

## 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 Il 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 Il 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 Il 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.

## **Session 9 Reading: Plugging In**

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 Il Shim class may become the Pastor one day. Someone in your Il 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!