

FFWPU USA's District Level Winter Youth Workshops Brighten December 2019

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District-wide and local youth workshops took place across the country in late December 2019, surrounding the Peace Starts With Me Clergy Rally on December 28.



Northeast and Midwest: Evolve

An air of excitement and anticipation filled the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) as more than 400 middle schoolers, high schoolers, and staff members, coming from all over the Northeast and Midwest, gathered on December 27 in Barrytown, New York for a six-day workshop under the theme "Evolve." The workshop gave participants the opportunity to enhance their understanding of God and True Parents, an affectionate term used when referring to Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and her late husband Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, co-founders of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification

(FFWPU), and take their faith to the next level.

On Saturday, December 28, both the Middle and High School Workshops left early to get on a bus to Newark, New Jersey for the [Peace Starts With Me Clergy Rally](#) to hear the Mother of Peace, Dr. Moon, speak and perform the "Tongil" dance alongside [Young Tribe workshop](#) participants. Despite limited time to practice, participants gave everything to the performance and enjoyed the overall experience. Following the rally, the group returned to UTS to continue the remainder of the workshop.



The middle school group focused primarily on learning about and building a relationship with Jesus and True Parents, designating a day for both Rev. Moon and Dr. Moon. Participants connected to Jesus through praise and worship music, Denthew Learey, assistant pastor of Belvedere Family Church, shared about his experience at the [Clergy Rally celebration](#) at East Garden, conveying the heart and love of Dr. Moon, and Hiroshi Suzuki, a local Unificationist, shared about Rev. Moon's love for his sons.

The high school group focused on finding one aspect of True Parents that they could connect to and had discussions about how to grow and change substantially by building a relationship with both God and True Parents. The workshop featured two guest speakers -- Andy Morris, a Unificationist from the Belvedere Family Church community, who spoke about the value of True Parents' efforts for global peace and his relationship with the Unification movement, and Margaret Repke, a Generation Peace Academy (GPA) staff member.

Then, on New Year's Eve, both the middle and high school groups reconvened for a midnight candlelight prayer offered by Rev. Demian Dunkley, president of FFWPU-USA, to welcome in the new year. The workshop concluded the next day with sports, a talent show and a game of yut.

Although many staff members felt the workshop was at times a little hectic, everyone's support and willingness to adapt to last-minute changes made the experience incredible and unforgettable for staff and participants alike.

Southeast: I Know My Roots



More than 40 young Unificationists joined the Southeast winter workshop held at Camp Pecometh in Centreville, Maryland from December 27 to January 1. Under the theme "I Know My Roots," the workshop focused on helping youth to understand, connect and find gratitude for their spiritual and physical roots.



Each day of the workshop was structured around a particular theme which guided the lectures and activities: understanding the life and heart Jesus, understanding the mission of True Parents and elder Unificationists, and, of course, family roots. The first day began with an outing in which participants were challenged to go to a city in teams and complete team-bonding challenges. Over the course of the workshop, participants heard from Father Bayo Adrien, pastor of the Richmond Family Church in Virginia, about Christianity, and many elder Unificationists shared their personal experiences with True Parents.

On the day of the rally, the Southeast workshop group also traveled to Newark for the [Peace Starts With Me Clergy Rally](#). For some participants, it was their first time attending a rally or seeing Dr. Moon in person, which many said was a holistic experience.

The workshop concluded in Maryland with a New Year's celebration where everyone connected as a community, reflected on the workshop and came up with commitments for the new year.

West: Los Angeles: Hyojeong Unleashed



The Los Angeles Family Church hosted a middle and high school winter workshop called "Hyojeong Unleashed" from December 28 to 31. The goal of the program was to help participants boldly embrace and share the culture of Hyojeong and True Parents.

The workshop featured testimonies about Dr. Moon, personalized Divine Principle study groups and discussions, and a watch party for the [Peace Starts With Me Clergy Rally](#) on December 28. There were also many opportunities for participants to have fun and bond with each other through activities like capture the flag, escape rooms and an evening visit to see the Los Angeles Zoo Lights.

Bay Area: Winter Workshop 2019



The Bay Area Family Church Youth Ministry held its Winter workshop at the Bay Area Family Church in San Leandro, California from December 27 to December 29. More than 50 participants, staff and volunteers attended the workshop, which, under the theme "My Offering," empowered each participant to understand their unique value and the significance of offering their gifts to God.



The three days each centered on a different aspect of the theme. The first day focused on introducing the concept of "My Offering," connecting with one another as a family and reflecting on the past year. This was accomplished through a number of icebreakers, activities, lectures and group discussions. The second day, which purposely coincided with the [Peace Starts With Me Clergy Rally](#), helped participants connect to the heart of Dr. Moon. A watch party of the rally was held for participants and many activities throughout the day were designed to help participants deepen their understanding of Dr. Moon and her global peace initiatives. The day concluded with a group outing to the ice rink, a 21-minute prayer, and quality team time.

Throughout the workshop, powerful lectures and testimonies were shared by staff members. The three-day workshop ended on a hopeful and joyful note, as participants shared their final reflections and testimonies from the weekend.