

Session 10: Graduation!

Make sure to ask the youth to arrive 1 hour early to graduation so you can go over the program and rehearse their exit. You should save seats for all the participants in the front row, or front few rows. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Attire:** This is a big moment for your group of youth, so 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.
 - **Decor:** A little decoration goes a long way to make these young people feel special. A few balloons, streamers, and flowers will help solidify the significance of this ceremony.
 - **Program:** In your program you should include the schedule of the program, names and blurbs from all the participants, the Il Shim pledge, the Community pledge, and any acknowledgements for people who helped make Il Shim possible this year. (An editable template and PowerPoint for projection are included in the Google Drive).
 - **Photos:** Make sure you have someone to take photos of the ceremony and particularly photos of the parents and youth. Make these photos available to the families after the ceremony is complete.
 - **Refreshments:** Prepare refreshments to offer at the conclusion of the ceremony to encourage fellowship.
1. **Songs:** Sing 3 congregational songs to set the spirit for the graduation. If you have Il Shim participants who are musical, this would be a good opportunity for them to plug in.
 2. **Prayer:** Offer a prayer to start the graduation.
 3. **Message:** Have one of the Il Shim leaders give a 15-minute message on the value of Il Shim and how it will impact the lives of the youth from this point forward.
 4. **Ring Ceremony:**

Depending on the size of your group, you can have however many families come up at a time that will fit on stage. When they are called the parents/guardians and youth should stand in front of the congregation. You may want to have volunteers help arrange the families so that it looks neat.

 - **Parent Vow:** Have the parents read their pre-written vow to their children privately (no microphone).
 - **Youth Vow:** Have the youth read their pre-written vow to their parents privately (no microphone).
 - **Ring Ceremony:** The father's will receive the "true love waits" ring from the pastor with a half bow, then the mother's will receive the ring from their husbands with a half bow, and the child will then receive the ring

from their mother with a half bow. If only one guardian is in attendance, they will receive the ring for the pastor and present it to the child.

- Hugs & Photos: The audience should applaud and photos can be taken of each family.
5. **Participant Pledge:** The youth should return to their seats but remain standing and face the congregation. The MC should lead the youth in reading the Il Shim Pledge in unison.
- *I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.*
 - *I will strive to inherit the Unificationist traditions of honoring True Parents, upholding the value of the Blessing by maintaining my sexual purity until the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.*
 - *I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.*
 - *I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.*
6. **Community Pledge:** The MC should direct the audience to stand up and lead them in reading the community pledge.
- *We promise to be examples of healthy relationships with God, True Parents, and our Families through our daily habits and testimony.*
 - *We will strive to create an atmosphere of love and encouragement as you grow and prepare for your future life as a Blessed Family.*
 - *We commit to making space for you to be involved in our community so that you can express your God-given passions and talents.*
 - *We believe in you, trust you, and are very excited to see the things you will accomplish!*
7. **Prayer:** A closing prayer of blessing should be offered upon the Il Shim graduates.
8. **Mansei:** Explain what *mansei* means - ten thousand years. We shout it out as a cheer to hope for success for many years to come. Then, give three cheers of mansei should be offered.
9. **Recession:** The youth should leave the room together before the congregation does. You can also play graduation music in the background as they leave to signify the importance of this occasion. After exiting the room, it would be a good time to take group photos.
10. **Refreshments:** Allow time for refreshments and fellowship at the conclusion of the ceremony.