



# Uniteen News

*Vol. 3, Issue 4*

*December 2003*

## From the Editor

Dearest Uniteens & Uniteen Leaders,

Winter is upon us now and the holidays are a perfect time to reflect on how each of us brings our unique gifts and talents to the world. Often we find ourselves feeling overwhelmed and unprepared for the task or event we may be dealing with. Let us remember that God's light is within each one of us, guiding our hands and words as we meet or exceed all expectations.

Consider for a moment the manger that held the newly born Christ child. The manger was a lowly item. Designed for holding feed for animals it was hardly expected to hold the Light of the World. Yet that is exactly what it did.

Are we any different than that humble vessel? Certainly not. And has God set us up to fail at whatever He has called us to do? You can rest assured that God never sets us up to fail. We are always surrounded by the people and things we need to succeed. We have only to look around us and accept what God has given us into our lives. Perhaps it is a friend, a parent, a child, a teacher or co-worker or someone you hardly know whom God has chosen to lead you.

As we move through the holiday season and into new year, remember to be accepting of God's gifts and know that each person and event in your life is a gift regardless of how it may appear.

In Peace & Light,  
Eileen Patra, Uniteen Consultant  
Great Lakes Region

*"Only Love Prevails"*

Great Lakes Region

## 2003 Fall Unitreat



## Circle of Light

Once again Uniteens and their Leaders from all over the Great Lakes Region joined together for a weekend retreat, meeting new friends, sharing their Light, and having fun.

The 2003 Fall Unitreat was held in Ingleside, Illinois November 14-16. Church groups took part in an exciting teams course that was one of the most well-liked events of the weekend.

Also enjoyed at the Unitreat was time for Spirit Groups (small group activities), walking a labyrinth, making mandalas, dancing, singing and playing games.

Overall, it was a great weekend with lots of opportunities for prayer, fun and spiritual growth.

Join us in Jackson, Michigan April 30-May 2, 2004 for our next regional Unitreat.

(see pictures p. 6-7)

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<p><b>Jan 17</b></p> 	<p><b>"Uniteen Leader Training"</b>                  Regional Training Event                  Renaissance Unity, Warren, Michigan                  Uniteen Workshop: Eileen Patra, Uniteen Consultant                  Youth Director Workshop: Diane Venzera, Children's Consultant.                  Diane Venzera 708-848-0960 or <a href="mailto:Consultant@kids.org">Consultant@kids.org</a>                  Eileen Patra 248-399-4689 or <a href="mailto:Uniteens@glruniteens.org">Uniteens@glruniteens.org</a></p>
<p><b>Feb 28</b></p> 	<p><b>"Uniteen Leader Training"</b>                  Regional Training Event                  Unity of the Valley, Savage, Minnesota                  Uniteen Workshop: Eileen Patra, Uniteen Consultant                  Youth Director Workshop: Diane Venzera, Children's Consultant.                  Diane Venzera 708-848-0960 or <a href="mailto:Consultant@kids.org">Consultant@kids.org</a>                  Eileen Patra 248-399-4689 or <a href="mailto:Uniteens@glruniteens.org">Uniteens@glruniteens.org</a></p>
<p><b>Mar 27</b></p> 	<p><b>"Uniteen Leader Training"</b>                  Regional Training Event                  Unity Church of Dayton, Ohio                  Uniteen Workshop: Eileen Patra, Uniteen Consultant                  Youth Director Workshop: Diane Venzera, Children's Consultant.                  Diane Venzera 708-848-0960 or <a href="mailto:Consultant@kids.org">Consultant@kids.org</a>                  Eileen Patra 248-399-4689 or <a href="mailto:Uniteens@glruniteens.org">Uniteens@glruniteens.org</a></p>
<p><b>Apr 30</b>                  —  <b>May 2</b></p> 	<p><b>2004 Spring Unitreat</b>                  YMCA Storer Camps, Jackson, Michigan                  A weekend retreat for <b>Uniteens</b> (Grades 6-8) and their leaders/chaperones. Uniteens must be in at least the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to attend. Details &amp; registration materials available in January, 2004.</p>
<p><b>Nov 5</b>                  —  <b>Nov 7</b></p> 	<p><b>2004 Fall Unitreat</b>                  YMCA Camp Duncan, Ingleside, Illinois                  A weekend retreat for <b>Uniteens</b> (Grades 6-8) and their leaders/chaperones. Uniteens must be in at least the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to attend. Details &amp; registration materials available in August, 2004.</p>

**Online Registration**

You can now register for the training events online. Visit the Uniteen website at [www.glruniteens.org/page2.html](http://www.glruniteens.org/page2.html) for details.





