Our families and communities often define us and our individual worlds. Community might refer to your cultural group, extended family, religious group, neighborhood or school, sports team or club, co-workers, etc. Describe the world you come from and how you, as a product of it, might add to the diversity of the University of Washington. (300 words)

I’ve never imagined having a religious group as my second family. When I first thought of “church organizations,” the image that comes to mind are stodgy, pious worshipers that have found absolute devotion to the Lord. However, the reality was a lot different.

I initially joined the church apostles to serve the Lord and, partially, because my parents covertly wished so. I didn't expect to get along with other members. However, it didn’t take long to realize that they were no different than me. In fact, they turned out to be super fun and relatable. I still remember a game during the inauguration where we had to protect a candle while the seniors attempted to blow it out. My friends and I took our shirts off to form a fortress around the candle, but the seniors soon stepped up their game, inviting the mentors and even the priest to take part in drenching us with water balloons, buckets, and hoses.

This community was diverse, consisting of members from different cultural backgrounds, economic conditions, and living environments. It’s a place where everyone could connect, converse, help each other, and leave none ostracized. As a result, I learned to connect with different kinds of people, thus, broadening my perspective of various cultures and lifestyles.

Being part of church apostles evolved me into a more socially active person, taking part in community services like fundraisers and teaching in orphanages. It introduced a new meaning to community service, not just to serve the Lord but there was always fun and bits of memories gathered in those actions. This community made me truly appreciate the joy I was able to generate amongst the people I helped.

In UW, I will apply the values I learned in the church apostles to interact with the multicultural community there. I would take part in community services, join organizations like UNICEF at UW to improve children's welfare through free education, fundraisings, and advocacy. There, I will attempt to organize more community service activities that are fun and memorable for the peers participating alongside me.

Hi Samuel:

It’s inspiring how being involved in church really shaped you. There seems to be many lessons learned.

I would suggest structuring your essay with a focus on one or two ways how serving at a religious community shaped you. You can start with considering the following structure:

1. What you initially thought of serving at church
2. What your experience was like – fun, social, inspired you to do be involved in community service
3. What you’ve learned – focus on one or two values as your takeaways and what kind of person those values made you to become. For example, you became more open minded.
4. What you will bring to UW by being the person you became in this community.

All the best!