



Faith Formation Leadership Program FAQs

What is the Faith Formation Leadership Program?

This program is offered as both a Certificate program and as a series of **online** classes that may be taken as stand-alone opportunities for those only interested in certain topics. Specific information about the classes is found in the FAQ section below.

***** Please note that these classes do not meet requirements for ordination.***

Who is this program for?

The classes offered through the Faith Formation Leadership Program are open to both lay leaders and authorized ministers who wish to further their education and understanding about faith formation in the 21st Century.

While specifically designed for the Southern New England Conference (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut), anyone outside of the United Church of Christ and southern New England may participate with the understanding that the focus will be on ministry within a United Church of Christ congregation.

Mission, Goals, and Objectives

Mission:

The Faith Formation Leadership Program of the Southern New England Conference seeks to fulfill its mission by:

- equipping leaders by making disciples of Jesus;
- promoting and sharing best practices for bringing new life as agents of change;
- fostering collegial community and relationships, forming covenant partnerships;
- and working together to make God's love and justice real.

Goal & Objectives:

The Faith Formation Leadership Program strives to meet the needs of all of our United Church of Christ faith formation leaders — paid or volunteer, bi-vocational, professional, part-time or full-time, called or employed — through theological and philosophical foundations alongside practical, experiential tools by

- ✓ affirming skills and capacities and matching them to the work of forming disciples;
- ✓ supporting participants in collaboration, networking, and relationship-building;
- ✓ identifying and supporting leadership styles; and
- ✓ promoting innovation, problem-solving, out-of-the box thinking, and adaptability.

Class Descriptions

- **Students may begin the program at any time with any class.**
- **Classes are 3 contact hours;** actual in-class time is between 3.5 and 4 hours.
- **Each class is offered twice via Zoom** — participants choose which date is most convenient for them.
- **Certificates in Faith Formation &/or Youth Ministry Leadership** are awarded to students who complete all of the classes listed below.
- **Classes are also offered a la carte** for those who do not need or desire a Certificate.
- **These classes do not fulfill requirements for ordination.**

2022-2023

Developing Faith — Ages and Stages

An overview of human development based on the work of Piaget, Erikson, and Gardner; and faith development based on the work of Fowler and Westerhoff.

Living Into the Mystery — Worship and Sacraments in the United Church of Christ

An overview of the worship tradition of the United Church of Christ, tracing its history back to early Christian practices, particularly Baptism and Communion.

Making Disciples — Theories and Practices for the 21st Century

How the grounding principles of education, formation, and living in the ways of Jesus can be developed and used to make disciples of all ages in today's congregations.

Creating Safe Environments — Policies and Procedures

Explore why congregations need a safe church policy and how to create one for the specific needs of the congregation.

Adaptive and Innovative Leadership

Engage in creative thinking that inspires slant approaches to faith formational ministries in a post-pandemic world.

Faith Formation 101 — Practices for a Sustainable Ministry

Explore the nuts and bolts of organizing and implementing faith formation programs in the local church; recruiting, nurturing, and supporting volunteers; leadership skills, and working on a church staff.

**This class is optional for those seeking certification who only have youth ministry in their job description.*

Youth Ministry 101 — Practices for a Sustainable Ministry

Explore the nuts and bolts alongside the theological foundations of organizing and implementing youth ministry programs in the local church, recruiting, nurturing, and supporting volunteers, leadership skills, and working on a church staff.

**This class is optional for those seeking certification who do not have youth ministry in their job description.*

Racial Justice

Create a common language around racism, to unmask racism in our lives, and to encourage long-term engagement in racial justice ministry as a spiritual issue. *

**Does not meet UCC Member In Discernment or clergy requirements.*

2023-2024

Engaging Our Sacred Scripture's Story

An overview of the formation, contents, structure, and flow of the Bible.

Exploring the United Church of Christ — Our History, Our Beliefs, Our identity

An overview of the birth, development, structure, beliefs, values, and ethos of the United Church of Christ.

***Does not meet UCC Member In Discernment requirements.*

Serving Together — Mission for All Ages

Explore the differences between charity and justice from biblical and developmental perspectives in light of offering mission and service opportunities for children, youth, families, and the congregation.

