

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS for the WHOLE FAMILY



2009-10

Unitarian
Universalist

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WELCOME!

It is with great anticipation that we look forward to the 2009-2010 church school year. We are pleased that you and your children are taking part in our program. This booklet is your guide to the religious education programs available this year.

The goals of our program are to provide a place where children can: feel welcome and have a sense of belonging, explore religious ideas in an open-minded community, define and redefine their beliefs, ask questions, and share their sense of wonder. We hope to create an environment that respects and celebrates diversity while offering children opportunities to translate their ideals into actions. We want our children to own their beliefs.

The seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism (found at the rear of the booklet) provide the backbone for our program.

You Are Needed!!!

We have a cooperative volunteer program that needs the involvement of each parent. We encourage you to share your time and talents with us and your children, show an interest in their programs and engage them in conversations about what they are learning. We may also call upon you to substitute in a classroom or bring a healthy snack to share. Most importantly, please help your child attend classes regularly. You will find the benefits are multiplied.

I am looking forward to getting to know each of you and your children in the coming year!

Chris Parker
Director of Religious Education
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WHO WE ARE

Our Vision

Our vision is a welcoming and supportive congregation that is also unique and diverse. We recognize the needs of our local and global communities and act in responsible ways.

Our Mission And Covenant

The mission of the Religious Education program is to nurture the heart, mind, and spirit of the church family. We offer programs and opportunities for all ages that embrace the UU Principles. In this spirit, we create

- * a safe and welcoming place where everyone belongs;
- * a nurturing place where wonder is valued;
- * an engaging place where people listen, think, question and share;
- * a spiritual place where people can explore world religions;
- * a joyful place where friendship, community, music, art, worship, and service are shared;
- * a socially responsible place that encourages all to be engaged with issues near and far;
- * a caring place for our planet earth, the home we share with all living things;
- * a hopeful place;
- * a peaceful place.

Our Value Statement Covenant

We will do this with honesty, creativity, kindness, compassion, and good humor.

WHEN WE MEET

Sunday School Church Schedule

- 9:55 AM Church School Classes Begin
- 11:00 AM Baby/Toddler Pick-up
(11:00 or immediately following the service)
Chapel Service Begins
- 11:15 AM All children are dismissed from their classrooms

The first Sunday of the month is usually designated as a time for the children to join in the service for the first 15 minutes before attending church school. During periodic Intergenerational services (Intergen), however, older children are invited to attend the full church service with their parents. Babies and toddlers meet as usual in Room 2, but there are no classes for the older children. During Sunday services when there is no church school, supervised activities are provided for those children who do not wish to attend the service.

Chapel Program

A worship program is held in the Chapel located in the Education Building. Each class attends a chapel service once or twice a month. These services are a special time for the children to meet together and share a religious experience. The services include songs, poems, and stories that further the children's understanding of UU principles.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Babies & Toddlers

Childcare

(Birthdays after 9-30-06)

Room 2

Childcare is provided for infants and children who are still under the age of three come the end of September. Our experienced caregivers, assisted by church members, take care of the youngest members of our church family. We try to make this experience for our youngest children as pleasant as possible—a warm, welcoming, and secure place away from home.

Preschool

Celebrating Me and My World

(Birthdays 10-1-04 to 9-30-06)

Room 3

This full-year curriculum celebrates the wondrous qualities of children along with the animals, objects, and people around them. It provides preschoolers with opportunities to grow in trust and caring as they develop their identity and sense of connectedness to the web of life.

Activities are tailored for this age group, so please dress the children for active play and sometimes-messy crafts. Please also prepare your refrigerator for new artwork!

Kindergarten

Treasure Hunting

(Birthdays 10-1-03 to 9-30-04)

Room 1

Children explore what it means to be part of the Unitarian Universalist faith. They celebrate the uniqueness of each individual while gaining greater awareness of their community and the world around them. Age appropriate. crafts and games are used to explore these ideas.

