment must the adviser make; what role is the adviser supposed to take; what support can the adviser expect from the church? These and similar questions must be answered in order to invite an adviser in good conscience to work with a youth group.
2. Who chooses the adviser? Sometimes the church and sometimes the youth group; but there are dangers in both ways, as the choice of one group may not be acceptable to the other. A suggested way might be as follows: have the youth group and the church committee responsible for youth work appoint a sub-committee (say three members from each group); this group should also include the minister or the church staff member responsible for youth work ex-officio. The committee should then select a panel of names, which they found acceptable. From this panel the youth group would make a preferential list in order of choice. The candidates would then be approached in order until an acceptance is gained. In particular situations, where it seems wise the church board might be asked to approve the panel of names also.



How to find an adviser

1. Have the responsible committee gather all possible names. Get the church board, the minister, the youth, and interested individuals to make suggestions. Go through the parish list. Include all possibilities in the beginning.
2. Once the potentials list is drawn up, think over the individuals. Remember that even more important than past experience is the basic attitude of the person toward youth. Can the individual give and take, or is he solely permissive or dominating? Consider experience; but don't let that consideration lead you to the individual, who is rigid in personality structure. Far better would be an inexperienced adult who can learn and grow.



3. Pare the list down to possibilities that seem good. Note strengths and weaknesses. Then select a preferential order in the light of the suggested way above (Policy #1) or according to the ways of your church.
4. Gain the necessary approval(s) from the necessary group(s) of the names to be approached.
5. Call on — don't phone — the top candidate. It is suggested that a committee of two or three, both youth and adult, call on the person (or couple) and discuss the work with them. If it seems a good idea invite them to attend one or more meetings of the youth group. If refused, move on to the next candidate until an acceptance is found.

Our problem is . . .



Yes, we know the usual problem is not paring a list down but just finding a person, any person, who will agree to be an adviser. If this is your problem, consider these things. Have you really systematically canvassed the church? Or have you merely bemoaned your lack of talent without really checking into what might be available? Secondly, are there reasons why people will not agree to become advisers to the group — church domination, difficulties in the youth group, etc.? If so, how about setting about correcting them? Thirdly, all right, you're still stuck. How about a training program for an adviser. Find an individual, who might be potentially good. Get firm commitments of support from parents and the necessary church committees to assist him. See if there is not an adviser's training session at some conference or area meeting to which the church could send the potential candidate. Make the adviser problem not your own personal problem but the problem of the entire church; for in reality it is their problem!

Helping the adviser

Sometimes, youth groups are unhappy with their adviser. Often the church provides no agency for expressing this discontent. The result is that the dissatisfaction festers — attendance at meetings falls off, the young people feel that there is no outlet for them in the church. It is a good idea to have a yearly evaluation session between the responsible church committee and the officers of the youth group(s).

Oftimes the adult committee can help the adviser take a more positive attitude and correct his faults. On other occasions the youth group may be falling down on the job and the church committee will have to talk frankly with them and to suggest attitude or program modifications

to the youth. In still other cases, it may be necessary to change advisers. The change should be made tactfully and carefully, as the adviser may be an excellent person who just does not have skills in working with youth.

Too often, though, churches appoint advisers and then leave them to "go it alone." Churches should take steps to see to it that they have a positive program of help, assistance, and training for their youth group advisers.

The Upward Path

Ask any adult who has had successful experience with youth. He will tell you that few, if any, events in his life have been as richly rewarding and personally meaningful. The vitality and constant "spark" which the adult can gain in working with youth can be a constant "lift" to the adviser. For despite the cries of many regarding juvenile delinquency, the "silent generation" and the "don't care" attitude of present-day youth, the picture is far greater. For our advisers are working with the future church and community leaders of tomorrow and from the experiences of the youth of today will in large measure come the attitudes of these same youth as the adults of the future.