Boundary Awareness for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Leaders and Church Musicians

This introductory class will equip faith formation and youth ministry leaders and church musicians with the basics of healthy boundaries. This class will explore the joys and challenges of ministering to and with children and youth while serving on a local church staff. Through reading, conversation, and case studies, participants will create their own guiding principles for ethical behavior in ministry.

***Does not fulfill the Boundary Awareness requirement for clergy.*

Exploring Curriculum & Digital Resources

How to evaluate, select, and adapt curriculum materials based on the appropriateness for the congregation's needs and mission. Includes an overview of the United Church of Christ / Unitarian Universalist *Our Whole Lives* sexuality materials as well as a review of current practices for using social media for communications, connections, and spiritual formation.

Racial Justice

Create a common language around racism, to unmask racism in our lives, and to encourage long-term engagement in racial justice ministry as a spiritual issue.

**Does not meet UCC Member In Discernment or clergy requirements.*

FAQs

Who may take these classes?

Both lay persons and authorized ministers who wish to further their education and understanding about faith formation in the 21st Century: congregational leaders such as faith formation leaders, youth ministry leaders, Sunday School teachers, Confirmation leaders, ministers of faith formation, youth ministers, pastors, Members in Discernment, interested lay persons — anyone who is passionate about nurturing disciples of all ages effectively.

Where can I find specific details about each class, like the meeting time and instructor?

Visit the Faith Formation Leadership Program's webpage at <https://www.sneucc.org/certification>.

Do I have to attend both offerings of each class?

No; just choose the date that is most convenient for you for each class offered.

Is there a required order for taking classes?

No; participants may begin the program with any class session.

What is the structure of each class session?

Each class session (offered via Zoom) begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. with introductions and announcements. Students are to be online no later than 8:25 a.m. in order to allow for solving any technical issues that may arise. The class itself begins at 9:00 a.m.

How long is each class session?

Each session begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends no later than 12:30 p.m.

Who are the instructors?

Class instructors are ministers or lay persons who are considered experts within their specific faith formation ministry. You may read more about each one by clicking on the "2-Year Class List & Descriptions with Instructors" link on the the Faith Formation Leadership Program webpage: <https://www.sneucc.org/certification>

What is the cost?

Individual session: \$45

There is a \$25 discount for taking all classes in one program year.

We encourage the local church to cover the cost of their participant as a show of support for their ministry in the congregation. For those taking the classes for the Certificate in Faith Formation (&/or Youth Ministry) Leadership, we also encourage the participant's local church to cover the costs of the membership in the Association of United Church Educators (AUCE; <http://www.auce-ucc.org>), attendance at Super Saturday (<https://www.sneucc.org/supersaturday>), and at the New England Association of United Church Educators Conference (<https://www.auce-ucc.org/new-england>).

How do I register?

Visit <https://www.sneucc.org/certification> where you will find a registration button next to each class description. **Be sure to register for each class separately** by clicking on that class' unique registration button. Participants may register for a class no later than two days prior to the class session.

Who do I contact with questions about my registration and/or payment?

Questions regarding your registration and/or your payments for the classes may be addressed to Sean Amato, Program Support Associate, at amatos@sneucc.org.

I am not responsible for youth ministry at my church. Do I have to take the youth ministry class for the certificate?

No. However, we offer a certificate in “Faith Formation & Youth Ministry Leadership” if one is also responsible for youth ministries in their congregation. A certificate in Youth Ministry Leadership is available for those whose ministry is only with teens.

Do I have to complete the Certificate Program or can I just take one or a few classes?

All classes are open to both those who are working toward the Certificate as well as all who are interested in only a specific class or classes. The Certificate Program is an option for those who desire to complete the two years of classes.

Do these classes fulfill requirements for ordination?

No, they do not, but they do provide a good introduction to ministry in the church.

Are there reading and written assignments?

Only the Boundary Awareness class has a pre-reading assignment (about forty 8.5 x 11 pages). And following each class session, participants are sent a link to an online form to respond to two reflection questions. These responses are not graded; however, they provide accountability for the participants as they process the learnings from the class.

I wish to complete the Certificate Program. How long will it take?

It is possible to complete the program in two years; however, we understand that many have other commitments that would make this timeframe impossible. Participants are welcome to take as long as is needed to complete the program.

What is required for the Certificate in Faith Formation (& Youth Ministry) Leadership?

See the Expectations of Students page below.

How do I keep track of my completed Certificate requirements?

