

This year's Embodying Principles in Culture (EPIC) workshop in Gloucester, MA

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A total of 35 youth from across the east coast attended this year's Embodying Principles in Culture (EPIC) workshop, which took place from July 7 to 20 in Gloucester, MA. EPIC is a grass-roots faith education organization for high school-aged students. Through a combination of Divine Principle lectures, group discussions, testimonies, and even youth-led presentations, participants are empowered to truly own their faith, develop personal connections with God, and gain a deeper understanding of True Parents.

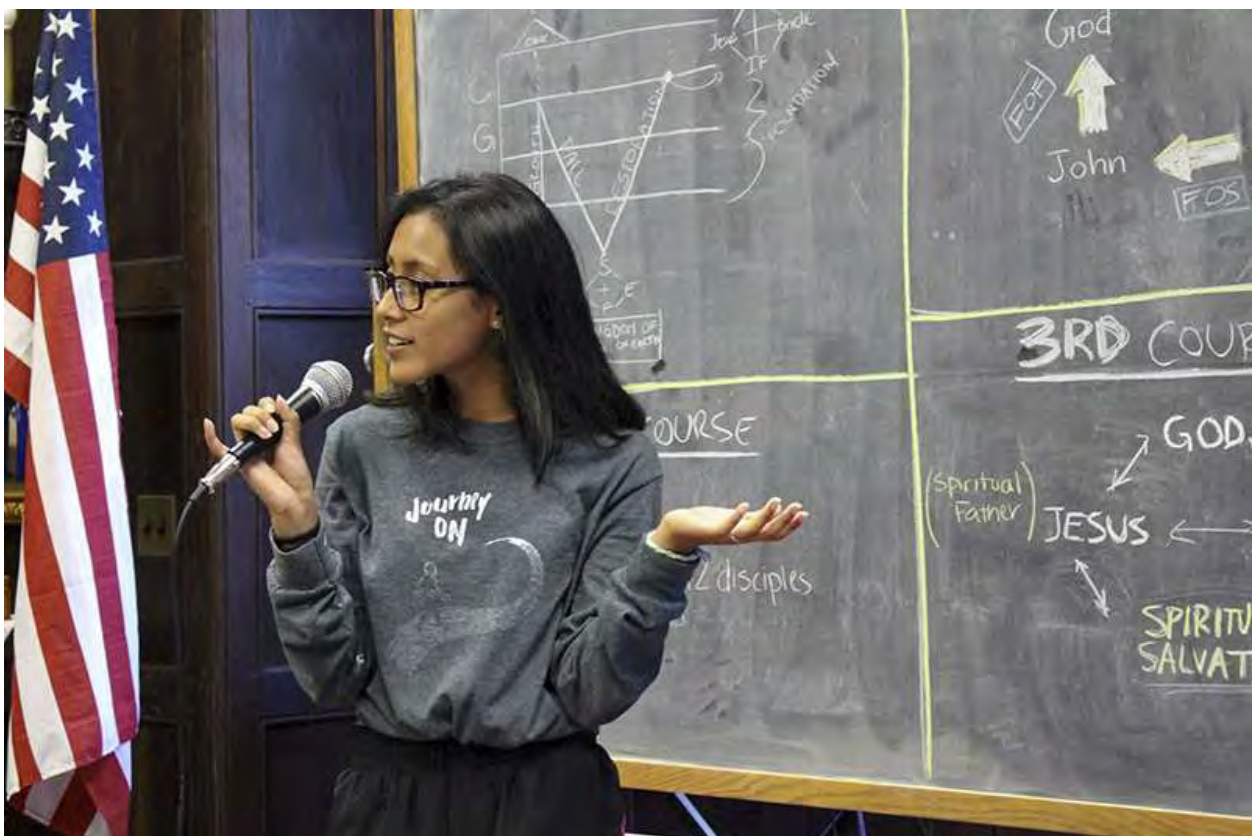


This year's lecturers included young Unificationists Sunhyn Miller and Miyoung Eaton, and young-at-heart Unificationists Rev. Wayne Miller and Dr. Frank Kaufmann. The participants learned not just Divine Principle, but also about the personal experiences of each of the staff, as well as major world religions. In addition to the lecturers, the participants were joined by workshop parents Joe Leonard and Sara Melchiorre, who served as spiritual anchors and mentors.



What makes EPIC truly special is that the young people take ownership over their faith by giving their own Divine Principle presentations. Throughout the workshop, the high school students were encouraged to ask as many questions as they wanted about the content, and to seek answers from the original text. Then, they each chose a section to lecture, practicing many times before finally presenting to their peers.

During the lecture competition, participants rated one another on four criteria, including logic, presentation, spiritual power and heart. The highest rated presenters were asked to speak in front of the whole workshop, and three winners were chosen.



When they weren't studying the Divine Principle or learning to do public speaking, the participants

engaged in sports, team-building exercises, swimming, and game shows. During some especially meaningful nights, they prayed with one another, shared deeply with one another, and participated in praise and worship.



This year, EPIC added the education of world religions to the curriculum in order to help the high schoolers understand people from different religious cultures and to see how the Divine Principle is alive in the doctrine of world religions. As part of the education, each person visited a mosque and attended a Christian Hillsong service in Boston. For most, it was the first intimate exposure to other religions.

Dr. Frank Kaufmann concluded the workshop by explaining how the content learned is relevant to the work of True Parents, and how young Unificationists can apply that content to their daily lives. A lovely graduation ceremony followed, which parents attended with their children.

