



II Shim Leader Packet
One Heart, One Mind

Hey there and welcome to the II Shim Team!

Let me start by saying a big THANK YOU for taking time out of your busy life and other commitments to invest in your younger brothers and sisters over the next 10 weeks! You are making a big impact on the experience of the II Shim participants this year. I **promise you won't regret it! II Shim is our faith's coming of age tradition and that's what you'll be helping these** youth do: come of age! The team who put together this curriculum has tried very hard to make it relevant, personal, and meaningful for young Unificationists. I hope that you find this curriculum is just that and much much more for you and your group of youth.

There is something so remarkable about having a group of youth whom you are working closely with for several weeks. A special closeness is formed because of the level of content and regularity of meeting. I remember my first time leading II Shim as a young Youth Pastor. I found that the more I invested my heart and soul in my group of girls, the deeper my personal experience became. I was surprised how much I enjoyed my time as a II Shim team member. By the time graduation came around I remember feeling like my group of girls were really my little sisters.

These youth are entering an important stage of adolescence, which is the transition between childhood and adulthood. Erik Erikson, a well-known psychologist, has cited this time period as an important time of identity formation which means they are trying to answer the question, **“Who am I?” This important quest coupled with a ton of physical and emotional changes mean that these youth are going through a lot. It's important to keep this in mind while you work** closely with them.

You are taking part of a very important and formative experience for your II Shim participants. **It's a once** in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of building a foundation for their development. They will remember this experience forever. If they choose to raise their children in our faith they will tell their children about their II Shim leaders. And that means they will be telling their children about you!

That may sound like a lot of pressure, but don't worry! You are going to do GREAT! The fact that you have volunteered your time means God is ready to work through you. Here are a few tips that may help you be even more successful:

- Let God work. Before each session take a few minutes to prepare yourself spiritually so that Heavenly Parent can truly work through you and guide sessions as needed.
- Come prepared to sessions. Take time the night before to review what you are teaching so that you are ready to be a great facilitator.
- Do the readings and homework yourself. The best leader is the best participant. Model the behavior you want to see in your youth by doing the work yourself. You will find a greater ability to relate to their experience as a result.
- Communicate with Parents. Let them know how sessions are going and encourage them to continue their participation at home. They are what makes or breaks a participant's experience during II Shim!

- Use small groups. Small groups are the greatest way to make an impact in the lives of these young people. If you have a large group try to split them into groups of no larger than 10 to facilitate this program. You may also want to consider how you are splitting them up such as by gender, by age, etc.
- Make it personal for you and for them. Get to know these youth on a personal level and let them get to know you. Allowing this to happen will also allow for more sincere investment in the program from your group!

On a practical note, try to keep good communication and follow-up with the parents of the youth **in this year's program. They will get their own parent packet, but it's a good idea to send them weekly e-mail reminders with the homework and the "parent tips" listed** in the parent packet. You may even need to talk to them at church or make a phone call. This experience is dependent upon the involvement of parents, and some parents may need more encouragement than others.

Once again, thank you so much for being a part of this experience. I'm confident that you and your youth will have a fantastic and transformative time together. If you ever need more help please use our Youth Ministry website as a resource: ym.familyfed.org.

God bless you and your youth!

Sincerely,

Kaeleigh Moffitt
National Youth Ministry Coordinator

Session 1: All About II Shim!

Supplies for this session: Blanket, II Shim Packets, Notebooks, Pens, Decorative supplies, Index Cards

1. Introduce the II Shim Staff (5 minutes)

You are going to be spending the next 10 weeks with these incredible youth and here's your chance to make a great first impression. Keep introductions simple and fun and remember that the more outgoing you are, the more comfortable the youth you are working with will be.

Here are some points to consider when introducing yourself:

- Your Name
 - What you are doing in your life right now (school, work, matching/blessing, etc.)
 - Remember that the parents are entrusting their children with you.
 - Why you decided to be a II Shim leader
 - What you remember about your experience in II Shim
 - Why you wanted to help with II Shim this year
2. Play an Icebreaker: (15 minutes)

All new groups of people need to break the ice and fun is the perfect way to do that. Make sure everyone has introduced their names to the group and then lead them through a fun name game.

Here's a simple game you can play, and all you need is a blanket!

Blanket Name Game

- Split your youth into two groups and have them sit on the floor facing each other.
 - Have two people hold up a blanket between the two groups so each team cannot see each other.
 - Ask each group to pick on member of their team to sit in front of the blanket.
 - Drop the blanket on the count of three.
 - **Whoever says the other person's name first wins that round. And the loser has to** join the other team.
 - Play until one team wins or everyone has had enough. Presentation of past II Shim programs (photos and videos, and testimonies from prior participants)
3. II Shim Session Reading (10 minutes)
 - **Read through the "Session 1" Reading.**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren't listening to one person's voice** the whole time.
 4. Discussion (10 minutes)

Share the answer to the following question in a large group. Make sure each person has a chance to answer and acknowledge them for sharing.

 - What aspect of the II Shim Program are you most interested in and why?
 5. Personalize II Shim Journals (10 minutes)
 - Hand out journals to all of the youth and take some time to personalize or decorate the journals.

- The idea is that by personalizing their notebooks they will be more invested in the use of it through II Shim.
 - Try to choose decorative options that would intrigue your group of youth. Perhaps even consider printing out some photos of them to put on the front of their journal.
 - You can laminate the outside of their journals by using contact paper on top of their creations.
6. Personal Reflection (7 minutes)
- Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
- What is your relationship with God like right now?
 - What is your understanding of the Unificationist faith?
 - What is your relationship like with your parents right now?
 - In what ways are you involved in our church community right now?
7. Activity: Goal Setting (10 minutes)
- Now that the youth have had time to reflect on some things they would like to work on during their time in II Shim, ask them to come up with a written goal for each of the following areas:
 - Relationship with God
 - Understanding of our Faith
 - Relationship with your Parents
 - Involvement in the Church
 - Have them write their goals on a large index card nicely and tape it to the inside of their II Shim Notebook as a reminder of what they are hoping to achieve during II Shim.
 - Encourage them to keep these goals in mind each week.
8. This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)
- Go over the packet with your parents
 - Write down any questions you have
9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)
- Offer a closing prayer and invite God to be part of the participants journey through II Shim.

Session 1 Reading: All About Il Shim!

Hello and welcome to the Il Shim Program! We are so excited for you to take part in this incredible journey over the next 10 weeks! This program is designed for YOU and we hope that you will find it valuable and meaningful in deepening your faith in God, True Parents and our Community, growing your relationship with your parents and finding ways to get involved that inspire you.

As a young Unificationist you may find it challenging to understand the faith of your parents and older brothers and sisters. That's **normal! This time of your life should be about making your** faith something unique and personal to you. This is a time for you to figure out what you believe, why you believe it, and what you are going to do about it. We hope that the Il Shim program serves as a foundation for you to do just that.

“Il Shim” in Korean translates to “One Heart” or “One Heart and Mind.” This term dates back to when True Father was released from Danbury prison. On that day, Father conducted a **ceremony called “Il Seung Il” or “Day of One Victory.” It was during that ceremony that True** Parents declared the beginning of the period of responsibility for young Unificationists. In 1989, **True Parents also conducted an “Il Shim” ceremony to proclaim the total unity between** Heavenly Parent and True Parents as well as the inheritance of this unity by the children. True Parents hoped that the True Children would inherit this unity, carry on the traditions True Parents have laid out, and become the people God can live joyfully through. In keeping with the spirit of this original ceremony, we have adopted the Il Shim ceremony for the purpose of supporting young Unificationists in taking ownership over their faith, relationship and life.

We hope that the Il Shim program will help you in these four areas of your life:

- Growing your Life of Faith by supporting you in creating a unique relationship with God and discovering tools to support that relationship.
- Deepening your Understanding of Unificationist Traditions by providing the resources for you to discover the value and significance of aspects of our faith such as True Parents, abstinence before marriage, the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.
- Developing your Relationship with your Parents by encouraging opportunities to develop a healthy relationship with your parents through open communication and deepening trust.
- Discovering Ways to Get Involved by connecting you to the people who can help you find ways of serving and getting involved in your local community that are inspiring to you.

Each major faith has a significant ceremony that recognizes and promotes the inheritance of their faith tradition by their youth such as the Catholic Confirmation ceremony and the Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Il Shim Ceremony is quite similar to these ceremonies as it is meant to be a way to recognize your maturity and the growing responsibility you are taking in your life. This program is just the starting point for you to truly take ownership over your life of faith, your relationships, and your surrounding community.

Throughout the II Shim program you and your parents will complete many conditions of faith and will also study the tenants of our faith. We hope that through your study you will find that our Unificationists faith is something truly valuable and worth committing to. The graduation ceremony is meant to highlight this incredible investment you and your family have made as well as recognize your commitment to continuing your path of spiritual growth. The ceremony is an opportunity for you to make a new beginning and a new commitment in front of God, True Parents, and your own family and community.

Please read through the requirements and schedule of the next 10 weeks so you will be prepared. You should also take a look at the II Shim Pledge so you know what you will be pledging before God, True Parents, your parents, and your community:

1. I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.
2. 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.
3. I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.
4. I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.

Please also know that your Heavenly Parent is eager to build a relationship with you. God is so excited to be able to deepen your relationship together throughout the course of this program. Your parents are also equally excited to deepen their relationship with you. The involvement of **your parents is an essential component of this program! Don't miss out on** these opportunities to hear their stories, inherit their life of faith and get to know them in a new way!

We sincerely hope and pray that as you continue your involvement in the II Shim Program you **will discover God's deep and boundless love for you as well** as the value of the traditions our True Parents have laid out for us. We pray that you will come to know how incredibly valuable you are and that you have very special role to play in our world!

Session 1: All About II Shim for Parents

Supplies for this session: II Shim Packets, Pens, paper pads, computer/screen to show powerpoints/photos/videos, copies of articles for parent and child communication

1. Opening Song (3 minutes)
Start the session with a holy song to prepare a holy environment.
2. Opening prayer (2 minutes)
Have an II Shim Staff member offer an opening prayer to invite God's presence into the session.
3. Introduce the II Shim Staff (5 minutes)
While you have the honor of spending the next 10 weeks with the children of these **parents, it's important to remember that these parents spend much more time with their children than you do and will thus have much more of an impact on their experience in II Shim.** The role of II Shim staff in this program is like a teacher; you may teach many great things during the sessions and workshops, however, the real work happens at home **with the follow up and habit formation. When introducing yourself it's important to make this point clear and focus on supporting the development of the parent and child relationship.**
Here are some points to consider when introducing yourself:
 - Your Name
 - What you are doing in your life right now (school, work, matching/blessing, etc.)
 - Remember that the parents are entrusting their children with you.
 - Why you decided to be a II Shim leader
4. Presentation of past II Shim programs (5 minutes)
 - Share photos, videos, and/or testimonies from prior participants and staff who have completed the II Shim program.
 - This will help parents understand the value of the program and what the end goal will be.
5. Read the Introductory Letter (10 minutes)
 - **Read through the first session "Introductory Letter."**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the parents aren't listening to one person's voice the whole time.**
6. Go Over the General and Home Study Packet (10 minutes)
 - Home Study Packet:
 - Explain: Your packet supplements the in-class study topics. The questions and assignments after each study topic should be completed together as parents and children.
 - Perform a short **role-play scenario in which a "parent" and "child" do the homework questions together.** This is an important opportunity to model how to create a safe and open environment for youth to talk to their parents.

1. **Use the question “Who is God to you” to demonstrate an effective communication between a parent and child about this topic.**
- o Program Requirements:
 - Youth must attend all 9 in-class sessions (which includes a 2-day retreat) as well as the graduation ceremony.
 - They are allowed to miss up to 2 in class sessions as long as an instructor can provide a makeup session. If a participant needs to miss more than 2 in class sessions, they will be asked to sign up for II Shim next year instead.
 - All homework must be completed with parents on a weekly basis.
7. **Understanding Your Teen (10 minutes)**

This part of the session is an opportunity to set the stage for the many changes and pressures these teens are going through. As you go through some of these topics it might be a good idea to have a parent advisor present to help address some of these concerns.

