

Searching for a Christian Educator

1. Obtain a copy of *The Professional Church Educator's Guide*.

This comprehensive resource gives guidance as to what to look for in a Christian educator and worksheets to help churches develop position descriptions, a call agreement, a service of installation, as well as a model for periodic review. It can be obtained through United Church of Christ Resources by calling 800.537.3394 and asking for item WE001.

2. Type of Christian Educator

See "Calling and Compensating Christian Educators" below.

3. Contact the person responsible for overseeing Christian education in your conference.

There you may ask for assistance by requesting a copy of your conference's compensation guidelines and advertising in conference and regional publications. If looking for an ordained educator, request that the conference minister contact Parish Life and Leadership at the national offices of the United Church of Christ for access to profiles of potential candidates.

4. Obtain a copy of your conference's compensation guidelines for educators.

If they do not have one, consider the model set forth by the New Hampshire Conference, "Calling and Compensating Christian Educators." [See below.] The Massachusetts and Ohio Conferences offer guidelines as well:

<http://www.macucc.org>

<http://www.ocucc.org>

5. If the position is full time and salaried, consider advertising in national settings, such as:

The United Church News Classified

Go to www.ucc.org/classifieds for contact information.

The Association of United Church Educators (AUCE) website and newsletter.

Go to www.auce-educators.org for contact information.

Also consider advertising in your local, regional, and secular news publications, and at local and regional education events/conferences.

6. Consider contacting colleges and seminaries that offer courses of study in Religious Education, such as:

Andover Newton Theological Seminary, 200 Herrick Rd., Newton Centre, MA 02459

www.ants.edu

617.964.1100

Catawba College, 2300 West Innes St., Salisbury, NC 28144

www.catawba.edu

704.637.4402

Chicago Theological Seminary, 5757 South University Ave., Chicago, IL 60637

www.ctschicago.edu

773.752.5757

Eden Theological Seminary, 475 East Lockwood Ave., Saint Louis, MO 63119-3192

www.eden.edu

800.969.3627

Defiance College, 710 N. Clinton St., Defiance, OH 43512

www.defiance.edu

800.520.GODC

Interdenominational Theological Center, 671 Beckwith St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30314

www.itc.edu

404.527.7792

Lancaster Theological Seminary, 555 West James St., Lancaster, PA 17603-2897
www.lts.org
800.393.0654

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, 3000 Fifth St. NW, New Brighton, MN 55112
www.unitedseminary-mn.org
651.633.4311

Calling and Compensating Christian Educators

from the *NH Conference UCC Clergy Compensation Guidelines*

Types of Christian Educators

Education and Experience of Christian Educators: The educational background of Christian educators is as different and varied as each individual. Some discover their call to be a Christian educator early on, and are able to follow a college (and sometimes graduate school) curriculum which gives them a good academic background in Bible, theology, and educational theory. Others arrive at a position in Christian education much later, but are able to use their life experiences in the church as well as their secular employment experience to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

What follows are some guidelines for understanding what many Christian educators have studied with the understanding that no two educators' training and experience is the same.

Minister of Christian Education: A minister of Christian education may either be ordained or commissioned. An ordained minister is a minister of the word and sacrament with some training in Christian education. Commissioned ministers of Christian education have completed very similar training as ordained ministers, but have focused their training specifically in the area of Christian education, and have chosen to have their calling in Christian education recognized as an authorized ministry by the United Church of Christ. The Christian education training of these persons will be similar to that described for the Director of Christian Education.

Director of Christian Education, Christian Education Co-Coordinator: This person usually has been trained in the area of Christian education and has a Bachelor's or a Master's degree in a related area or attendance in a denominational training program in Christian education. This background education should include a basic knowledge of the Bible, theology, educational theory, developmental age characteristics, and possibly some group process and administrative skills.

Church School Superintendent: Most Church School Superintendents mainly serve in an administrative capacity since the duties of the job often prevent them from teaching a church school class. (This may not be the case in churches with less than 15 children in the program, where the Superintendent may also serve as a church School teacher.) This person may recruit church school teachers, order curriculum, maintain church school supplies, and serve as the church school contact person, as well as complete other related duties which are deemed necessary within a particular congregation. This person may be a high school graduate with several years of church school teaching experience, or someone with any college degree who enjoys administration and has had church school teaching experience. Needless to say, this person should also work well with people.

Other Considerations

Full-Time or Part-Time: Hiring a person for a part-time position requires that a number of lay persons are ready to accept the responsibility of carrying out most of the “hands-on” tasks that are involved in the Christian education program. A professional working part-time should only be expected to carry out the tasks that need an experienced/trained person.