# TV Review

**“Joan of Arcadia”**  
Fridays, 8:00 p.m. EST

I you haven't seen Joan of Arcadia, CBS' replacement for “Touched By An Angel”, tune in next Friday for a true treat. Joan, an Arcadia, California high school student frequently talks to God. Like the “Oh God” movies, Joan sees God in human form but the form is constantly changing. God appears to her as a teenage boy, an old woman, a street cleaner, and various other unlikely individuals.

No one knows about Joan's recurring visits from God, including Joan's family who is made up of a loving and somewhat doting mother, a chief-of-police father, an older, paraplegic brother and a science/math whiz, younger brother. Joan's family finds her behavior a bit strange but is often surprised by her role in some rather fantastic outcomes.

The truly wonderful thing about this show is its message. Each week Joan is asked by God to do something that seems at best out of character and sometimes a bit dangerous or frightening. However insignificant or unusual the request might seem to be, the small act that Joan is asked to perform always has great significance in the lives of others.

In this week's episode Joan was told to ask Ramsey, the school troublemaker to the semi-formal dance. This young man was an outcast at school with a history of fighting and violent outbursts. Joan's parents were very worried about her dating this person and allowed it only if she met the boy at the dance and stayed within her mother's view. (her mom was a chaperone at the dance.) Joan was strictly forbidden to get in a vehicle with Ramsey.

A bizarre set of circumstances and more comments from God (now the D.J.) led Joan into Ramsey's truck and ultimately to a scene where Ramsey threatens to take his own life. In the end, the young man's life is saved and God visits Joan again to let her know how important her role really was. Simply by being an observer, God told her, she not only saved Ramsey's life but the lives of many other students and teachers who would have been in the path of his violent outburst. Without Joan's presence, the event would have happened the next day during school. God continues to explain how our willingness to enter the Light for just a moment and recognize even the smallest amount of it in others produces monumental results.

I invite you to watch this show and encourage your Uniteens to watch it as well. The message is always clear and aligns well with Unity principles. Video taping the show and using clips from it would be a great addition to a Sunday lesson.

- Eileen Patra

## NEW RESOURCES FOR UNITEEN LEADERS

### **“The Universe Is Calling Me To Sing”**

Association of  
Unity Churches. 2003



Now available! A CD of new Unity music for youth programs has been released by the Association. The CD can be supplemented with a music book that includes sheet music, lyrics, and guitar chords. This is a wonderful tool, designed specifically for musically challenged teachers and leaders to bring music to their programs.

To order call the Association at 816-524-7414  
6903 The Universe is Calling Me to Sing – CD \$10.00  
6903 The Universe is Calling Me to Sing – Songbook \$8.00

# What Makes Them Clique?



Ursula Uniteen and Michael Middle-Schooler have graduated from the fifth grade and entered the awesome, yet frightening world of Middle School. Quite suddenly they seem to have limited their friendships to just a few close friends. Kids they were friends with just a few months ago seem to have fallen by the wayside and become excluded from the group. What happened?

Donna Eder, Indiana University researcher shows three major reasons that middle-school youth tend to form cliques.

**1. Larger school population.** Most middle schools are fed by several elementary schools. The number of students may be 4 or 5 times higher than previously experienced. This can be an overwhelming experience and the need for safety and social acceptance is huge. According to Eder, the larger school population "... encourages the development of more distinct friendship groups or cliques."<sup>1</sup>

**2. Extracurricular activities and special interests.** To some extent, new groups are formed naturally as a result of more defined special interests. Band students will tend to bond with other band students, student council members will tend to hang out together and the football players and cheerleaders will tend to form their own cliques. Ursula Uniteen and Michael Middle-Schooler may have been best friends in elementary school but Ursula's new band friends are as excited about music as she is and Michael's new friends on the student council share many of his developing viewpoints about the world.

