

Session 9: Plugging In

Supplies for this session: paper and pens, highlighters, 11 Shim notebooks

1. **Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)**

- Welcome everyone to their ninth and final session! Next week is graduation!
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - Serving & living for the sake of others
 - Finding ways to serve that inspire you
 - Our role in the future of our church
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A deeper understanding of the value of service
 - Insight on areas of service that might be meaningful for you
 - Perspective on your role in the future of our community

2. **Warm Up for Today's Session (10 minutes)**

Instead of an icebreaker this week, use this time to let the youth share about the completion of their 3 hours of internship with their local community. Have them stand in front of the group and share on these three points:

- What ministry area did you work with and how did you spend your time in service?
- What did you learn and what skills did you gain?
- How do you personally benefit from this experience?

To encourage each person with their sharing, you can do a group chant for them! An example can be: "Look atchu and what you got!" *clap* *clap* "Huh!" or "Ayyeeeee We're lovin what you just shared ayyeeeee!"

3. **Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)**

- Check in on the completion of the 3 hours of service internship with your local community.
- Confirm that the youth have completed their 7 day prayer condition.
- Have the youth share their 10 year vision with the group.

4. **Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)**

- Read through the "Session 10 Reading."
- Have the participants lead the reading. Have them "popcorn" read (one person starts, then picks another person to read, and so on). After each person reads, they will share a thought or insight they had from the reading, and will share what they feel should be highlighted.

5. **Discussion: (15 minutes)**

Have students walk around the room aimlessly. When you say "Partner up!" they will partner with the person closest to them. Read aloud the first discussion question and give a couple minutes for them to each share. Then, have them walk around again and repeat the process for the rest of the discussion questions.

- Share an experience in which you felt like you benefited from giving your time for someone or something else.
 - If you haven't had that experience yet, share how you think you might benefit from giving your time for a greater cause.
- What area of ministry would you like to get involved in? If you are unsure, what gifts do you have that you think you can give back to your community?
- What kind of church community would you like to have for you and your future family?

6. Activity: (10 minutes) Fuzzy Wuzzies with a Twist

- Get everyone to sit in a circle at either a table, or make sure they have something flat to write on.
- Have each person write their name on the top of a paper and pass the paper the right.
- Give each person 1 minute (timed) to write something nice about that person whose name is on the paper. They should write a short message on the paper they received which highlights that person's best qualities, talents and skills.
- After the minute, say, "Switch!" and then everyone will pass the paper to the right again. Time a minute again as each person writes. Repeat until everyone gets their paper back.
- Allow a few minutes for everyone to read the messages, soak up the love, and see how special they really are.

7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their Il Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.

- How can you make service a part of your regular life?
- What area of ministry could you see yourself contributing to in your adult life?
- What kind of relationship and/or involvement would you like your future family to have with the church community?

8. This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

- Go over the schedule and attire of the graduation so the youth will know how to prepare.
 - Encourage them to dress semi-formally.
 - Girls can wear dresses, skirts, or nice pants with a blouse.
 - Boys can wear a suit or collared shirt with dress pants.
- Complete 3 hours of service internship with your local community if you haven't already.
- Write a 3-5 sentence blurb about what area of church ministry inspires you that will be used in the Il Shim Graduation program. Give them your email or contact info so that they can send you their written

blurbs. Make sure the youth complete this homework today so that you can use it to prepare the program.

- Write a personal pledge to your parents or guardian that will be read during the graduation. The whole class will read the Il Shim pledge together, but the personal pledge will be read to your parents/guardian during the ring ceremony. Your personal pledge should have 3-5 points, and should reflect the type of commitment you want to make to your parents/guardian from now on.

9. **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**

Offer a closing prayer focusing on finding ways to serve that us and taking ownership over the future of our local church.

Session 9 Reading: Plugging In

There's a common concept in our society that teaches us if you give your time, energy, money, and resources to others, you will end up with less than what you started with. But if we all lived that way, what kind of a world would we be living in? Do we really want to live in a place where people focus only on their own needs and don't take care of others? That kind of world is not the one God designed for us, and it doesn't benefit us as a whole either. So there must be something false about this concept. The Divine Principle teaches us that the universe was designed with the spiritual law of *give and take action*. What this means is that God created the universe with the law that you get something in return when you give to others. Simply put, if you give to others, you will receive from others. God made this a spiritual law, so you can count on the fact that it will never change.