 - **Social Impact of Adolescence:**
 - o Teens are transitioning from childhood to adulthood.
 - o In this period, teens struggle between their need to stand out, and their need to belong.
 - o **They have a strong desire to belong to a group, but also don’t want to be defined by expectations of others.**
 - o They may experiment with different roles and personas in an attempt to discover their true identity.
 - **The Internet & Social Media:**
 - o Teens in this day and age have grown up with access to the internet from a very young age.
 - o Most teens in middle school are on one of the following social media websites and social apps (you may want to explain what these websites **are in parents don’t know**):
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Snapchat
 - YouTube
 - Vine
 - o Even without meaning to, teens of this generation are exposed to online pornography. These images and experiences are deeply ingrained and impact their perception of love, intimacy, sex, and the Blessing.
 - o Here are some statistics to mention, you can easily look up more recent statistics on these issues if you like:
 - 47% of high school students in the U.S. have had sexual intercourse (<http://www.statista.com/topics/1063/teenagers/>)
 - 20.1% of high school students in the U.S. were bullied (<http://www.statista.com/topics/1063/teenagers/>)
 - In 2010, the average teenager sends 3,339 texts per month. This number is increasing

(<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2010/u-s-teen-mobile-report-calling-yesterday-texting-today-using-apps-tomorrow.html>)

- 93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to Internet porn before the age of 18. (<http://www.covenanteyes.com/2010/08/19/teens-and-porn-10-stats-your-need-to-know/>)
- **Today's teens spend more than 7.5 hours a day consuming media:** T.V., music, surfing the web, social media, video games, etc. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/postlive/teens-are-spending-more-time-consuming-media-on-mobile-devices/2013/03/12/309bb242-8689-11e2-98a3-b3db6b9ac586_story.html)

- What can we do about it?
 - True Parents have taught us the incredible value of the family as the school of love. This is meant to be a place where we learn how to have healthy relationships.
 - The most important thing we can do is build an open and honest relationship with our children.
 - Even though it may be difficult, we need to have the challenging discussions with our children. Otherwise, they will learn about the most important areas of life from the internet or their friends.
 - We hope that II Shim serves as a foundation to build this type of relationship so that you and your child can continue communicating into their adulthood.

8. Communication with Teenagers (15 minutes)

Separate the parents into small groups and discuss these three points. Ask one person from each group to take notes and report to the larger group at the conclusion of the discussion.

- How do you open up to your child and how does he/she open up to you?
- How do you talk to your child about sexuality?
- How do you help your child develop a relationship with God?
- Reference Parent Articles that are located in the Parent Packet. These have some helpful tips for communicating with teens.

9. Answer Questions & Hand Out Articles

- Answer any questions the parents may have regarding II Shim and the requirements.

10. Closing prayer

- Ask a parent to offer a closing prayer for the session.

Parents Introductory Letter

Hello and welcome to the II Shim Program! We are so excited for you to take part in this incredible journey over the next 10 weeks! This program is designed for your child and we hope **that you will find it valuable and meaningful in deepening your child's faith in God, True Parents**

and our Community, growing his/her relationship with you and finding ways to get involved that inspire your child.

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We hope that the Il Shim program will help your child in these four areas of their life:

- Growing their Life of Faith by supporting your child in creating a unique relationship with God and discovering tools to support that relationship.
- Deepening their Understanding of Unificationist Traditions by providing the resources for your child to discover the value and significance of aspects of our faith such as True Parents, abstinence before marriage, the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.
- Developing their Relationship with you by encouraging opportunities to develop a healthy relationship with you through open communication and deepening trust.
- Discovering Ways to Get Involved by connecting your child to the people who can help them find ways of serving and getting involved in your local community that are inspiring to them.

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Throughout the Il Shim program you and your children will complete many conditions of faith and will also study the tenants of our faith. We hope that through their study they will find that our Unificationists faith is something truly valuable and worth committing to. The graduation ceremony is meant to highlight this incredible investment you and your family have made as **well as recognize your child’s commitment to continuing their path of spiritual growth. The** ceremony is an opportunity for your child to make a new beginning and a new commitment in front of God, True Parents, and their own family and community.

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3. I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.
4. I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.

Each child will have a unique experience throughout the II Shim Program. Some may take it **more seriously than others, and that's ok. II Shim is not meant to be a quick fix for any youth. It** is simply a foundation and framework for you and your child to navigate through these very important topics at a level that is appropriate for them. Your child is just beginning a life journey **of discovering who they are and what they believe in. Don't worry if they don't understand** everything as deeply as you would like them to. They will get there one day! While the II Shim leaders are very important in this process, we want to stress the significance of parental involvement throughout the program. No one knows your children better than you and this program is meant to highlight your incredible investment. You are the main educators of this program at home, and we are here to support you!

We sincerely hope and pray that as you continue your involvement in the II Shim Program your family will become even closer together as you support your child and go through all the requirements of the II Shim program.

Talking With Teens -- Tips for Better Communication

Parents and teens can bridge the communication gap with a little patience and a healthy measure of R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Here are 6 tips for parents and 6 for teenagers.

By: Neil Osterweil

A parent's view of speech development: it begins in infancy, blossoms in childhood, and stops dead in its tracks at adolescence.

A teenager's view of speech development: "My parents don't understand a word I'm saying." You don't need a degree in communications to know that parents and teenagers seem to spend more time talking at and past one another than to or with one another. Chalk it up to different agendas, the stress of daily life, or familiarity breeding contempt. Whatever the reason, adolescents and their folks are as good at making conversation as the construction crew at the Tower of Babel.

But with a little give and take, a lot of patience, and a healthy measure of R-E-S-P-E-C-T, parents and teens may be able to remove the roadblocks hindering two-way communication.

To help understand talking with teens, WebMD interviewed two experts in adolescent development: Laurence Steinberg, PhD, Distinguished University Professor and Laura H. Carnell Professor of Psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia; and Carol Maxym, PhD, who counsels families in Honolulu and Washington, D.C.

Good to Know

First, says Steinberg, parents need to recognize that "although your child doesn't have the same level of knowledge, information, wisdom or experience as you do, he or she has essentially the same logical tools and can see through logical fallacies and lapses in what's sensible."

In other words, the "do-it-because-I-said-so" approach to talking with teens doesn't work anymore. "They can't be bullied around by power-assertive statements by parents that aren't based on any kind of logical reality," Steinberg says.

Teenagers have exquisitely sensitive [lie] detectors, agrees Maxym, who counsels families of troubled adolescents in private practice. "Parents need to be emotionally authentic. Don't try to act as though you are angry when you're really not. Don't try to tell your child 'I'm really hurt when you don't go to school,' when what you really are is angry. Kids know their parents really well and pick up on it, and as soon as you as a parent become inauthentic, you've lost any chance of real communication," says Maxym.

Research also shows that "the big barrier is in how parents and teenagers define issues," If the parent sees a teen's messy room as a moral issue, and the teen sees it as a matter of choice, they may never reach a mutually satisfactory solution, says Steinberg.

What can you do to communicate better? Our experts offer these tips both parents and teenagers:

For Parents

1. Don't lecture your teen, have a conversation. When parents complain "my teenager doesn't want to talk to me," what they're really complaining about is "my teenager doesn't want to listen to me." Conversation involves at least two people, Steinberg emphasizes.
2. Don't attack. "The conversation between any two people will break down if one of the two is put on the defensive and made to feel he's being accused of something," says Steinberg.
3. Show respect for your teen's opinions. Teenagers can be surprisingly easy to talk with if the parents make it clear that they're listening to the teen's point of view.
4. Keep it short and simple. Maxym urges parents to remember what she calls the "50% rule": "Almost every parent says at least 50% more than he or she should. Shut up. Remember when you were a teen and your parents lectured at you? And you thought, 'Will you please stop; I already got the point!' Stop before your teen gets there."
5. Be yourself. Don't try to talk like your kids or their friends. "You're an adult, so be an adult," Maxym says.
6. Seize the moment. A spontaneous conversation in the car or at home late at night -- any time when you're not rushed -- can make for some of the warmest, most rewarding moments, Steinberg says. "I think for parents, one of the key parts of having good communication with kids is being around enough to capitalize on these moments that invariably don't come up when you expect them to."

5 Secrets for Communicating with Teenagers

By: Debbie Pincus

Does this sound familiar? Your teenage son is taking forever in the bathroom (again), but you need him to get ready so you can get to work on time. You're thinking, "How could I have raised such an inconsiderate kid? He's so disrespectful!" Meanwhile, your child is locked in the bathroom, consumed with his image in the mirror. He's thinking, "No way am I going to school with this pimple on my nose." Outside in the hallway, you start pounding on the door, yelling at him to hurry up. He screams, "God, you just don't understand! Leave me alone!" When he finally emerges, he gives you the silent treatment. Not only that, he's missed the bus, so you have to drive him to school. You end up late for work and completely overwhelmed, wondering, "Why doesn't my kid listen to me? Does he have to fight me on everything?"

Distance and explosiveness are often the only ways your teen knows how to communicate when things get intense—which of course only causes more conflict.

You and your teen: two different worlds, two different perspectives—and a giant disconnect that can make communicating a real mystery. As a therapist and the mother of three teenagers myself, I know firsthand that the more you push your kids, the more they get defensive and dig in their heels; they become **reactive in the form of explosiveness or shutting down. And they're thinking, "My parents don't have a clue, so what's the point of trying to explain myself? I'll just tune them out."** Clamming up or exploding are both ways your teenagers attempt to manage their stress and defend themselves. That's because distance and explosiveness are often the only

ways your teen knows how to communicate when things get intense—which of course only causes more conflict.

Here are 5 secrets that I've found to be really helpful personally for communicating with kids through the difficult adolescent years.

- 1. The secret to opening your child's ears: Here's a simple secret that will help you in everything you do with your teen: No matter how hard it might be, try to start all interactions with your child with understanding, even if you don't fully agree or even quite comprehend what they're talking about. Here's an example: Your teenage daughter is not doing her schoolwork, and instead is online with friends chatting. It drives you crazy because you're thinking, "If she fails another test, her average will go down and she'll never get into college. What kind of future will she have?" Your teen, on the other hand is thinking, "I have to get online and talk with Skyler. If we don't make up after the fight we had in the hall today, all the other girls will be against me and I'll have no one to hang out with at school tomorrow." Again, two different worlds. Try to start by saying, "I understand how difficult it is for you when you have a fight with one of your friends. I also know that you need to pass this test tomorrow. Schoolwork is your job and it's your responsibility to do it to the best of your abilities. Let's sit down and think of a good way you can manage your time tonight." Be sure not to say "I understand, but..." which will simply disqualify what you've just said. Start from a place of understanding, and try to put yourself in your child's shoes first before telling her what needs to change. I've found that doing this tends to "open kids' ears." Instead of feeling like they have to defend themselves against you, they actually listen.**
- 2. Take the emotionality out of the equation. Emotion is your enemy when you're trying to get through to your teen. Remind yourself that what he says and does is not a reflection on you. You may not like how he's behaving—or even how he's thinking—but keep your emotions out of it, even if his behavior impacts you. I'm not saying this is an easy thing to do; it's tough, but it's a skill you can learn just like any other. In fact, I tell parents to repeat this slogan to themselves before talking to their kids: "This is just like a business transaction; it's nothing personal." When you really think about it, there's no reason to be mad at your child for being himself. He may be making a poor choice, but the truth is, he might not yet have the skill set to make a better one. So your job is to help guide him to better choices so he can in turn develop a better skill set. When you realize what your job is as a parent, it will help you be less emotional. When you feel frustrated, remember, don't take it personally. Tell yourself that this is simply a problem to solve, and part of "parenting business as usual."**
- 3. Ask curious questions...not loaded questions. Ask your teen for his ideas and be collaborative. Let him see that you believe in him and that you're not mad at him for struggling in his life. When you let him see that you have faith in his abilities and he has the space to work things out on his own, you will begin to develop true confidence in him. Don't ask loaded questions that put your child on the defensive like, "Why can't you get up on time? What's wrong with you?" Instead, try opening a conversation with, "Eli, do you have any ideas for how you might get up on time?" If he says he doesn't know, offer a few of your own and ask which one would work for him. Let your teen know that his problems are his to solve. Don't step into his "box." Rather, you are there to help him**

figure out solutions—and to let him deal with the natural consequences of his behavior. Your goal is to help your child think for himself, which will in turn help him feel like he has some control over his world. Listen openly to what he says and ask him to think critically about each choice. What will work and what will be problematic about each decision? What would be the natural consequences of each choice—and how would he feel about dealing with that?

