

Theological Statement

We Are the Church -Purpose

This weekend retreat experience is designed to enable youth with various church group identities to come together and explore aspects of our identity and the values important to participation in the community of faith. For many, Confirmation is a rite of passage and a time for youth to explore authentic discipleship in the context of their church, in relationship with the wider Christian community, and of course, their daily lives. The retreat is designed to be developmentally appropriate for youth in Grades 7-9, and is designed to connect youth (and their adult advisors) to one another wherever they find themselves in their own faith journey. For some, these explorations will be new, for others it will be another look at an evolving journey of Christian identity and discipleship. Throughout the retreat aspects of these concepts are explored:

- ✧ Our identity and values as beloved children of God.
- ✧ Our identity and values as disciples within the faith community and,
- ✧ The identity and values of the United Church of Christ (and other mainline denominations as appropriate for Federated Congregations).

“When Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting on him. A voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him.’”
Matthew 3:16-17

“I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.” John 17:21

The Role of the Facilitators who lead your weekend will be to:

1. Provide a time of discovery for youth to explore their discipleship, the faith community that currently forms them and the six vital themes of the United Church of Christ.
2. In collaboration with church leaders to create a context in which to explore what it means to be a member of the “body of Christ” and affirm that continued discovery and participation are essential to authentic and meaningful life in the church and the world. (Discipleship)
3. To offer youth and their accompanying advisors a time of retreat and renewal through shared play, shared experiences, symbols and sacrament, and Christian themes.