**3. Status and esteem.** As middle school students become more aware of themselves as

separate from their families they have a growing need to know what their place is in the world. Cliques seem to offer them a place to view how others perceive them and help them begin to explore who they are and what their place in the world might be. Throughout the middle school years, the cliques become more firmly established with an increasingly defined hierarchy.

## WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

Although the clique phenomena will become less important as middle school youth move into high school, it can be the source of very difficult experiences. Here are some ways we can help our Uniteens during this trying time in their lives.

- Interactive learning activities.
  - Plan activities that group kids together with people they might normally avoid.
  - Make cooperation one of your ministry goals.
  - Find fun ways to pair kids for discussions and one-on-one affirmations; i.e.:
    - Find partner with the same size pinky finger
    - Find partner with the same color eyes
    - Find partner with a different hobby/interest
- Non-Sunday, Off-site Experiences. Removing kids from their regular routine helps to break down walls built by cliques.
  - Overnight trips, such as rafting, camping, etc. Give each person or small group an important responsibility to fill. Give them

opportunities to recognize one another's abilities or put them in situations where they have to depend on one another.

- Day or Evening trip. Even a trip to a local theme park, the zoo or putt-putt golf can provide opportunities for your group to learn the importance of acceptance, listening and forgiveness.
  - Area-wide events. Plan an area wide event for two or three local Uniteen groups. This will give your group an opportunity to recognize themselves as part of a larger group of teens.
  - Regional retreats. Take your group to a regional Uniteen retreat. They will have opportunities to meet and identify with a much larger group. They will spend time with new people and learn about acceptance, teamwork and listening skills in a fun, exciting and safe atmosphere.
- Teach friendship skills. Often the kids have very inadequate friendship skills. Help them learn the importance of listening, affirming one another and looking for ways to serve each other.
- Provide lessons for improving self image. When a youth has a more positive self image they have less need for outside approval.
- Resources for lessons on friendship/self esteem include:
    - Relationships: Uniteen Life Issues. Association of Unity Churches.
    - Self-Image: Uniteen Life Issues. Association of Unity Churches.
    - Connecting Teens To Truth. Southeast Region Y.O.U. Sponsors
    - Group's Best Junior High Meetings, Volume 1. Group Publishing..

None of these suggestions will instantly or permanently remove the tendency of middle school youth to form cliques. It is a natural part of growing up. However, these experiences will help to make a crack in the wall and allow them to glimpse the Light

within themselves and others. You may not see the results, but be assured that the experiences will have an affect on them.

By helping your Uniteens to break down walls, build basic friendship skills and improve their own self esteem you will be helping to make this difficult period in their lives a little easier and a little less stressful.

**You make a difference!**

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<sup>1</sup> Jr. High Ministry. April/May 1992

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## Leadership Tips

New to leading a Uniteen group? Here are few tips to help you relax and enjoy the experience.

- Prepare well in advance
  - If possible prepare 2-3 weeks in advance
  - Being well prepared will help you to relax and your meeting will go more smoothly
- Carefully read the instructions for leading the activity.
  - Be Sure you understand how the activity works
  - If you have questions check with your adult assistant or youth director prior to the meeting
- Gather all the supplies you will need
  - Check with your adult assistant or youth director before spending money on supplies
  - Keep all materials together
- Do any necessary preparation well before the meeting (i.e. making game boards, preparing and photocopying handouts, selecting music, etc.)
  - Don't put off preparations, you may run out of time
  - Preparing materials Sunday morning just before the meeting will likely raise your stress level and reduce your personal prayer time
- Arrive early to prepare your meeting space and center yourself
  - Be sure to spend some time in prayer and meditation just before your meeting.

# Photos of

# Circle of Light

# Fall Unitreat

Nov. 14-16, 2003  
Ingleside, Illinois



"Falling!" A teams course activity



Sharing Our Light With Skits



Human Circles of Light



Just Hangin' Out



Making Mandalas



Dancin' The YMCA at the YMCA



Speaking of Labyrinths...



Watch Our Circle Glow



Evening Celebration Game Room



Walking The Labyrinth