4. **Don't be needy; stand on your own two feet. Don't "need" your teen's cooperation,** validation, or good behavior. As soon as you need something from your child so that you can feel better, you have put yourself in a vulnerable position because he does not have to **give it to you. When you need something and don't get it, you will naturally try harder by** controlling and manipulating more. And your teen will become more and more defiant or passively compliant—neither of which is good.

The truth is, you don't need anyone else to prop you up. You can validate yourself and solve your own problems. So if your child is acting out, that's his problem. Your problem is to decide how you will choose to behave toward him. That's in your hands, not his. Ask yourself, "How do I want to act, no matter how he is acting? What can I put up with and what can't I?" Take back your power and say to yourself, "If my child is screaming at me, instead of needing him to stop, I can turn around and walk away and not engage." Let him know you won't talk with him until he can approach you with civility. Here's the truth: when you aren't trying to get your child to change or shape up, you will be able to think of better choices for yourself. And your child will be less defiant because he will have no one to resist. When you're not trying to control him and you're not reacting to him, he will have to wrestle with himself rather than with you.

5. **Don't do anything until you're both calm. Another rule of thumb is to avoid doing anything until you and your child have both calmed down. The fact is, you don't have to respond to your child when you are upset, or when your child is upset and in your face. You just don't. You can say nothing. You can take a few minutes or more if you need to.** When emotions have evened out, you can sit down and talk with him. It's never good to try to bring up a difficult subject or resolve a conflict in the heat of the moment. So if either you or your child is upset, pause and come back when you can address things in a calmer way.

If you attempt a conversation with your child and he's rude or out of line, that's when you have to hold on to yourself and make sure you don't get dragged into a fight. If your relationship with your child is such that it's impossible to have an open, respectful conversation at this point in time, remember that it's still your job to stay firmly planted. Have a slogan that you say to yourself like, "I'm not going there no matter what." If you can do that consistently, over time the baiting and antagonism should calm down. And don't feel badly if you get pulled back in occasionally—staying strong isn't easy. The good news is that the more you refuse to engage, the easier it will get to stay calm.

6.

Session 2: Your Heavenly Parent & You

Supplies for this session: Construction paper & markers.

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)
 - Welcome everyone to their second session!
 - Introduce what the session will be about:
 - Who our Heavenly Parent is
 - Having a relationship with God
 - Taking ownership over your spiritual life
 - Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A deeper understanding of God
 - **Idea's for how to build your relationship with God**
 - If you have members in your group that do not believe in God you will need to be sensitive as you go through each section. Some youth with this belief will be fine just following along, but if you have youth who are very adamant about their belief you will need to modify the session to include them. You can focus the discussion questions and activity on being intentional and improving your quality of life in that kind of scenario.
2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)
 - *Tongue Twisters*
 - Have participants find a partner
 - If there is an odd number staff should play too!
 - **Tell them they have to stare into their partner's soul**
 - Then tell them to say these tongue twisters *They should start laughing so it isn't awkward*
 - Blue Balloon
 - Toy Boat
 - Irish Wristwatch
 - Unique New York*
 - Red leather, yellow leather
 - **The Sixth Sick Sheik's Sixth Sheep is Sick**
 - One Smart Feller, he was Smart. Two Smart Fellers, they were Smart. Three Smart Fellers, all Felt Smart.
3. Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)
 - **Last week's homework was to go over** the II Shim packet and write down any questions that the youth or parents may have. Spend a few minutes answering the questions from their homework and making sure everyone knows what the requirements of the II Shim program are.
4. Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)
 - **Read through the "Session 2 Reading."**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.

- Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren't listening to one person's voice** the whole time.
5. Discussion: (15 minutes)
- Split into small groups or discuss as one large group. Make sure each person has an opportunity to share. The point of discussions is to allow each person to share their **personal thoughts and feelings on a topic, so no answer is right or wrong. It's a good idea** to acknowledge each person after sharing and thank them for having the courage to do so.
- Which characteristics of God do you appreciate most?
 - Where do you see God in the world?
 - What practices do you think would help you build a relationship with God?
6. Activity: Invitation for God (10 minutes)
- Give everyone a piece of paper and markers.
 - Ask everyone to think of something they are doing this week that God would like to enjoy with them. It can be anything from doing homework to eating a meal.
 - Then have everyone make an invitation for God with the supplies provided. They should answer the following questions on the invitation:
 - Who: (Who are you inviting?)
 - What: (What are you inviting them to?)
 - Where: (Where will this be taking place?)
 - When: (When will this be taking place?)
 - Why: (Why are you inviting them?)
 - Take a few minutes at the end of the activity to share your invitations with the group.
 - Encourage them to put these invitations somewhere that they can see regularly to remind them to invite God into their daily activities.
7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)
- Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
- **Consider the area's in your life that you feel the most joy, can you see or feel God's presence during these activities?**
 - What is one thing you can do this week to grow your relationship with God?
8. **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**
- Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Gerry Servito entitled “Creation- Who is God?”, http://dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/1863/ After watching the lecture, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - What is the “heart” of God?
 - What makes God a “personal God”?
 - How can our surroundings help us to understand God?
 - At the end of each day this week write down one way you saw or experienced **God/God's Love/Joy. It's ok if you are still figuring out where you stand with**

God. This journaling exercise is meant to be an opportunity to discover who God is and where you might find Him/Her.

- o Choose a song or a picture that reminds you of God and bring in the lyrics or photo to class next week.

9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

Offer a closing prayer focusing on developing our relationship with our Heavenly Parent **and recognizing God's presence in our lives.**

Session 2 Reading: Your Heavenly Parent and You

Who is God? What is God? Is God really there?

If you've ever asked yourself these questions you are not alone; having questions about God is a normal part of a life of faith. And if you haven't asked yourself these questions yet then now is a good time to think about them! The many religious groups that have developed over the course of history may differ in their practices of faith, however, they all agree on one thing: there is some type of higher power. **And that's what we call "God." While each person's relationship with God may be different we all have one thing in common: we are God's Children, and that makes God our Heavenly Parent.** As Unificationists we call God our Heavenly Parent because we recognize that God has the heart of both a father and a mother.

The pretty amazing thing about God is that we can spend an eternity exploring our relationship with Him/Her. There is no end to the pieces of God we can discover. A big part of that experience is that we are continually growing ourselves. Our relationship with God is a two way street, so that means God is responding to whatever we are going through and wherever we are at in our lives. So one day God may be supporting you in a big test you have coming up, and the **next day God may be helping you work out a fight you had with your sibling. It's the same God,** just a different situation in life. God relates to all of it and wants to be a part of all of it!

Because of God's invisible nature it can be difficult to think about what it means to build a relationship with our Heavenly Parent. The Divine Principle teaches us about God's nature through the Principles of Creation. In that chapter of Divine Principle we learn that God's heart behind creating the universe was joy. God wanted to have someone to love and laugh with, and that lead Him/Her to YOU! God loves you and loves all of His/Her children with the deepest love imaginable. I don't about you, but that sounds like someone I'd like to get to know!

God made each of us as unique representations of His/Her nature. That means each one of us will have a unique relationship with God. If God created the universe for the sake of joy, then the best place to start when building your relationship with God is there; where do you feel joy? Who or what makes you smile or happy? Where or when do you feel the most joy? **Is there a place that you feel "in your element," such as sports, music, or a subject in school? You may not realize it, but these are all places that God is most present in your life. God wants nothing more than for you to be truly happy, and He/She wants to experience that happiness with you!** It may take some time to figure out the ways that you relate best with God but you will get there, have

patience. **Perhaps you're not sure where to start? Here are a few suggestions to consider when finding the ways you experience God best:**

- Nature & Creation
- Sports, Music & The Arts
- Passion & Expression
- Holy Environments & Religious Traditions
- Family & Friends

Just like every relationship, your relationship with God requires active participation. Imagine **you had a friend that you loved very much. Now pretend that you've tried contacting them every day for the past month but they never returned your calls or messages. That's not very much of a relationship is it?** The same is true with God. While it may be hard to recognize for now, God is talking to you and reaching out to you every day. God is playing His/Her part in our relationship but we need to do the same. We need to set aside time everyday to talk to God, connect with God, and relate with God. Some people can do that through prayer, some can do it through taking a walk in nature, and some can do by taking care of others. The point is they all work, you just have to find what works for you!

Up until this point you have been following your parents lead as far as spirituality goes. And **that's great because it's important to inherit the spiritual foundation of our parents so that we can build our own life of faith. Now that you're a teenager, however, it's time for you to step up to the plate. It's a good idea to keep practicing your life of faith with your parents but now you can take it to the next level.** Try practicing your spirituality in your own time as well as the time you do so with your parents. Take your own initiative to talk to God or invite God into your activities. Say a prayer at the start and end of your day by yourself. If prayer is hard for you, try journaling to God. Try talking to people you respect about God. There are so many ways to start growing your life of faith. If you are able to take these kinds of steps in your spiritual life then your relationship with God will grow tremendously!

God is so excited for you to get to know each other on a deeper and more personal level. In our **current society God can feel so far away from us. But that was not God's desire. God created human beings so we could interact with our Heavenly Parent in every moment and in a natural way. And that's what it means to have a mature relationship with God.** For now we need time to practice and develop our spiritual life so that we can build up healthy habits. So enjoy the journey and discovery of your Heavenly Parent, He/She is pretty awesome!

Session 3: Your Family; Your School of Love

Supplies for this session: sticky notes or name tags.

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)
 - o Acknowledge the participants for their work thus far.

- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - The four realms of heart and how that applies to their life
 - Their relationship with their parents
 - Distractions to living a lifestyle of purity
 - Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A greater understanding of what love means, and how this greater understanding can lead to more fulfilling relationships
 - Steps to creating the kind of relationship that they would really love to have with their parents
2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)
- *Question Game*
 - Everyone stands in a circle
 - The youngest goes first by asking a question to their left
 - The next person then asks a question to their left as soon as person 1 finishes
 - Keep going in the circle
 - If someone hesitates, or answers a question they are out*
 - Keep going until there is a winner
 - *Questions **can't be repeated in a round until somebody gets out**
3. Review the Homework (10 minutes)
- Go over the answers to these questions regarding the DP Lecture they watched this week. Keep in mind that the youth may have a variety of answers. It may be a good idea to address these answers in a discussion format with you making the concluding points so everyone is on the same page.
 - **What is the “heart” of God?**
 - **What makes God a “personal God”?**
 - How can our surroundings help us to understand God?
 - This week the youth were to record a moment they saw or experienced God each day. Have each person share at least one highlight from this week.
 - Share which song or the photo the youth chose that they felt reminds them of God. They can either share a portion of the lyrics or why they feel moved by this song.
4. II Shim Session Reading (10 minutes)
- **Read through the “Session 3 Reading.”**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.
 - Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren't listening to one person's voice the whole time.**
5. Discussion: (15 minutes)
- Split into small groups or discuss as one large group. Make sure each person has an opportunity to share. The point of discussions is to allow each person to share their personal thoughts and feelings on a **topic, so no answer is right or wrong. It's a good idea**

to acknowledge each person after sharing and thank them for having the courage to do so.

- What is your favorite family tradition?
- What have you learned from being in the sibling realm of heart?
- What is one area of your life that you could be more understanding towards your parents?