Covenant or contract: It is strongly recommended that a covenant or contract be written and signed once a Christian educator has been hired, in much the same way that is done for the pastor. This should make clear the lines of responsibility and accountability, the hiring and firing procedures, the frequency of performance and salary reviews, and the responsibilities of the position. This contract should be reviewed and updated as often as is the contract for the clergy.

Accountability: In order to help in the transition of bringing on a new staff person, it is strongly recommended that a staff relations committee be put in place. This group of parishioners will be responsible for seeing that a contract is maintained, will conduct performance and salary reviews, follow the hiring and firing procedures as outlined in the contract, and see that the lines of responsibility and accountability are clear and followed.

Background Check: A background check must be completed on all candidates being interviewed for any position in Christian education to comply with the New Hampshire Conference Safer Spaces Policy.

Compensation

The compensation for Christian education staff should be appropriate to the individual's education and experience. Persons with experience in complementary fields (such as art, music, and drama, for instance) should have this expertise considered in the discussion of the compensation package as well. What follows are some basic guidelines with which to start creating a compensation package. The number of years of church education experience and the number of Christian education workshops and continuing education courses taken also should be considered when determining the salary for a Christian educator.

For a full time Christian education position in the church --

- A person who is ordained or commissioned should be compensated according to the conference's guidelines for clergy.
- A person who holds a master's degree in religious or public school education should be compensated relative to the equivalent of a public school teacher in the church's district with the same education and same years of experience.
- A person who holds a bachelor's degree in religious or public school education should be compensated relative to the equivalent of a public school teacher in the church's district with the same education and same years of experience.
- A person who has completed the equivalent of a denominational noncredit program of training in church education should be compensated at least 80% of the salary of a first year public school teacher in the church's district.
- For those who have organizational skills and some educational background but little training or experience in Christian education, we recommend compensation at no less than 60% of what a public school teacher in the church's district receives. We also recommend that the church pay for this person to complete a program of training in Christian education.

As a person receives more training, the salary package should be adjusted annually with a pay raise that recognizes this achievement.

Salary for part-time positions would be the appropriate percentage of the full-time salary guidelines.

United Church of Christ Certification for Church Educators

While Certification is to be encouraged, it is not necessarily a prerequisite for employment in the United Church of Christ. UCC Certified Church Educators have participated in a process that includes personal assessment, goal setting, continuing education, peer review, and reflection on their vocation. Certification also should be considered when determining the salary for a Christian educator. For more information about UCC Certification for Church Educators, see www.ucc.org/education/certified.

Benefits Package

Consideration needs to be taken in including enough benefits for Christian educators to accomplish their jobs effectively with a physically and spiritually healthy lifestyle. Suggestions for a benefits package are found below.

Part Time Position
(Minimum of 20 Hours Worked Per Week)

Benefits to include:

- Social Security Supplement
- UCC Pension for Lay Workers
- UCC Health/Dental Insurance for Lay Workers
- Paid Vacation - 4 weeks per year
- Leaves of Absence - negotiable with employer
- Sick Leave - accumulative at the rate of one day per month for up to thirty days per year

Job-related Expense Allowances to include:

- Books, magazines, and other resource materials
- Organization dues
- State and National Memberships
- Conferences
- State and National Ecumenical Events
- Travel Expenses - at the IRS Allowable Rate

Sabbatical:

- None

Full-Time Position
(Minimum of 35 Hours Worked Per Week)

Benefits to include:

- Social Security Supplement
- UCC Pension for Lay Workers
- UCC Health/Dental Insurance for Lay Workers
- Paid Vacation - 4 weeks per year
- Leaves of Absence - negotiable with employer
- Sick Leave - accumulative at the rate of one day per month for up to thirty days per year

Job Related Expense Allowances to include:

- Books, magazines, and other resource materials
- Organization dues
- State and National Memberships
- Conferences
- State and National Ecumenical Events
- Continuing Education Costs
- Travel Expenses - at the IRS allowable rate

Sabbatical:

- 2 to 3 months for every five years served

This information is reprinted with permission from *The Professional Church Educator's Guide*, which is published by the Association of United Church Educators (www.auce-educators.org). There is much useful information in this booklet about what to look for when hiring a Christian educator, how to develop a job description, conducting annual reviews, and the like. It is strongly recommended that each church and its educator acquire a copy, as the information it provides is invaluable in hiring and working with professional Christian educators. Copies of this resource are available from United Church Resources at 800.537.3394.