

Unification Youth Pastors Nationwide Highlights from May, 2017

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN

As the school semester drew to a close, we gathered as many high schoolers as we can to our local Japanese restaurant to celebrate the seniors' graduation. In accordance with the theme of the celebration, "Contribute," we recognized our gifts and passions as they relate to the bigger and larger picture. We had several discussions (what would our lives look like in 50 years or how can we serve and love others) and activities (think, draw, and describe a machine that would solve world hunger) to further explore the theme.

— N. Nishikawa

BOWIE, MD

Our theme for this month was "What's your Calling?" The youth were challenged to think about what their calling may be and how they can apply that to help others in their daily lives. We also attended Spring Fest and Family Fest at Belvedere. We had a lot of fun and at Family Fest; the entire Maryland youth group was able to practice contributing by being volunteers for the event and helping set up. What a great month!

— M. Manor

BRIDGEPORT, CT

We emphasized understanding your own value in being able to contribute to others. We went on a hike and focused on our ability to make other people happy. The first activity we did was one in which we asked all the participants to write down what they appreciated or found value in themselves. We then asked them to pass their paper around to the other participants so they could write what they valued in each other. The purpose of this activity was so that they understood the way they help others realize their value those around them.

— R. de Sena

BAY AREA, CA

On the weekend of May 6-7 we took a group of high school and middle school students to a local mall to do a fun scavenger hunt involving talking to strangers and taking funny pictures. After the trip to the mall we had two people provide internal guidance: Kouki Tamura and Toby Rosenblum. The weekend was rounded out by a fun cooking activity, sports, and fellowship.

— J. Hardman

LOS ANGELES, CA

As for Junction, the theme was “Helping Yourself.” The topic was about how to fulfill one’s needs in a healthy way by connecting to the right people as well as understanding that your actions affect the community.

— T. Sasaki



OMAHA, NB

We combined the monthly theme of Contribute with Mother’s Day. We had fun making treats and decorations for our church community, and we were glad to see that our community enjoyed the results as well.

— A. Asanuma



DALLAS, TX

This month, we had a Generation Peace Academy (GPA) witnessing group over in our community and we gave them the opportunity to lead our youth group. The kids had so much fun, as they learned with these new older brothers and sisters of GPA. The lesson focused on the inherent value of each person and that God needs everyone in His life.

— S. Suina

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

This past month we had our Il Shim retreat for 5 out of 6 of our young participants. Topics that were covered include the three great blessings, integrity, and traditions. It was a rainy yet fun weekend at a familiar house by the lake.

— M. Muyongo

CLIFTON, NJ

The first Saturday of the month, the youth were encouraged to think about an important question: How can we use our talents and ideas to contribute to the natural world? There was a field day event in which the group was divided into two teams, with each member contributing their ideas in creating their new team name, chant, and flag.

— Y. Ozawa



TARRYTOWN, NY

Our theme this month was “Expand.” We challenged our participants to expand their hearts to each other and become more connected. We also viewed the theme as an opportunity to discuss how best we can share about our faith culture to those who are not familiar with it. We also applied our theme to the Spring Fest weekend that drew many people who haven’t been coming to youth ministry into our program at the end of the year.

— T. Hagiwara

KODIAK, AK

The theme of “Contribute” fit perfectly with many activities we had planned. The youth group decided to cook lunch on Mother’s Day after Sunday service. We also helped with spring cleaning at our church, as well as picking up garbage in our local community. Our biggest activity was a local weeklong festival, where the youth volunteered at our church-owned sushi truck. It was inspiring to see every one of our youth smiling and sharing their positive energy with all the people in the festival. This showed us how much impact we can give to others by practicing what we’ve been taught gratitude and true value.

— A. Whitmore

MILWAUKEE, WI

We had our Il Shim graduation this month. The youth team did our best to make it special for the participants to show them our appreciation for their hard work. It was also a great relief for us as a team. We put a lot of effort and coordination into making sure that someone was there to teach the session every week and the graduation ceremony was a great time to finally take a deep breath after all of the work. We have a picture of the participants from Milwaukee showing off their new rings and holding the roses we gave them!

— A. Gilfillan

COLUMBUS, OH

We talked about the monthly theme in our education every week. We also participated in the Day of All True Things event with our church and the kids read part of the Chambumo gyeong to the community and all the first gens were very happy to see the younger second gens participate in the event.

— R. Kanazawa

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

We practiced the monthly theme of “Contribute” by singing karaoke in front of our group and learning from the passion the parents of our movement have had throughout their lives. The purpose of these activities was to take initiative and to be a leader rather than a follower. As important as it is to be part of the movement, it is far more important that you are here because you choose to do so. Simply following along will not suffice; taking charge and being a leader is how we will grow our movement to others around us.

— L. Pierson