Visit <https://www.sneucc.org/certification> for a Word doc “Class Tracking Form” for Certificate students found under “Quick Links for Program Registrants” near the bottom of the webpage.

After completing the Certificate requirements, what happens next?

The Faith Formation Ministry Partners will review your class tracking form and attendance lists, confirm that you have met the requirements, and if accepted, you will attend an Exit Interview with the Faith Formation Ministry Partners and Program Administrator, and then be invited to the online certificate presentation event in the fall to receive your certificate.

Who should I contact if I have more questions?

Debbie Gline Allen, Minister of Faith Formation, at glineallend@sneucc.org or call 508-244-4332.

Expectations of Students

in the Faith Formation Leadership Certificate Program

- ✓ Attend all required class sessions via Zoom (3 contact hours each).
 - Developing Faith — Ages and Stages
 - Engaging Our Sacred Scripture's Story
 - Living Into the Mystery — Worship and Sacraments in the United Church of Christ
 - Exploring the United Church of Christ — Our History, Our Beliefs, Our identity
 - Making Disciples — Theories and Practices for the 21st Century
 - Serving Together — Mission for All Ages
 - Boundary Awareness for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Leaders
 - Faith Formation 101 — Practices for a Sustainable Ministry
 - Exploring Curriculum & Digital Resources
 - Youth Ministry 101 — Practices for a Sustainable Ministry (if needed)
 - Creating Safe Environments — Policies and Practices
 - Racial Justice
 - Adaptive and Innovative Leadership

2 Electives

Any workshop, webinar, class, course, etc. taken outside of the SNEUCC Faith Formation Leadership Program that will be useful for the students' current ministry.

Recommended events that provide good electives are:

- Super Saturday (<https://www.sneucc.org/supersaturday>)
- New England Association of United Church Educators Conference (<https://www.auce-ucc.org/new-england>)
- Institutions found on our Continuing Education webpage (<https://www.sneucc.org/continuing-education>)
- and/or a webinar/workshop/class/course of your own choosing.

Electives must be at least 1 to 1.5 hours each

- ✓ Keep track of classes taken.

Include the date, the instructor, and keep a copy of your reflection responses. A class tracking form is available on the Faith Formation Leadership Certificate Program webpage (<https://www.sneucc.org/certification>) found under "Quick Links for Registrants." This form will also serve as part of your request for Certification after you have completed all of the requirements.
- ✓ Submit responses to the Reflection Questions for each class session.
- ✓ Regular participation in a Faith Formation & Youth Ministry Leader Community of Practice (<https://www.sneucc.org/faith-formation-leadership-program-community-of-practice-requirement>).
- ✓ Membership in the Association of United Church Educators.

Visit their website to become a member: www.auce-ucc.org. Strongly encourage your church to pay for this membership in support of your ministry with them.
- ✓ Keep your pastor, Faith Formation/Youth Committee, and congregation updated on your learnings and progress.
- ✓ Pay for Core Class sessions as soon as possible after registering.

If your church doesn't already pay for these classes, strongly encourage them to do so, as a show of support for your ministry with them. Questions about payment may be addressed to Sean Amato, Program Support Associate, at amatos@sneucc.org.

Equivalent Classes

For those who are unable to attend one of the classes within this program or have already taken a class on the same topic, equivalent classes may be accepted as having fulfilled the requirements for that class. To be considered an equivalent, the class/course/workshop/webinar must be at least 3 contact hours (at least 1.5 to 2 contact hours for electives). A copy of a transcript or certificate with the student's name, date(s), and instructor(s) included, submitted to the administrator of this program, will suffice as proof of having taken the class.

Keeping Covenant in a UCC Congregation

You are encouraged to attend Annual Meetings of your local congregation, your Association, and your Conference to gain a better understanding of the United Church of Christ (or your congregation's denomination) and your role and responsibilities as one who ministers in a UCC (or other denomination's) congregation. If you have the opportunity to attend a national UCC General Synod (or your own denomination's national meeting/gathering), you will not regret it. Attendance at these meetings/gatherings is not required for Certification, but they will serve you well as a part of your training in faith formation ministries.

Questions?

More specific details about this program are provided at <https://www.sneucc.org/certification>. You may also contact the program administrator, Debbie Gline Allen, at glineallend@sneucc.org or 508-244-4332.