First Grade

Coming Home (fall)

Room 5

This program helps children develop a sense of home that is grounded in faith. The program speaks of home as a place of belonging, explores the roles each of us play in the homes where we live and it introduces the concept of a "faith home" (the congregation). Like a family home, our faith home offers its members certain joys, protections, and responsibilities.

Special Places, Sacred Spaces (spring)

Room 5

The students in this curriculum will be encouraged to become “at home” in the world by exploring a variety of buildings and homes. In addition, a variety of life situations: birth, death, fears, and relationships will be discussed. As part of this curriculum, each child will create their own “special place” out of a large box and have the opportunity to use it during a class sleepover at the church.

Second Grade

Experiences with the Web of Life (fall)

Room 11

Children explore the ways that specific living things relate to the rest of life, e.g. what the earthworm eats, what eats it, what it contributes to the soil, how that helps plants and helps us who grow food in that soil. Concepts come to life through direct experience. Throughout the curriculum, our spiritual connection with all living things is brought out. A closing ritual at the end of each session helps the children internalize their learning

Rainbow Children (spring)

Room 11

With the Rainbow Children curriculum, the children have opportunities to learn about themselves and others through games, stories, and activities.

Third & Fourth Grades

Heart Talk for Kids (fall)

Room 9-10

The goal of Heart Talk for Kids is to empower children to create peaceful relationships by seeing the worth and dignity of all people, including themselves. The curriculum teaches communication skills based on Marshall Rosenberg’s model of Nonviolent Communication.

Windows and Mirrors (spring)

Room 9-10

Windows and Mirrors nurtures children's ability to identify their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about and respect those of others. The sessions unpack topics that lend themselves to diverse experiences and perspectives—for example, faith heritage, public service, anti-racism and prayer. The program teaches that there are always multiple viewpoints and everyone's viewpoint matters.

Fifth Grade

Toolbox of Faith (fall)

Room 6

What tools does Unitarian Universalism offer for the challenges of life? Children discover what aspects of UU faith are helpful to them, as they develop a “toolbox of faith.”

Riddle and Mystery (spring)

Room 6

This exciting curriculum helps young people experience how our individual search for meaning in the universe is supported and strengthened when we come together as people of faith. Participants explore our shared UU beliefs and where their own beliefs fit in the spectrum.

Sixth and Seventh Grades

Amazing Grace (fall)

Room 7

Amazing Grace intends to help sixth graders understand right and wrong and act on their new understanding. Its purpose is to equip them for moving safely and productively through the middle- and high school years, when they will be continually tugged toward both ends of the ethics continuum. Through their involvement in Amazing Grace, youth will come to recognize and depend upon their Unitarian Universalist identity and resources as they move toward independence, understanding and fulfillment of their personal promise.

Race to Justice (spring)

Room 7

"Race to Justice" explores racial justice and diversity through the use of role-playing, games, and filmmaking. It directly addresses the UU Principles of the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; and the goal of a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

Eighth & Ninth Grades

Rites of Passage Experience (R.O.P.E.)

Youth Room

Through this experience, our youth will learn to express their own beliefs within the context of Unitarian Universalism, and to mark the beginning of their own spiritual path through life. Each student will work with a mentor/church member of their choosing in order to refine their beliefs. Don't miss the ROPE Affirmation Service where the students will present their statements to the congregation!

Senior High

Youth Group meets Sunday evenings from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.

R.E. for Sr. High transitions into "Youth Empowerment." Our youth group provides opportunities to develop leadership skills, strengthens a sense of community, offers peer support and a chance to travel and meet other UU Youth. The students play games, hear guest speakers and participate in workshops and topic-led discussions. They are involved in outreach and fundraising while working on life skills.

Youth are encouraged to participate in leading the group and/or contribute to decisions regarding the direction the group will take.

Youth group provides a safe and comfortable environment to explore and nurture the questions and beliefs of those who participate.