6. Activity: Identifying Labels (15 minutes)

- Give each person two sticky notes or name tags.
- Ask everyone to make a list of all the labels they give their parents (each parent individually), both good and bad.
 - **It's a good idea to give an example of a label you have given to your parents in the past such as, "bossy" or "dorky."**
- Ask everyone to write down the most common label they give to each parent.
- Give everyone an opportunity to share about these two points either in small groups or in pairs:
 - What is the biggest label they have give for each parent?
 - How could your relationship with your parent change if they stopped labeling them that way?

7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.

- How is your relationship with your parents currently?
- How would you like your relationship with your parents to be?
- What can you do to be the son or daughter they want to be?

8. **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**

- Find a unique way to serve and/or take care of your parents this week. Make sure you have a chance to serve your mom and dad. You can serve each of them in different instances. Try to think from their point of view so you can find a service they will truly appreciate. Be ready to share about what you did and their reaction in class next week.
- Spend time interviewing your parents about their lives using the interview questions in your II Shim packet. Write down the answers to their questions.
- Read from the Cheon Seong Gyeong Book 5, Chapter 1, Section 4: The Family is the Base of Happiness (pages 489- 493). At the end of each paragraph share a summary with your parents about the meaning of that section.

9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

Offer a closing prayer focusing on opening up communication between parents and **children and learning to see from one another's viewpoint.**

Session 3 Reading: Your Family; Your School of Love

Our families are the people who help shape us into who we are and who we will become. As babies our parents teach us how to eat, use the bathroom and become self-sufficient. And as we get older we learn how to interact with others from both our parents and siblings. True Parents teach us that the family is the school of love in which we learn how to grow our hearts. And as Unificationists we believe that by working on the relationships within our family we will be able to also learn how to love all people in the world as an extension of our family.

True Parents have brought us the incredible knowledge of the Four Realms of Heart as the blueprint by which we are meant to grow and be able to love as God loves. You can think of the four realms as special classes that teach us how to grow a certain aspect of our heart. The four realms are represented through four stages of relationships that each human being goes through **in their family: children's love, sibling love, conjugal love, and parental love. The basic idea is** that as you get older you learn to become masters of love in each of these areas.

As youth, your job is to receive the love of your parents and return filial piety (love, respect, and honor) back to them. As siblings (and this includes friends along with your actual brothers and sisters) you learn camaraderie, teamwork, loyalty, and friendship. When you get married you experience romantic love, intimacy, and the process of achieving your dreams together. And **lastly when you become parents you learn what it means to love someone so much that there's** nothing they could do to stop you from loving them. Each of these realms should be conquered in sequential order, meaning you should ideally have a good relationship with your parents and siblings/friends before you get married. If we were to skip a realm without mastering it and then **jump into a new realm, it means we haven't grown our ability to love in that way and that will** impact us and those around us negatively. The realms are meant to build upon one another. We are meant to become a good husband and wife before becoming parents. Once we pass through all four realms we will have experienced all the types of relationships God designed for us. And ideally we will have grown our capacity to love so much so that we will have become like God.

While that is God's design, we, however, live in a world that is still reaching towards perfection. That means that many people haven't had the chance to master the different realms of heart. And that includes your parents! They are also still working on learning to love the way God does. **They've been at it for a while so they've made a lot of progress, but learning to love like God is** not an easy task to accomplish. They may not be perfect yet, but they are doing the best that they can. So try to give them a break sometimes, they are learning how to become the right parents **for you! After all, they've never been parents to you at this stage of your life.**

When you were conceived, your parents were so excited to meet you. They waited months and months until the day you arrived. And as you grew they eagerly awaited your first steps, first words, and your first day of school. They wiped your poopy butts, held you when you were afraid of the dark, and prayed for you as you became more independent. You may not always see it, but they love you so much. They are trying hard to balance being involved in your life while still

giving you the freedom you deserve. It's not an easy balance to strike, and each person's situations is unique. When communicating with your parents you've probably noticed that you are often coming from different points of view. That's normal and natural! And because of that your parents may say things that upset you. But their true intention is to help you be successful and happy; it's just that sometimes they don't know how to express that in a way you will receive it.

Here are some examples of what parents might say and what they actually mean. We call it our "Parent Dictionary Translation":

When They Say:	What were you thinking? Are you crazy? Why would you do something like that?	What are you doing watching T.V./playing on the computer? Did you do all of your homework?	I don't like those friends that you are hanging out with. You are getting too close to that boy or girl.
What They Mean Is:	I love you more than life itself and sometimes it makes me so mad that you don't make better choices.	You have so much potential. I want you to have a great future with unlimited possibilities and being responsible in school helps make a foundation for that.	I want you to think about the choices you make in life. We want you to find true love with your future spouse.

In our relationships with our parents it's common that we have built up some concepts about the type of people they are based on our experiences. We call this *labeling* people, and it can be both positive or negative. For instance, we might say my Mom is "cute" or my Dad is "close-minded." The problem with labeling people is that it limits our perspective of them. If we think our parent is a "bad listener," then we automatically don't want to talk to them. Our negative labels define our parents in a way that keeps them at a distance from us. But the truth about our parents is that they are changing and growing every day, just like we are. And if we keep labeling them a certain way we will never notice that they have actually changed and have become a good listener! In our society we tend to think our parents aren't cool or don't. In our society we tend to think our parents aren't cool and don't understand what it's like to live in this world. But that's not exactly true. We have to give them a chance to become the best parents that they can be and put down our labels for a while. They may not be as good at technology as you are, but they do know a thing or two about life!

A healthy relationship between parents and children requires two active parties. Your parents are trying to find the right ways to communicate and support you, and we should do the same! Here are some tips to consider to improve your communication with your parents:

- Think about the situation from your parents point of view. When they tell you not to do something ask yourself, "why don't they want me to do this?"
- Ease their concern with a solution you can commit to. If your parents are worried about you spending too much time with a boy or girl, talk to them about what safeguards you have in place to keep your relationship as just friends.

- **Listen to them, don't shut them out. If you feel strongly about a topic you should express yourself, but give your parents a chance to be heard as well.**
- Be kind with your words. If you are having a tough conversation be careful not to be insulting or criticizing. They are entitled to their own opinions as are you.
- **Focus on "I" statements such as "I feel like you're not understanding my point of view," instead of "you're not listening to me!"**

The beauty of families is that no matter what you go through, you will still be family! We will all go through our ups and downs in our relationships with our family members. Sometimes your brothers and sisters may drive you crazy, and sometimes you may be so happy to have them.

That's life with a family! Even though they may not be perfect, we're lucky to have them.

Parent Interview Questions

The intention of the interview is to get a deeper understanding of who your parents are and what is really important to them. Be open to the possibility that there is a lot of depth to your parents that you may not have seen quite yet, and that this is an opportunity to see more of that depth.

The way to gain the most from this interview is to really own it. You do not have to ask every question on this list. You are encouraged to create your own list of 5-8 questions. You are welcome to take questions from the list below that you think would be valuable to ask your parents, and you are welcome to create your own questions. You can interview your parents individually or together.

1. What were you like as a teenager?
2. What was your first impression of Dad/ Mom?
3. What is a moment where Dad/ Mom had a profound impact on you?
4. How has your view of life changed when you became a parent?
5. What was I like as a baby?
6. What is your favorite memory of you and me when I was growing up?
7. What was your life like before you joined the church?
8. What was your experience joining the church and why did you join?
9. What is a core belief or commitment that you live by?
10. What really inspires you these days?

Session 4: Becoming the Best “Me”

Supplies for this session: possible art supplies for making masks/weapons

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)
 - Welcome everyone to their fourth session and remind them about the retreat next weekend! They are half way through the II Shim program!
 - Introduce what the session will be about:
 - What it means to be a person of integrity
 - **How to balance God’s standard with true love in our society**
 - Becoming a person who can impact the world around them
 - Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A vision for the kind of person they want to become
 - An understanding of how our environment impacts us
 - A chance to discover a way to use your personal skills and passions to help others
2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Grade Your Week

 - Ask everyone to think about the past week and choose a letter grade for this week (A would mean they had a great week, C would mean they had an average week)
 - Ask them to share about why they chose this grade
3. Review the Homework (10 minutes)
 - Have everyone share one new thing they learned about their parents or something that really stuck with them during their interview.
 - Have everyone share the ways in which they served their parents and what their parents reaction was.
 - Reiterate the main point of the Hon Dok Hae Reading; a person cannot truly be happy without their family.
4. II Shim Session Reading (10 minutes)
 - **Read through the “Session 4 Reading.”**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.
 - Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren’t listening to one person’s voice the whole time.**
5. Discussion (10 minutes)
 - Who is someone you look up to and what do you admire about them?
 - When people talk about you, how do you want to be remembered? What can you do to become that type of person?
 - What is one of your greatest passions/interests, and how could you use that to impact the world around you either now or in the future?
6. Activity: Building the Best Habits (15 minutes)

- Tape 4 large pieces of paper on the wall and title them respectively: body, mind, heart, and spirit.
 - If you have a small group you may want to do this at a table with smaller papers instead
 - Explain to the youth that an important part of becoming the best version of ourselves is developing good habits that shape us into the types of people we want to be.
 - Ask everyone to write down things that they do in each of the four areas listed on the wall that help them be the best versions of themselves. Encourage them to be specific.
 - **If your youth are having a hard time give them some idea's to get them going.** Here are a few to begin with:
 - Body: Playing soccer
 - Mind: Reading books
 - Heart: Giving my Mom a massage
 - Spirit: Going to Youth Group
 - After 5-7 minutes have passed give the youth time to look at what was written on the wall and write it down in their notebooks.
 - In pairs ask the youth to share about one idea they saw on the wall that they would like to try themselves.
7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)
- Fill out this survey:
 - *If you agree with the statement, circle the highest number, lowest if you disagree
 - 1. I always do the right thing, even when it is costly or difficult 1-2-3-4-5
 - 2. I always put my best foot forward 1-2-3-4-5
 - 3. **I don't give into temptation** 1-2-3-4-5
 - 4. I always keep my promises 1-2-3-4-5
 - 5. Complete the statement: I think I am/ am not a person of integrity **because...**
 - What kinds of friends do you surround yourself with? Are they helping you **become a better "me"?**
 - Make a list of 3 things you can do this week to impact someone or something around you.
8. **This Week's Homework (5 minutes):**
- Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Gerry Servito entitled "**What is our Purpose?**", http://dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/creation-part-3/ After watching the lecture, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - What is indirect dominion and direct dominion/perfection?
 - Why did God give us freedom and responsibility?
 - **What are life and "death" elements** and how do they impact you?
 - Read from the Cheong Seon Gyeong, Book 12, Chapter 3, Section 2: High Noon Settlement and a Life of Resonance (pages 1310-1313). At the end of each paragraph share a summary with your parents about the meaning of that section.

- Use the list of 3 things you came up with during your reflection today to impact the world around you. Accomplish all 3 acts this week and write about what you did and how it impacted the world around you in your packet.
9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)
- Offer a prayer focusing on the potential and creativity of each youth and finding ways for them to impact the world around them.

Session 5 Reading: Becoming the Best “Me”

Think for a moment about someone in your life that you look up to. What is about them that makes you respect them and perhaps want to become like them? When we think about some of the well-known people in history who have impacted the world we see a few common qualities. And one of them is their unchanging pursuit of making the world a better place. When we hear stories of people who have overcome insurmountable odds and persevered to be **victorious we can't help but feel the tugs of our heart strings. Each of us wants to be part of that kind of story.** What if we could be remembered as someone who made a difference in the world? Is it even possible? If so, how?

Father Moon's personal motto for his life is “Before conquering the universe, I must first conquer myself.” Father Moon has done incredible things for God and for the world, so it's clear he knows what he's talking about. But what does it mean to “conquer myself”? It means to become a person of integrity. Having integrity means being a person who is honest and righteous. A person of integrity will do what they know is right even if other's don't agree and will follow their personal moral compass. Many people can talk about what it means to be a good person, but there aren't many people who practice what they preach. We need to become people who can match what they say with what they do.

