

## OPERATION: "CLOSE ENCOUNTERS"

### 1-on-1 INTERACTIONS WITH POTENTIAL UNITARIANS

On Saturday September 20, approximately 30 U\*Us from 8 congregations in and around the GTA attended the Close Encounters Workshop hosted by Neighbourhood congregation.

The workshop was all about how we interact with people and talk about our U\*Uism - how we present our faith, and how we can intrigue people to find out more about us. (And, hopefully, become a member of a U\*U congregation!)

After some preliminary discussion, the participants split into 5 breakout groups, each to focus on one particular kind of a one-on-one encounter between a U\*U and a "Proto-U\*U" (someone who might want to become a U\*U, or who might already be U\*U but doesn't know it!).

These encounter scenarios explored were:

- Talking with a Friend;
- In the Workplace;
- At a Cocktail Party;
- Community Event/Trade Show; and
- At Coffee Hour / Congregational Event.

The groups discussed what techniques had worked well in the past, and what might be done to improve the interaction. This might include developing specific "tools" (such as printed material), or providing training. The groups were also asked to identify critical success factors.

The detailed notes from each of the groups have been packaged as an Appendix to this summary.

### TOOLS

The specific **tools** that were identified to help improve encounters were as follows:

#### **7 Principles Cards**

Wallet-sized card including 7 Principles and contact info. to get more information (website and phone no.).

#### **U\*U Soundbites**

Snippets of information that have been practised and can be easily recalled, including:

- Personal Elevator Speeches;
- "What's In It For Me" ("WIIFM") Statements;
- Tidbits of U\*U History;
- U\*U Stats. (e.g. Congregations in Canada, Presence around the world.).
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**Introductory Booklet**

More than a leaflet, designed to garner interest. Produced in high volume for ready distribution.

**Newcomer Information Package**

A collection of information on a specific congregation, designed to give sufficient background on the activities of the congregation.

**Promo Items**

- Pins/Broaches
- Coffee Cups
- Decals
- Greeting Cards
- Key Rings
- Clothing
- Posters

**Booth Display**

Formal booth-style presentation and display configuration complete with backdrop and tabletops.

Each tool was considered beneficial in a number of encounter situations:

TOOLS	Talking with a Friend	In the Workplace	Cocktail Party	Community Event	Coffee Hour / Congregational Event
7 Principles Cards	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
U*U Soundbites	High	High	High	High	High
Introductory Booklet	High	Medium	Low	High	High
Newcomer Info. Package	High	Medium	Low	Medium	High
Promo Items	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low
Booth Display	Low	Low	Low	High	Low

Impact:  High  
Medium  
Low

## **VISUAL IDENTITY**

A key initial activity prior to embarking on the development of the specific tools will be a "**Visual Identity**" process to determine the overall "look-and-feel" to be reflected throughout the materials to be developed - thereby promoting a professional, consistent image.

## **TRAINING**

In addition, **Training** was deemed necessary for U\*Us to help them in ALL of the encounter situations. A comprehensive "**Close Encounters**" **Training Program** is envisaged. The notes developed during the workshop breakout sessions (included in the Appendix) will be valuable in developing the course material.

## **NEXT STEPS**

As a first step, **cost estimates** will be developed with input from professional designers. Funding will be procured prior to starting work. There will, of course, be regular feedback to the congregations.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Kalvin Drake  
Unitarian Congregations of Greater Toronto (UCGT) /  
Congregational Networker, CUC Central Region (East)

Close Encounters Workshop Attendees

Sep 20, 2003

<b><u>Congregation</u></b>	<b><u>Attendee</u></b>
Don Heights	Jim Montgomery
Don Heights	Rev. Emily Morse Palmer
Don Heights	Ron Weigand
Don Heights	Sharyn Devine
Durham	Andy Piebalgs
Durham	Cynthia Garland
Durham	Lucy Sanford
Durham	Rev. Cheryl Jacks
Elora Fergus	Christine Nye
Elora Fergus	Ellen Papenburg
Huronia	Alexander Hamilton
Huronia	Donna Halliday
Huronia	Hendrika van Kooten
Huronia	Sylvia & Warren Andrews
Neighbourhood	Ed Preston
Neighbourhood	Ernie Kulnies
Peterborough	Andrew Picton
South Peel	Barbara Ennis
South Peel	Janine Lewis
South Peel	Karyn Burney
South Peel	Yvonne Greig
Toronto First	Art Brewer
Toronto First	Beverley Grace
Toronto First	Helen Iacovino
Toronto First	Janine Gliener
Toronto First	Kalvin Drake
Toronto First	Nancy Krygsman
Toronto First	Nancy MacTavish