

Winter Workshops in the USA

Michael Balcomb
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Winter Workshops are a chance for communities to converge on their spiritual journey, build close relationships and learn from one another. All around the United States this holiday season, young Unificationists, and occasionally entire families, gathered together to reflect, celebrate and prepare for the New Year. Through reflections, sharing, goal setting and creative activities, participants of all ages took the time to deepen their faith and fellowship with others and start the year off with momentum. Here are some of the highlights from across the country.

Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C.

Sixty people participated in the District 1 annual High School Winter Workshop. The theme this year was “Our Fight, My Promise,” which focused on what it means to be a young Unificationist. The very open group of young people allowed for an intimate experience which let the participants go deep and make lasting connections. By the end of the workshop they were able to make strong promises to tackle the new year for God and True Parents!

New York and New Jersey

New York and New Jersey’s workshop asked participants to reflect on “Where am I in life right now, and where do I want to go?” Much of the activities and talk focused upon self-awareness as well as goal setting. The group also focused on some of the collective goals of Unificationists around the world, specifically Vision 2020.

Pennsylvania

The Winter Workshop at Camp Innabah in eastern Pennsylvania was an exciting family affair. From newborns to grandparents, there was a place for everyone. Every morning each age group received education based on the workshop’s theme, “Manifest Your Dream.” In the afternoon and evenings, participants took part in activities for the whole family. The group welcomed in the new year with testimonies, musical performances and a bonfire at midnight. Additional families joined the celebration on New Year’s Day with a potluck meal and talent show.

New England

The theme for New England’s annual Winter Workshop was “Emerge.” The workshop was designed to encourage participants to create a foundation for their life of faith. Organizers said they hoped that by giving each student the space to explore different faiths, cultures and traditions, they would be able to take ownership of their own relationship with God and establish a more clear identity as young

Unificationists. Through presentations, activities, music and fellowship, the staff worked to help each participant feel as if they could truly emerge into their life with full force!



Southern States

In Georgia, participants at the Winter Workshop engaged in a Divine Principle forum with small group discussions. Thirty participants, ranging in age from 11 to 19, and an additional 14 staff members attended from North Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Alabama.

The main goal of the workshop was to give participants the tools needed to continue on their spiritual growth journey and be strong in a society that has a lot of negative influences. The forum sought to give young participants the same excitement that their parents first had in reading the Divine Principle and allowed the youth to connect with their parents through deeper understanding.

There was also a lot of time to reflect on the past year and figure out what they would like to achieve in the future. Many determined to have better relationships with siblings and parents, and be more aware of other people's emotions. Participants heard talks on how to make steps toward long-term goals and overcoming personal barriers. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with some even asking for similar workshops throughout the year.

Camp KOHOE: Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana

At Camp KOHOE, participants were asked to "Look Up." The theme was a call to get away from social media and technology, to look at the world around them and appreciate the relationships and blessings they have been given. Sixteen staff and 56 participants spent December 28 to 31 together. The staff had met a day prior to prepare internally and discuss their goals, rules and role expectations. Each co-ed team was made up of about seven high school participants and had two team leaders. Lectures were given by Toby Gullery, pastor at the Indianapolis Family Church. Much time was spent on reflection and making goals. Other exciting activities included ice skating and making gingerbread houses.

Minneapolis

Thirty-five young Unificationists from all over the Midwest came to attend the Winter Workshop in Minneapolis. Their theme was "Ownership—Owning Our Life of Faith and Our Relationship with God." The three days were an opportunity to reflect and share, as well as to bond and have fun as a family.

The first night was an activity-filled family game night to break the ice. Other group activities throughout the workshop included bowling, ice skating, a movie night and a talent show. There was guidance on ownership, integrity and personal testimonies of growing a life of faith. In addition, there were activities that allowed participants to connect with each other and share their personal experiences as well as new goals and determinations for 2015.

Washington

Washington state's workshop centered on the theme "Prayer: My Life Is a Gift." The three-day workshop was organized into four guiding themes of gratitude, repentance, resolution and redetermination. It was a

time of fellowship with communities from Oregon and Washington and also a time of letting go of baggage as the participants burned repentance letters around a fire pit. Participants created dream boards, watched each other's skits and set S.M.A.R.T. goals together.

California

The NorCal Winter Workshop was an empowering experience. The theme of the workshop was "I God This." Through vulnerability, affirmation, support and introspective activities, participants gained a deeper understanding of how God sees them. The experience helped them let go of negative self-perceptions and connect with God's viewpoint of themselves and each other. Many participants said the workshop was the best yet, and for many it also helped them gain confidence to change their life direction in a positive way.

Arizona

The workshop on December 6 for the Arizona community was very impactful. Participants talked in depth about their relationships with their parents and how to build a relationship with one another. The workshop had 13 participants engage in activities that included "finding your compass," connecting with others and preparation for the Holy Marriage Blessing.