It can be hard to practice being a person of integrity in our society. Perhaps your friends at school don't have the same values as you. **They can put you in a situation where you are being pressured to do or say something you don't want to. Have you ever felt your friends were pushing you to do something even though you felt it wasn't right? That's the effect of peer pressure. And it's not a healthy place to be. You should choose environments where you and your conscience can feel clear.** Your friends are some of the most influential people in your life, so it's important to surround yourself with the types of friends that help you become a better person, not the opposite. You have a choice with whom you surround yourself. If you feel like some of your **friends aren't good for you it's time to walk away. It may be hard to do at first, but in the end you'll be happier because of it.**

In our world it can be hard to stand up for something and that's why we have to practice integrity. But we also have to strike a balance between maintaining a standard of goodness and truly loving others as our brothers and sisters. We may not agree with the lifestyle choices of others, but that doesn't warrant treating them poorly or judging them. God's heart towards all of His/Her children is nothing but love. Even if God may want us to make different choices in our lives He/She gave us free will so that we could create the lives we want. God never judges us or holds things against us. And that's the ultimate standard with which we should hold ourselves up to. We should practice the same type of love towards the people in our lives.

If we can become people of true character who can balance integrity and love, we will also become the people who impact the world around us. We will become the people that others look up to and and aspire to be. We will become the people who can create Cheon Il Guk on earth. **True Parents have taught us that we should become “owners of Cheon Il Guk.” An owner is**

someone who takes responsibility of something. If you own a car, you take care of it. You fill it **up with gas when it's empty, you get oil changes regularly, you clean it, and maintain all of its parts so it runs well.** **Becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk means we take care of all its' parts so it runs well.** If our physical environment is covered with littered, we clean it up. If the people in **our environment aren't treating each other with love and respect, we speak up.** **If someone is hurting, we lend a helping hand.** When our conscience urges us about a particular situation, we do something about it.

One of the most awesome parts of becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk is that we get the chance to focus on our talents and interests. Each of us has some unique passions and skills that we have developed over the years. Some of you may have a subject in school that you excel in or really enjoy. Some of you may have a passion for sports, technology, music, or one of your hobbies. These are all important parts of what makes you who you are, and God wants you to be **excellent in those area's.** **Becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk also means that you can use your passions and skills to make the world a better place.** If you pursue them, your passions and interests will give you the opportunity to help others and help the world at large.

When people think about changing the world they often think that they can't make any difference. We turn to those who have money, power, intelligence, or are famous and count on them to make the right choices to impact the world. **But we shouldn't just count on others to** make the world a better place, we have to count on ourselves! God designed each of us with the **potential to do great things.** **Even if you don't think you have much to offer, remember that there** is no one in the world like you. You are the only one who can offer your insights, your thoughts, and your impact to the world. The world needs you just the way you are!

Session 5: Being a Unificationist

Supplies for this session: paper and pens.

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone to their fifth session.
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - i. Unificationist traditions and core beliefs
 - ii. Heart of True Parents
 - iii. Foundation of the 1st Generation
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - i. A deeper understanding of why we practice certain traditions in our community
 - ii. An appreciation for the investment of True Parents and the 1st Generation.

2. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

It's important to create positive energy so that you can have dynamic discussions with your small group. For that reason it's a good idea to spend time breaking the ice at the beginning of each session. Keep in mind that each of your small group members will bring their own energy and unique experiences to each session. Icebreakers are a great way to get everyone on the same page so healthy discussion and growth can occur in your sessions.

Here's a simple game you can play for today's session:

One Common Goal

- Break the class into teams of 3-4.
- Give each team a piece of paper and a pen/pencil.
- Ask them to make a list of all the things that they can think of that are common traits among all the team members.
- After 10 minutes have passed ask the group to read their list to the rest of the group.
- The winning team is the one with the longest list.

3. Review Homework (10 minutes)

- Go over the answers to these questions regarding the DP Lecture they watched this week. Keep in mind that the youth may have a variety of answers. It may be a good idea to address these answers in a discussion format with you making the concluding points so everyone is on the same page.
 - i. What is indirect dominion and direct dominion/perfection?
 - ii. Why did God give us freedom and responsibility?
 - iii. **What are life and "death" elements** and how do they impact you?
- Reiterate the main point of the Hon Dok Hae Reading; we should strive to become people with no shadow who lead a life with integrity.
- Share about the 3 acts you accomplished this week and how it impacted the world around you.

4. II Shim Session Reading (10 minutes)

- **Read through the “Session 5 Reading.”**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.
 - Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren’t listening to one person’s voice the whole time.**
5. Discussion: (15 minutes)
- Split into small groups or discuss as one large group. Make sure each person has an opportunity to share. The point of discussions is to allow each person to share their **personal thoughts and feelings on a topic, so no answer is right or wrong. It’s a good idea** to acknowledge each person after sharing and thank them for having the courage to do so.
- What part of our Unificationist traditions do you identify with most?
 - What is one thing you admire about True Parents and why?
 - Share a story you heard from your parents about the early days of the church and **the course of the 1st Generation. If you can’t remember a specific story, then** share what you admire about 1st Generation.
6. Activity: Unificationist Trivia (15 minutes)
- Split your group into at least 2 teams and have each team come up with 3 trivia questions about the church. They should try to make the questions challenging **and keep in mind that it’s ok if they don’t know the answers to the questions** themselves.
 - i. **If you don’t have enough people for teams, have the youth work** individually.
 - Collect all of the questions and read them aloud to your group.
 - Have the teams work within themselves to find the answers within a 7 minute time limit. They can use any resources available to them (books, phones, internet, people etc.)
 - Go over the correct answers **and celebrate the winning team! (If there’s a question you don’t know the answer to, just be honest. Everyone wins a point for that one!)**
7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)
- Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
- What aspects of our church do you appreciate most?
 - What aspects of our church do you not yet understand?
 - Who can you talk to about the aspects of our church **you don’t understand yet?**
8. **This Week’s Homework: (5 minutes)**
- Ask your parents these questions and write their answers down in your packet:
 - i. Who are True Parents to you?
 - ii. What do you admire most about them?
 - iii. What did they teach you that changed your perspective on life?

- Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Rev. Kevin Thompson entitled **“Purpose of the Messiah Part 2”**, http://dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/purpose-of-the-messiah-part-2/ After watching the lecture, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - i. **How come the Messiah came and was killed if that wasn't God's original intention?**
 - ii. What are the barriers to us recognizing the Messiah?
 - iii. **What was John the Baptist's role in welcoming Jesus?**
 - Offer a 24-hour fasting condition with your parents during this week. The **purpose of the condition should be related to this week's content, “Being a Unificationist.” You and your parents can decide the specific purpose so that it is most relevant to you and your experience.**
9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)
Offer a closing prayer focusing on the journey of understanding what it means to be a Unificationist and wish everyone a great week!

Session 5 Reading: Being a Unificationist

The word “unification” means to be united. So it makes sense that Unificationism is about bringing together people of different religions, races, cultures, and walks of life. A key factor in our faith is that we are all God's children and that makes us brothers and sisters. And one of the important aspects of our church is to bring unity and healing among the divisions of the world to bring peace and joy to God's heart. The way that each of us does that however, may be a little different from each other. But it's all about the same thing: bringing humanity back to God, their Heavenly Parent.

If you ask any member of our church what it means to be a Unificationist they may say **something different. And that's OK! Each person's faith is as unique as their own personality** and we celebrate that as a Unificationist community. Although every person may practice their faith in a unique way, there are a few things we all agree on that make us a Unificationist community. When in doubt we can always turn to the Divine Principle and the teachings of True Parents to help us find clarity. Here a few highlights from the teachings of True Parents that make our faith community different from others:

- God is a parent and has the heart of both a mother and father.
- God has been working throughout all of human history to bring joy to humankind since the time of the Fall, which was the result of immature love relationships between Adam, Eve, and Lucifer.
- God designed the family as the School of Love in which we learn how to love and take care of others through the relationships within our family.
- Father and Mother Moon have taken on the messianic mission of completing the work **left undone during Jesus' life at the time of his crucifixion.**

- The Divine Principle is the main theology of our community and has deep insights concerning God and human history.
- The Marriage Blessing is our opportunity to receive salvation as a family through our True Parents.

True Parents have worked tirelessly throughout their lifetime to pave the way for God to reunite with His children. They had to endure incredible suffering so that the culture of our world could change and we could find our way to our Heavenly Parent. They shared profound insights and truth with our world that help us to live a heavenly and righteous life. It is their example of unconditional love and service that we emulate as members of the Unification church. As young Unificationists it can be hard to feel connected to True Parents. But we can build a relationship with them by studying their word and learning about their life through hon dok hae and the stories of the 1st Generation.

The people who first joined and shaped our church are known as the 1st Generation. Their faith in True Parents is what allowed our community to grow and expand as rapidly as it has. No other church has grown as quickly as ours during the lifetime of its **founder, and that's because** of the 1st Generation. Many times they were asked to do conditions and actions that were **challenging, didn't make sense, or went against what the world told them was normal. But** because of their investment through fundraising, witnessing, and programming the providence of restoration was able to move forward tremendously.

Growing up as a young person in our church you may not have always been sure why we do the things that we do. The traditions you practice as a family may be very different from those of your friends and you may sometimes have had a hard time explaining them. However, each of our traditions have a rich spiritual history and come directly from our True Parents. If you ever have questions about why we are doing something as a faith community we encourage you to ask your parents! What a great way to take ownership of your faith! Here are a few of our unique traditions and a brief explanation of why we do them. These explanations are very short, so if you have more questions please talk to your parents. They would be happy to answer them for you!

- *Praying in our own name:* We have received authority from True Parents to report and **pray directly to God, instead of reporting through the use of someone else's name.**
- *Hon Dok Hae & Pledge:* Time at the beginning of each day to connect with God and read **God's word so we** can have a clear mind, heart, and spirit for the rest of our day.
- *Holy Songs:* Songs of great spiritual power. Father Moon wrote the words to many of these songs.
- *Holy Candles & Holy Salt:* Holy items that bless either our spiritual atmosphere or bless our physical goods. These holy items allow Heaven to create a heavenly environment around us.
- *Holy Ground:* Specific places that have been blessed and serve as places of direct connection to God and good spirit world in which our prayers can be received directly.
- *Holy Days:* Special days that were created by our True Parents to celebrate important moments in providential history and the creation of a new culture.

- *The Blessing*: A significant ceremony in which a husband and wife exchange vows, drink the holy wine, and represents the start of a heavenly blood lineage.
- *Seung Hwa*: A funeral service in which we honor the life and spirit of a person and send them off joyfully to the spiritual world.

As a young Unificationist you will go through your own journey of discovering your faith and creating your own spiritual life. The traditions of our church are a framework by which you can go on that path. You should always feel free to ask questions and understand the purpose and meaning behind the traditions of our church. There is great depth and meaning behind each of them. We carry on these traditions because of their spiritual value and the blessings and growth they bring to our lives and our world.

II Shim 2 Day Retreat

God's Design for Me

Day 1: Owning the 1st Blessing

8:30 AM Arrivals & Board Games

Have some board games and staff ready to play with the youth as they come in.

It's a good idea to choose board games that people can join at any time so no one feels left out. Here are some suggestions: Mad Gab, Taboo, Apples to Apples, etc.

This is also a good opportunity to check in with parents as they drop off their kids. Ask them how things are going and answer any questions they may have.

9:00 AM Break the Ice

Play some high energy games to get everyone pumped up for the retreat. Here are two games you can try:

- *Amoeba (good for a large group)*
 - Ask everyone to mingle around in a large space.
 - Randomly call out group sizes and characteristics that the youth must gather in. Here are some examples:
 - **“Groups of 4 with at least 1 girl”**
 - **“Groups of 3 with 2 people wearing blue”**
 - **“Groups of 6 with 3 people wearing glasses”**
 - Whomever is unable to join a group is **“out” for this round.**
 - When you are left with only 2 people you can either crown them both as winners or use a game of rock, paper, scissors to determine the winner.
- *Jump In, Jump Out*
 - Have everyone join hands in a circle (you probably want no more than 10 people in a circle)
 - **Announce to the group that you want them to “Say what I say, and Do what I Say” and then say these directions in a random order**
 - Jump In
 - Jump Out
 - Jump Left
 - Jump Right
 - So this would look like:
 - **You: “Jump In”**
 - **Group: “Jump In” (Simultaneously jumping into the circle)**
 - Now it gets more challenging, try these rounds and get ready to laugh:
 - Say what I say, Do what I say
 - Say the Opposite, Do the Opposite
 - Say what I do, Do the opposite
 - Say the opposite, Do the opposite

9:30 AM Introductions

Use this time to go over the schedule for this weekend and answer any questions the youth may have. If you need to break into groups this would be a good time to do so.