Feeding Your Spirit

So what do you get in return when you give to others? You may very well receive external things such as gifts, money, or acts of kindness. But that's not what the law of give and take action is talking about. When you give to others, you create a spiritual relationship between your soul and the soul of the other person. It's your spirit that is able to reap the biggest benefit from giving to others, and we call this benefit *vitality elements*. Vitality elements are the nourishments that your spirit receives when you give to others. Just like your physical body needs food, air, and water to grow and survive, your spiritual body needs vitality elements that come from serving others. Although vitality elements are a spiritual element, your physical body is able to reap the benefits of them through your spiritual body. There's a special mutual relationship between your spirit body and physical body that allows this to occur. That's why you feel happier and better about yourself after you do a service project, volunteer your time, or go out of your way to help someone. God created the law of give and take action so that you would be happier as a result of giving to others!

Our society tends to promote the importance of achieving personal success in terms of money, status, and lifestyle. It's likely that as a result of growing up in this society, you've been taught to take care of your own needs and look out for yourself first before looking out for others. But one of the cornerstones of the Unificationist faith is that we believe living a life of service is an essential part of becoming an ideal person. We believe that living for other people is the way in which you become a better person. That's because when you put the needs of others before your own, you learn to see from God's viewpoint and to love the world the way God loves the world.

// Section Recap: When you selflessly give to others, you, in turn, provide your spirit with the fuel it needs to grow. Just like our physical body needs food and water, our spirit needs vitality elements, which comes from serving others. When you put others before yourself, you learn to love others as God loves.

Living for the Sake of Others

True Parents have taught us that the way to create true peace and happiness in the world is by *living for the sake of others*. When we live for the sake of others, we receive positive energy and blessings from God. God is ready to support you in your life when you are able to support others first. Additionally, if you are able to think from someone else's point of view and understand their heart, you will have learned to love with true love. This is what we call the *culture of heart*, which is a culture that centers around making decisions based on our love-centered relationship with others. If each person in our world practiced this type of culture, we would have a thriving world of peace and joy.

There are many different ways that you can serve the world and your community. An important part of taking responsibility for your life of faith is finding ways that you can contribute that also inspire you and make you feel fulfilled. Some people may find fulfillment in playing in their church band,, some may find fulfillment in making food for people, others may find it by greeting church-goers at the front door. The point is there is no wrong way to serve and live for others, but it's your job to find the best place for you to plug in and give!

Another way of serving your church community is by tithing. Unificationists are encouraged to offer at least one-tenth of their income as a way of showing God that He/She is more valuable to them than money. God can then see your selflessness, and will want to bless you in return. It can be hard to give our money, because money is a necessary part of our lives. It's the way in which we are able to feed, clothe, and house ourselves and our families. It's not as if God needs money, but we offer our money because it's important to us. In order to make a sincere offering to God, we must offer something that is of high importance to us. It's easy to give small things, but it takes a lot of strength to give our hard-earned money. So even in moments of financial difficulty, it's even more important to continue to tithe so that God can feel your heart and bless you in your situation.

// Section Recap: Today's culture is more focused on the *self*. This is not the culture that God intended. When we care for others, we begin to create a culture of heart. One way to give back to your community is by finding how you can use your talents and passions to improve your church. Another way is by tithing, which shows God that you are able to give one of the most valuable things for something greater.

Building *Your Church*

At this point in your life, you are still young and are watching other people run your church. However, in 10-15 years, it will become *your church*, and you will have more power and resources to lead it in a positive direction. Someone in your II Shim class may become the Pastor one day. Someone in your II Shim class may become a Sunday School teacher, a Youth Pastor, the church bookkeeper, or the church clean up team. One day you and your peers will be running the church, and that means you will have the ability to make it the kind of place you want to be part of. That process starts now. What kind of church community do you want to raise your future family in? How can you help make that happen now?

You have your own spirit that needs to grow and it's your job to take care of it, just like it's your job to make sure you eat, get exercise, and take care of your physical body. One of the best ways to let your spirit grow consistently is by getting involved in your local church. It can be hard to put yourself out there, but the reward of serving your local community is priceless. You will feel happier, build deep relationships with others, and become a part of creating the community you want to be part of. You bring a unique perspective to your community - one that only you can provide. You are needed in building a better world, and that opportunity can start now!

// Section Recap: You may be young, but soon enough, your church will be *your church*. Now is the time to think about how you can contribute to help create the church environment you'd like to see. Also, when you begin to plug into your community, you will also be able to meet other people and build deeper relationships.