10:00 AM

Presentation # 1: God's Design for Me; The Three Blessings

1. Sing songs to prepare the atmosphere.
2. Presentation: The content of this presentation should focus on the Three Blessings and how they relate to the lives of youth. The talk should be about 20 minutes long.
3. Discussion
 - a. What is one way you can work on accomplishing the first blessing?
 - b. What is one way you can prepare for the second blessing?
 - c. What is one way you can see yourself having dominion over creation in the future?

11:00 AM

Presentation #2: Discovering Your Relationship with God

1. Sing songs to prepare the atmosphere.
2. Presentation: The content of this presentation should focus on practical ways for the youth to discover and develop their relationship with God. The talk should be about 20 minutes long.
3. Discussion:
 - a. What is one way you already know that you connect with God?
 - b. What is one way you would like to try to connect with God?
 - c. Who can help you be accountable to your relationship with God?

12:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 PM

Service Project

An important part of the II Shim Retreat is doing a service project. We want to teach our young people to embrace a lifestyle of living for the sake of others. This of course means more than just doing a service project every now and then, but this project is a great way to kick start that type of mentality. It would be a good idea to give a little blurb before the service project that encourages the youth to serve with the right heart and intention.

If you're having a hard time finding a service project to participate in, you can also do kind acts of service. Check out some ideas here:

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas>

4:00 PM

Breaks and Snacks

Have some free time and put out some snacks so the youth can have some much deserved downtime.

4:30 PM

Church Traditions Stations

These stations are an opportunity for the youth to practice, understand, and **inherit some of our faith's traditions. They will also have the opportunity to go home with their own holy salt, holy candle, and True Parents' picture** to use in their own time.

Have the youth rotate through the following three stations. Here are directions for how to make each of this holy items:

- Holy Salt: Explain that we use Holy Salt to sanctify a sacred place, the things we buy, and the place we live.

- To make holy salt:
 - Make seven equal piles of new salt in a row. Make one pile of equal size with seed holy salt in a row above the other piles.
 - Mix the seed holy salt evenly with the new salt piles.
 - Gather all piles into one pile and mix well.
 - Offer a prayer: I sanctify this in the name of the Cosmic Parent and the Parents of Heaven and **Earth, the True Children's families, and (your name)**, owner of Cheon Il Guk. May the spirit of God and True Parents dwell within it. By Your holy power, allow this salt to become Holy Salt and be used to sanctify and bless our surroundings.
- To use holy salt: Sprinkle a small amount four times (top, **bottom, right, left**) and quietly say: **"I sanctify this in the name of the Cosmic Parent and the Parents of Heaven and Earth, the True Children's families, and (your name), owner of Cheon Il Guk."**
- Holy Candle: Explain that we light a Holy Candle at the beginning of a prayer or meditation. The holy candle creates a good spiritual atmosphere that helps us make a connection with God. We use a special box or book or matches that are set aside for this purpose.
 - Give each youth a box or book of Holy Matches that have been sanctified with Holy Salt.
 - The multiplication ceremony requires 3 new candles and 1 seed Holy Candle. You will have to repeat this process as many times as needed to make enough for all of the youth. The new candle must be of white or a bright ivory color, and must be at least 12 to 15 cm long.
 - Prepare a candle holder or a place on which to put the seed Holy Candle.
 - The seed Holy Candle, placed on the candle holder, must **be put in Heavenly Parent's position, and the newly purchased three candles are to be respectively put in Adam, Eve, and child's position in the form of the four-position foundation.**
 - **Offer a prayer such as: "In the name of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind, I would like to multiply the Holy Candle.."**
 - Light the seed Holy Candle with Holy Matches.
 - Hold the seed Holy Candle with both hands (the right hand should go above and the left hand should support the candle from the bottom) and light the Adam, Eve, and **Child's candle in respective order. Once that is done, the**

seed Holy Candle must be returned to its original position
(Heavenly Parents' position)

- Offer the concluding prayer while the candles are still lit
such as: “Whenever these candles are burned, may it invite God and good spirit world into our surroundings. I pray that these candles will provide a special environment for us to connect with our Heavenly Parent.”
- Extinguish the flame between two of your fingers or a candlelight-extinguishing tool, not by blowing it out with your mouth.
- Pledge:
 - Set up a pledge table with a Holy Candle and picture of True Parents.
 - Light the Holy Candle with Holy Matches.
 - Offer a kyungbae as a group to True Parents.
 - Read the Family Pledge in unison.
 - Offer a representative prayer and then have a 7 minute **unison prayer ending with the song “Tongil.”**
 - Extinguish the flame of the Holy Candle with your two fingers.
 - Hand out pictures of True Parents to each of the youth and express the value of using this picture to create a holy spiritual environment. This picture can serve as a reminder of the people we want to be and a tool to connect with True Parents.

6:00 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM

Being a Person of Integrity

Have parents or youth leaders give short talks or testimonies on the following topics. Their talks should either focus on why they personally uphold the

Unificationist standard regarding these area's or should focus on the benefits of keeping a standard of integrity regarding these area's.

If you don't have people in your community who can share on these topics, you can try using a service like skype to feature people from other communities.

Drugs & Alcohol

Brother/Sister Relationships

Internet Safety/Porn

You can optionally end with a panel made up of the testimony givers and II Shim leaders. The youth can anonymously submit questions by writing them on a piece of paper and putting them in a container.

9:30 PM

Closing

End the evening on a high note with some uplifting songs, a group hug, encouraging words about supporting each other as brothers and sisters, and time for prayer.

Day 2: Preparing for the 2nd Blessing & 3rd Blessing

- 7:00 AM Morning Exercises
Prepare some stretches and exercises to get **everyone's blood pumping to start the day**. Make sure to make it fun and exciting!
- 7:30 AM Hon Dok Hae
Read from the Cheong Seon Gyeong, Book 8, Chapter 1, Section 1: A Life of Faith (starting on page 793).
- 8:00 AM Breakfast
- 9:00 AM Matching & Blessing Testimonies
1. Sing songs to prepare the atmosphere.
 2. Prepare 3 couples to offer 10 minute testimonies about their matching **and blessing experience. It's a good idea to feature couples with different** experiences such as a young couple that was matched by their parents, a young couple that was matched by True Parents and an older experienced couple.
 3. Testimonies should focus on: preparation during middle and high school for the matching and blessing, personal story of the matching and blessing, and insights on the value of the matching and blessing.
 4. After they share their testimonies open up the floor to questions and answers from the youth.
 5. Optional: Share responses to the testimonies in small discussion groups.
- 10:30 AM Personal Mission Statement Building
1. Have the youth fill out this worksheet:
<http://familyfed.org/youthministry/mission-statement-building/>
 2. Once they have finished the worksheets, have the youth share their **mission statements in small groups. It's ok if they aren't** able to completely finish their mission statement, but encourage them to at least share the direction they are heading.
- 12:00 PM Lunch with Parents
Invite the parents ahead of time to attend lunch and the final session with their children during the retreat. This is a great opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of the parent and child relationship. You can leave some discussion questions on each table to encourage good communication during lunch as well. Here are some ideas:
- What is your favorite meal?
 - What is the funniest joke you know?
 - If you could change one thing in the world what would it be?
- 1:00 PM Homework: Review & Assign
Review Last Week's Homework:
1. Share the answers to these questions. Depending on the size of your group you can share as one group, pair share, or share in small groups. You just want to be careful about your time, so choose the format that is best for your group.
 - a. Who are True Parents to you?
 - b. What do you admire most about them?

- c. What did they teach you that changed your perspective on life?
2. Go over the answers to these questions regarding the DP Lecture they watched this week. Keep in mind that the youth may have a variety of answers. It may be a good idea to address these answers in a discussion format with you making the concluding points so everyone is on the same page.
 - a. **How come the Messiah came and was killed if that wasn't God's original intention?**
 - b. What are the barriers to us recognizing the Messiah?
 - c. **What was John the Baptist's role in welcoming Jesus?**
3. Check in about the 24-hour fast. You can ask things like:
 - a. What purpose did you choose for your fast?
 - b. How did it go?

Assign Homework for this Week:

1. Before II Shim is completed you will need to complete three hours of service internship work with your local church by graduation. Your homework for this week is to choose your area for internship and make a plan for how and when you will complete three hours of service.
 - a. Invite your Pastor to come and spend time with the youth and explain some options for them to get involved in the local community. Some ideas could be: Sunday School, Youth Ministry, Music Ministry etc. You will need to check in with the youth before graduation to make sure they have completed this work.
2. Think about what aspects of your spiritual life are important to you and make your own holy day or spiritual tradition. Practice your tradition or celebrate your holy day with your family and share with the class next week.
3. Design a display for the family mission statement we are making later today and put it up somewhere in your house.

3:00 PM Family Session: Family Mission Statement

1. Give this list of questions to each family and have them discuss a few of these questions to help them start their family mission statement. The parents/families can choose which questions to use:
 - o What is the purpose of our family?
 - o What kind of family do we want to be?
 - o What kinds of things do we want to do?
 - o What kind of feeling do we want to have in our home?
 - o What kind of home would you like to invite your friends to?
 - o What embarrasses you about our family?
 - o What makes you want to come home?
 - o What do we want to be remembered by?
 - o What kind of relationships do we want to have with one another?
 - o How do we want to treat one another and speak to one another?
 - o What things are truly important to us as a family?

- What are the unique talents, gifts, and abilities of family members?
- What are our responsibilities as family members?
- What are the principles and guidelines we want our family to follow?
- Who are our heroes? What it is about them that we like and would like to emulate?
- What families inspire us and why do we admire them?
- How can we contribute to society as a family and become more service-oriented?

(These questions are taken from an article written by Brett & Kate McKay called “**Creating a Positive Family Culture: How and Why to Create a Family Mission Statement**.” You can read the article here: <http://www.artofmanliness.com/2013/08/21/creating-a-family-culture-how-and-why-to-create-a-family-mission-statement/>)

2. After discussing for 15-20 minutes, have the families create their mission statement. The families should have freedom to make the mission statement as they please, either a short phrase or a short paragraph. **Here’s** a quote from Stephen Covey on what a family mission statement is, **“A family mission statement is a combined, unified expression from all family members of what your family is all about --- what it is you really want to do and be --- and the principles you choose to govern your family life.”**
3. Have each family read their mission statement aloud to the rest of the group.

4:00 PM

Closing & Farewell

Thank everyone for their participation and offer a closing prayer for the retreat.

Session 7: I'm Worth Waiting For

Supplies for this session: 2 random objects and at least one male and one female facilitator for the discussion.

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone to their seventh session!
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - The impact of The Fall on our society
 - The value of purity
 - Difficulties we face in living a pure lifestyle
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - An understanding of why our world is the way it is because of The Fall
 - A better grasp on why we practice purity
 - Some tips and tools to living a pure lifestyle

2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)

This is A...

- Choose 2 items to feature in this game and have everyone sit in a circle.
- Take one item and turn to the person on your right. Follow this script together:
 - Person A: This is a [insert name of item here]
 - Person B: A What?
 - Person A: A [insert name of item here]
 - Person B: Oh, a [insert name of item here]
- Repeat this process with the person on your left with the second item.
- The people on your right and left must then repeat this process with the person **sitting next to them. The only difference being when they are asked “A What?” they must turn back to you and ask “A What?” When you respond with the name of the item then they can respond with the name of the item.**
 - The game gets most confusing once the two items pass each other in the **circle and people have to remember to pass both the “A What’s” and their answers in the right direction.**
- To keep the game fun try to keep it going quickly so people get a little lost and confused!

3. Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)

- Share what area of church internship they chose and how they are going to complete their 3 hours before the completion of Il Shim.
- Share what holy day and/or tradition they created to practice and how they celebrated it.
- Share how they designed their family mission statement and where they displayed it in their home.

4. Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)

- **Read through the “Session 7 Reading.”**
- Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.

- Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
 - **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren't listening to one person's voice the whole time.**
5. Discussion: (15 minutes)
- For this discussion split your youth into two groups based on a gender. Each group will need a same-gendered facilitator. Try to create an open space for people to share honestly and comfortably. Some of these topics are difficult to share about, so you should feel free to use this time in the most constructive way. If someone is not comfortable sharing on **some of these topics, they don't have to share. If some youth needs or want to talk more about some of these topics, feel free to talk to them after the session is concluded.**
- What are your thoughts on crushes, dating and temptation/pornography?
 - How have your own experiences with crushes, dating, and temptation/pornography impacted your life?
 - How do you deal with or want to deal with crushes, dating, and or temptation/pornography?
- Thank everyone for sharing. Make sure everyone is acknowledged for their courage to **share whatever they shared, and if people didn't share much, make sure they know that that is perfectly fine. Let them know that you'll now be joining back with the other group.**
6. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)
- Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
- What tips do you use, or want to use, to keep yourself accountable in terms of living a pure life?
 - Why do you feel waiting to have a romantic relationship until marriage is important?
 - What activities, adventures, and experiences do you want to invest your time in now instead of spending your time dealing with crushes, dating and/or temptation/pornography?
7. Activity: Role Playing (10 minutes)
- **Give everyone a few minutes to draft out responses to these scenario's:**
 - Someone asks you for your number, or out on a date
 - **Someone is pestering you about why you don't have a boyfriend/girlfriend**
 - Someone asks you about your II Shim ring
 - Someone is talking about having sex and asks you if you have had sex before
 - **Role play these scenario's with each of the youth in front of the group. You should play the "someone" character.**
 - **These scenario's can be very awkward to role play, so you should make it fun. You can dress up, talk funny, etc. The point is you want to give these youth a chance to practice responding to these questions so that they will be ready when the time comes.**
8. **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**

- **Fill out the “My Plans for My Internet” form in your packet and go over your answers with your parents.**
 - **Write 2-3 paragraphs in response to the prompt, “The Kind of Husband/Wife I want to be.”**
 - Read from the Cheon Seong Gyeong Book 1, Chapter 4, Section 1: The Parent whose position was usurped (pages 98-100). At the end of each paragraph share a summary with your parents about the meaning of that section.
 - Here are some optional resources to learn more about the impact of pornography on your mind and body:
 - www.fightthenewdrug.org
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb1hkIjcSjQ>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flh8gnC6J1s>
9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)
- Offer a closing prayer focusing on surrounding ourselves with a good environment so that we can nurture our purity and prepare for our future blessings and marriages.

Session 7 Reading: I'm Worth Waiting For

A few weeks ago we learned when God created us He/She envisioned each of us building lives of love, joy, and fulfillment. We also learned that God invested His/Her entire self into creation with the hope that it would become a world full of happy families living in happy communities. **And yet when we look at the world around us we see that it is far from God's hope. We can't help but ask ourselves, what happened? How did the world stray so far from God's ideal?** The answer to that can be found by looking at the story of our first human ancestors: Adam and Eve.

You've probably heard the story of the Human Fall a few times before. After creating Adam and Eve, God shared with them all the wonderful things that they had in store for their lives. God expressed His/Her excitement over being able to experience their lives through them. And He/She also asked them to wait to have a romantic relationship until they were mature people and could receive God's blessing. As time went on, however, Lucifer, who was God's right hand man, started feeling jealous towards the love Adam and Eve were receiving from God. Lucifer began flirting with Eve and convincing her that she was missing out on something amazing by not having a romantic physical relationship. Eventually, Eve began to have feelings for Lucifer which lead her to have a sexual relationship with him. Eve was ashamed of her actions and she turned to Adam for love, comfort, and an attempt to be who she was before her mistakes with Lucifer. However, Adam also gave into Eve's affection and they had a sexual relationship before receiving God's blessing. This original sin has been passed down through generations and is the reason our world has distorted romantic physical relationships.

Adam and Eve knew the consequences of engaging in a romantic relationship before they were ready, so why is it that they could make such a mistake? The Divine Principle teaches us that the power of love is stronger than the power of the principle (or in this case, God's commandment to wait until maturity to have a romantic relationship). God designed the world this way so that we could build fulfilling and personalized lives for ourselves. If the power of the principle were stronger than love we would consider following the rules and principles as more important than loving and taking care of people. We would put studying scripture above our unique relationship with our Heavenly Parent. Instead of this, God made love the most powerful force of the universe so that we could lead dynamic and meaningful lives with Him/Her at the center.

While this is a great blessing, the time in our lives in which we are growing towards maturity can be difficult. We call this time the *period of indirect dominion*. To traverse this time well we need **to follow God's principles so that we can reach the *period of direct dominion* in which our desires and God's desires become one. This is why God asked Adam and Eve to wait for their marriage until they were mature. If we don't wait until we are mature beings, we end up with hurt hearts or hurting others because we weren't ready to engage in a romantic relationship. When we talk about saving ourselves for marriage, we're talking about more than just having sex.** Our faith teaches us that we are both physical and spiritual beings. So that means there is both a physical and spiritual aspect of purity and that means that purity has many aspects and levels to it.

The spiritual aspect of our purity has to do with what we allow our spirit to interact with. This includes the types of movies and T.V. shows you watch, the types of books you read, and the types of music you listen to. It also includes making important decisions regarding pornography. **Pornography are materials that displays vivid sexual activity and include pictures, video's and even books.** Because pornography is so easy to access online, you will probably be exposed to it **in the near future if you haven't already been exposed to it already. But it's important to know the whole story about pornography. There's a whole science about the negative impact of** pornography on your brain and your ability to have meaningful romantic relationships in the future. All of the research surrounding pornography says the same thing; pornography is not healthy for you or your future marriage.

Nurturing our purity on both of the spiritual and physical planes is the reason we, as Unificationists, choose not to date. It may be **hard to explain to your friends why you don't date** when they may already have boyfriends and girlfriends. We choose not to date because we want to give our whole heart, soul, and body to our future spouse. If we were to have other romantic relationships before marriage we would always have the memory of other people we dated, **kissed, and shared our feelings with. Instead, we want to be able to share every "first" with our** spouse and continue to learn about a man and woman relationship through our spouse only. True Parents have taught us that it is only through our spouse that we are able to understand God and understand all people of the opposite gender.

The awesome part of nurturing your purity while you are in this stage of your life is that it gives you the freedom to focus on the things that make you happy! This is the time for you to find your hobbies and think about what kind of life you want to live. This is your time to have adventures, discover yourself and the world around you, and become the person you want to be. Choosing to save romantic relationships for when you are mature and ready to get married means you have the freedom to live your life to the fullest! So enjoy it, because God certainly wants to enjoy your **life with you. One day you'll get blessed and experience marriage the way God intended it to be, and you can look forward to that. But in the meantime it's important to continue to be invested** in your purity so that you can be the best future husband or wife for your spouse.

Here are a few tips and tools to help you in maintaining a pure lifestyle and becoming a mature person:

- Choose your music, movies, and T.V. shows well
- Tell your parents when you have feelings for someone of the opposite gender
- Hang out with friends of different genders in groups, instead of one-on-one
- Let your friends know where you stand in terms of dating and purity

The most important tip having a pure lifestyle is to fill your time with activities and experiences that you love. That way you can focus on being the best version of you!

My Plans for My Internet

The internet is an amazing place where you can learn *anything!* Unfortunately, some people have abused this freedom and are making material available that impacts your attempts to lead

a pure lifestyle. It may seem harmless because it's just the internet, but it's important to have a plan in action for when you are confronted with potentially harmful situations.

Please fill out this form with honest ideas and answers. You can fill in as many or as little ideas in each section, but please fill out at least one answer for each section.

1. I use the following online chatting and messaging services:

2. I have the following guidelines for my online messaging conversations:

3. I use the following social media websites:

4. I have the following guidelines regarding what type of personal information I put on my page:

5. When talking online with people I have only met online and do not know in real life I have the following guidelines:

6. When I come across inappropriate content online such as images, videos, and **conversations that are sexual in nature, I...**

7. If someone I have met online asks me to meet in person, I have the following guidelines:

Session 8: The Greatest Blessing

Supplies for this session: pens.

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)
 - Welcome everyone to their eighth session!
 - Introduce what the session will be about:
 - The value of Marriage
 - The value of The Blessing
 - Your Path towards the Blessing
 - Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - An understanding of the benefits of committing to marriage.
 - A clearer perspective on why the Blessing is different from marriage.
 - **Some idea's for what steps to take when you feel ready to being your future Matching process.**
2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Don't Make Eye Contact

 - Have everyone stand in a large circle, close their eyes, and face their head towards the floor.
 - **Count “1, 2, 3, Look” and when you say “Look” everyone should look up and look at someone's eyes in the circle.**
 - If two people make eye contact, they are out of the game.
 - Some people like to have dramatic death scenes to symbolize their leaving the game.
 - Make the circle smaller each time someone leaves the game.
 - Continue this process until there is 1-2 people, who are the winners of the game.
3. Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)
 - Check in on how the youth are doing regarding their 3 hours of service internship with your local church community.
 - **Confirm that everyone filled out the “My Plans for the Internet” form and went over it with their parents.**
 - **Have the youth share their paragraphs on “The Kind of Husband/Wife I want to be” in trinities or small groups.**
 - Reiterate the main point of the Hon Dok Hae: God was meant to be our Parent, but instead His/Her heart was broken as a result of the Fall.
4. Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)
 - **Read through the “Session 8 Reading.”**
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.
 - Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
 - Take turns **reading paragraphs so the youth aren't listening to one person's voice** the whole time.

5. Discussion: (15 minutes)

Split into small groups or discuss as one large group. Make sure each person has an opportunity to share. The point of discussions is to allow each person to share their **personal thoughts and feelings on a topic, so no answer is right or wrong. It's a good idea** to acknowledge each person after sharing and thank them for having the courage to do so.

- In your opinion, what makes The Blessing so special?
- When do you think a person is ready to start a relationship through the matching?
- **What do you admire about your parent's blessing/marriage?**

6. **Activity: Am I What I'm Looking For? (10 minutes)**

- Ask everyone to write down 10 qualities or aspects of a person that they would be looking for in a future spouse.
- Share those lists in small groups
- **Now ask everyone to ask themselves, "do I have these qualities?" and remind the group that we should become the type of spouse that we would want to have in the future.**
- Have the youth choose 2-3 qualities they are achieving from their list, and 2-3 qualities that they need to work on.

7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.

- Is there a married couple in your church community that you admire? What do you admire about their relationship?
- Do you think the Blessing is an important step in your future? Why or why not?
- What do you hope your future marriage will look like? What kind of relationship do you envision for yourself?

8. **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**

- Continue completing your 3 hours of service internship with your local community.
- Complete a 7 Day prayer condition with your parents this week. Focus on the 4 points of the II Shim Pledge:
 - 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.These things I pledge before God, True Parents, my parents, and my community.
- Complete the 10-Year Vision Worksheet in your packet.

9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

Offer a closing prayer focusing on preparing ourselves for a fulfilling and happy future blessing.

Session 8 Reading: The Greatest Blessing

Marriage is an amazing commitment between a man and woman to love each other in sickness **and in health and for better and for worse. Although it may seem like people don't see as much** value in marriage these days, the research says that marriage is a beneficial investment! For instance, married people experience less depression and less poverty. Men who are married tend to make more money than single men with similar education and job histories. Married women report higher levels of physical and psychological health. Children raised by their own married mother and father are more likely to stay in school, have better reports on behavior and attendance in school, and are more likely to graduate from college. They are also more likely to be successful in forming their own lasting marriages in the future. Overall the facts are clear, married people tend to be happier, healthier, and are more successful in their careers. You can learn more about the benefits of marriage by checking out these resources:

- <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/1/the-benefits-of-marriage>
- <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/what-are-the-social-benefits-of-marriage/>

As Unificationists, we believe that marriage is an essential part of God's plan and our path towards becoming the best versions of ourselves. However, we see that marriage in our current society has lost some of its spiritual value and significance as a result of the Fall. That is why we **celebrate the Marriage Blessing. The Korean word for the Blessing is "chukbok," which literally means "praying for blessings." The Marriage Blessing is the greatest blessing you can receive because it's the first** time in human history that God has been able to give His/Her Blessing to married couples! If Adam and Eve had not fallen and instead become mature before having a romantic relationship, they would have experienced their Blessing ceremony. However, Adam and **Eve fell and all of their descendants have been unable to receive God's Blessing. That's why** True Parents have focused much of their effort on the Marriage Blessing. Because of True Parents God is finally able to give His/Her Blessing to humankind. God can finally have His/Her wishes fulfilled and have His/Her grief of the past six thousand years resolved.

The ultimate purpose of the Marriage Blessing is to build a foundation for a happy and true family. While there are many happy families in the world, **marriage doesn't always produce a** happy family. This is because we have inherited bad habits and ancestral sins from our society and ancestors. When we partake of the holy wine ceremony at our Blessing, our connection to **Satan's lineage is cut off and our** mistakes and sins that have occurred in our life are also **eliminated. It doesn't mean that drinking of the holy wine fixes everything in your life, but it does give you a direct connection to God's blood lineage and a fresh start in your spiritual life. That's why we call children who are born after their parents Blessing as "Blessed Children." Blessed Children have been born directly into God's lineage, instead of Satan's lineage, and don't have the "original sin" which is what humanity has inherited from the Fall of Adam and Eve.**

When we look at the world today we can see that many romantic relationships end with hurt and **pain. But God's original plan for the Marriage Blessing was that it is the place in which a man** and a woman can inherit the love of God. God exists with the dual characteristics of masculinity and femininity, and so the union of a man and woman represents God in His/Her entirety. Getting Blessed is a statement that says we will perfect ourselves and become like God. Being in a Blessed Marriage gives you the opportunity to grow into a more well-rounded and loving person. Through the ups and downs of a Blessed Marriage you learn to love your spouse **unconditionally and see them from God's point of view. You will help your spouse grow and change through your relationship. But even more importantly, you will find opportunities to challenge and grow your own character. That's the beauty of a Blessed Marriage; that you and your spouse will grow your character together and your ability to love one another.** Throughout your marriage you will comfort each other when you feel lonely, share joy together, and give each other strength during your difficulties. True Parents have taught us that over time you will become like one body, each spouse representing a foot of one body. And together you will leave footprints of love for humanity and for God.

When it comes time for you to begin your initial path towards the Matching and Marriage Blessing it can be rather daunting. It will be some time from now before you feel ready to begin this process, but a key thing to remember is that the first step is to talk to your parents. They are the ones who will help guide you in creating the right process for you. If you have trouble communicating with your parents about this important topic, you can also talk to another elder figure in your community who can act as a mediator and support you and your parents during this process.

Here are some general tips and information to keep in mind regarding your future Matching and Blessing Process:

- If you have feelings about a friend who you think might be a good candidate for your future Matching and Blessing, tell your parents about it.
- It can be difficult to trust that your parents will find the right person for you. So figure out the right type of involvement you want to have with your parents, and then continually communicate together.
- If you decide to get matched by your parents, the process can take a significant amount of time. Make sure you go into the process for the long term result, and not the short term payoff.
- You can also decide to go through the Cheon Il Guk Matching process in which a spouse will be chosen for you from around the world.
- There are many resources available to you and your parents at <http://bfm.familyfed.org>

The Matching and Blessing may seem like a long ways a way, but remember that the process begins now. This is your time to work on your relationship with God, your family, and become the kind of future spouse you want to be!

Session 9: Plugging In

Supplies for this session: paper and pens.

1. Welcome & Check In (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone to their ninth and final session! Next week is graduation!
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - Service & Living for the sake of others
 - Finding ways to serve that inspire you
 - Our role in the future of our Church
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A deeper understanding of the value of service
 - Insight on areas of service that might be meaningful for you
 - Perspective on your role in the future of our community

2. **Warm Up for Today's Session(10 minutes)**

Instead of an icebreaker this week, use this time to let the youth share about the completion of their 3 hours of internship with their local community. Have them stand in front of the group and share on these three points:

- What ministry area you worked with and how you spent your time in service?
- What you learned about and what skills you gained?
- How do you feel you personally benefited from this experience?

3. Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)

- Check in on the completion of the 3 hours of service internship with your local community.
- Confirm that the youth have completed their 7 day prayer condition.
- Have the youth share their 10 year vision with the group.

4. Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)

- **Read through the "Session 10 Reading."**
- Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points.
- Ask thoughtful questions that connect the content to the lives of the participants. Make sure they connect the dots of how this reading can actually make a difference in *their* lives.
- **Take turns reading paragraphs so the youth aren't listening to one person's voice the whole time.**

5. Discussion: (15 minutes)

Split into small groups or discuss as one large group. Make sure each person has an opportunity to share. The point of discussions is to allow each person to share their **personal thoughts and feelings on a topic, so no answer is right or wrong. It's a good idea to acknowledge each person after sharing and thank them for having the courage to do so.**

- Share an experience in which you felt like you benefited from giving of your time for someone or something else.

- **If you haven't had that experience yet, share how you think you might benefit from giving of your time for a greater cause.**
 - What area of ministry would you like to get involved in?
 - What kind of church community would you like to have for you and your future family?
- 6. Activity: (10 minutes) Fuzzy Wuzzies with a Twist
 - Have each person write their name on the top of a paper and pass the paper the right.
 - Ask each person to write a short message on the paper they received which **highlights that person's best qualities**, talents and skills.
 - Continue to pass the paper to the right and write short messages to each person in the group until everyone gets their paper back.
 - To keep things moving along you may need to remind people to finish up or tell them to pass their papers to the right after a certain amount of time.
 - Allow a few minutes for everyone to soak up the love and see how special they really are.
- 7. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.

 - How can you make service a part of your regular life?
 - What area of ministry could you see yourself contributing to in your adult life?
 - What kind of relationship and/or involvement would you like your future family to have with the church community?
- 8. **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**
 - Complete 3 hours of service **internship with your local community if you haven't** already.
 - Write a 3-5 sentence blurb about what area of church ministry inspires you that will be used in the II Shim Graduation program. Make sure the youth complete this homework today so that you can use it to prepare the program.
 - Write a personal pledge to your parents that will be read during the graduation. The whole class will read the II Shim pledge together, but the personal pledge will be read to your parents during the ring ceremony. Your personal pledge should have 3-5 points, and should reflect the type of commitment you want to make to your parents from now on.
 - Go over the schedule and attire of the graduation so the youth will know how to prepare.
- 9. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

Offer a closing prayer focusing on finding ways to serve that us and taking ownership over the future of our local church.

There's a common concept in our society that teaches us if you give your time, energy, money, and resources to others, you will end up with less than what you started with. But if we all lived that way, what kind of a world would we be living in? Do we really want to live in a place where **people focus only on their own needs and don't take care of others? That kind of world** is not the one God designed for us. So there must be something false about this concept. The Divine Principle teaches us that the universe was designed with the spiritual law of give and take action. What this means is that God created the universe with the law that you get something in return when you give to others. Simply put, if you give to others you will receive from others. God made this a spiritual law, so you can count on the fact that it will never change.

So what do you get in return when you give to others? You may very well receive external things **such as gifts, money, or acts of kindness. But that's not what the law of give and take action is** talking about. When you give to others you create a spiritual relationship between your soul and **the soul of the other person. It's your spirit that is able to reap the biggest benefit from giving to** others, and we call this benefit *vitality elements*. Vitality elements are the necessary nourishment for your soul. Just like your physical body needs food, air, and water to grow and survive. Your spiritual body needs life elements that come from God and vitality elements that come from serving others. And although vitality elements are a spiritual element, your physical body is able to reap the benefits **of them through your spiritual body. There's a special mutual relationship between your spirit body and physical body that allows this to occur. That's why you** feel happier and better about yourself after you do a service project, volunteer your time, or go out of your way to help someone. God created the law of give and take action so that you would be happier as a result of giving to others!

Our society tends to promote the importance of achieving personal success in terms of money, status, and lifestyle. **It's likely that as a result of growing up in this society you've been taught to** take care of your own needs and look out for yourself first before looking out for others. But one of the cornerstones of the Unificationist faith is that we believe living a life of service is an essential part of becoming an ideal person. We believe that living for the sake of others is the **way in which you become a better person. And that's because when you put the needs of others** before your own, you learn to see from God's **viewpoint and to love the world the way God loves** the world.

True Parents have taught us that the way to create true peace and happiness in the world is by living for the sake of others. When we live for the sake of others we receive great blessings and **support from heaven and good spirit world. It's the foundation upon which the angels and good** ancestors can help you be successful in life. Additionally, if you are able to think from someone **else's point of view and understand their heart, you will have** learned to love with true love. This **is what we call the culture of heart; it's a culture in which we make decisions based on our** heartistic relationship with others instead of with our minds or bodies. If each person in our world practiced this type of culture, we would have a thriving world of peace and joy. There are many different ways that you can serve the world and your community. And an important part of taking responsibility for your life of faith is finding ways that you can contribute that inspire you and make you feel fulfilled. Some people may find fulfillment in witnessing, some may find fulfillment in making music for church, others may find it by doing

work behind the scenes like setting up chairs for church, or sending out e-mails. The point is **there is no wrong way to serve and live for others. And it's your job to find the right place for you to plug in and give of yourself!**

Another way of living a life of service is by tithing, and it's also an important practice of our Unificationist faith. We offer one-tenth of our income as a condition that is equivalent to having offered all that we have. The principle of give and take action is true in the case of tithing just as it is in all other areas of giving others. If we have a sincere heart in offering one-tenth of our money, we will be blessed as a result of our tithe. It can be hard to give our money, because money is a necessary **part of our lives. It's the way in which we are able to feed, clothe, and house ourselves and our families. It's not as if God needs money, but we offer our money because it's important to us. When we tithe sincerely, God and good spirit world recognize** will bless us accordingly. In order to make a sincere offering to God, we must offer something that is **important to us. So even in moments of financial difficulty, it's even more important to continue** to tithe so that heaven can bless you as a result of your offering.

At this point in your life, church is run by your parents generation. But in 10 or 15 years things will change drastically. Someone in your II Shim class may become the Pastor one day. Someone in your II Shim class may become a Sunday School teacher, a Youth Pastor, the church bookkeeper, or the church clean up team. One day you and your peers will be running the church. And that means you will have the power and ability to make it the kind of place you want to be part of. And that process starts now. What kind of church community do you want to raise your future family in? How can you help make that happen now?

You have our own spirit that needs to grow and it's your job to take care of it. Just like it's your job to make sure you eat, get exercise and take care of your physical body. One of the best ways to let your spirit grow consistently is by getting involved in your local church. It can be hard to put yourself out there, but the reward of serving your local community is priceless. You will feel happier, build deep relationships with others, and be a part of creating the community you want to be part of. You bring a unique perspective to our community that only you can provide. And we need you to build the Kingdom of Heaven. And you need opportunities to serve so that you can become the best version of yourself. Sounds like a win-win situation to me!

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 II Shim pledge, the Community pledge, and any acknowledgements for people who helped make II Shim possible this year.
 - 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 II 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 II Shim leaders give a 15-minute message on the value of II 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 and youth should stand in front of the congregation. You may want to have ushers 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.**
 - Hugs & Photo's: The audience should applaud and photos should 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 II 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 II Shim graduates.
8. Mansei: 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 is a good time to take group photos.
10. Refreshments: Allow time for refreshments and fellowship at the conclusion of the ceremony.