Youth Choir

Our Youth Choir is open to anyone who wants to sing. Consistent attendance and love of singing are the only requirements to join. They generally meet at 11:30 in the Choir Room on Sundays and perform throughout the year. The Adult Choir is open to adults and young adults in High School and older. If you have any question, see our Music Director, Jed Holland, in the Choir Room.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Food for Thought Thursdays

Our first offering will be the series *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians*, a PBS historical documentary series that tells the epic story of the rise of Christianity and explores the life of Jesus, his death, and the men and women whose belief, conviction, and martyrdom created the religion we now know as Christianity. See the four part series and join in discussions led by Rev. Stephen Edington Thursday evenings from 7-8:30 in late October and early November.

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven: On the Threshold, the second part in a series we started last January continues our journey into the past to reclaim the stories of powerful women to be found in ancient Judaism and in early Christianity. This will be open to women only and will again take place in January and February.

The Nashua Buddhist Meditation Group offers a regular space for UU Church members and community members to join together to practice meditation and to provide opportunities to study the dharma with longtime practitioners and students of Buddhism. Every Wednesday from 7 – 8 pm, sitting and walking meditation is practiced as a group and every first and third Wednesday from 8-9 pm there will be an Open Book Discussion in the Youth Room beginning September 3rd. For more information, contact Cynthia Schroer, cschroer@comcast.net.

UU 101 is a three part introductory “class” open to anyone wishing to know about our religion’s history, theology and this church in particular. It is offered twice during the church year.

Covenant Groups offer adults a chance to meet in a gathering of 8-10 people to have themed discussions and connect with each other on a more personal level than is possible during coffee hour. You can learn more about *Covenant Groups* and sign up for one at the Information Table in the Dining Room or the church office.

SPECIAL EVENTS & SERVICES

A 2009-2010 Church School Calendar is inserted in the center of the booklet so it can be removed for easy reference.

Water Service (13 September) – An intergenerational gathering that where we bring samples of water from our summer journeys to share in celebration. A dedication is also offered at this time for our Religious Education (RE) teachers before they begin leading classes the following Sunday.

Winter Party/White Gifts Collection (20 December) – Students begin the morning by joining the church service for a brief period during which time the White Gifts are received (members and friends donate gifts for those in need). Afterwards, the older students gather to celebrate winter with crafts and snacks in the auditorium while the preschoolers will meet in their own room.

Spring Party (4 April) – As with the Winter Party, the RE classes (Kindergarten and up) celebrate the coming of spring with crafts and refreshments after the first 15 minutes of service. Plus, we will continue the tradition of performing a service project during the get-together. Anyone with a project suggestion is welcome to contact a member of the RE Committee.

Senior High Service (21 March) – A service designed and led by the Senior High students. Come be amazed!

ROPE Affirmation Service (23 May) – This service is the culmination of a year of hard work by our eighth and ninth graders. Please join us as the students present their personal belief statements to the congregation, it is wonderful opportunity to celebrate our youth and witness the benefits of our RE Curriculum.

Intergen Flower Service (6 June) – The last service of the year recognizes the many volunteers who give of their time and talents to our Religious Education program. A Flower Communion is held in which members of the congregation bring flowers. Everyone leaves with a different flower representing the sharing that takes

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Director: Chris Parker 888-1137
Minister: Steve Edington 883-3141
Church Phone 882-1091

MEMBERS

Cindy Hudson (Chair)
Laurie Conrad
Gwen Mikailov
Michelle Morrison
Mickeline Saunders Shepherd
Geoff Skelton
Barbara Berrios (Adult RE)
Nona Storer (Volunteer Coordinator)



OUR UU PRINCIPLES

Each and every person is important;
All people should be treated fairly and kindly;
We should accept one another and keep on learning together;
Each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life;
All persons should have a vote about the things that concern them;
We will work for a peaceful, fair and free world; and
Care for our planet earth, the home we share with all living things.

The Sources of Our Principles

Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder,
affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit
and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us
to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion,
and the transforming power of love;
Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in
our ethical and spiritual life;
Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love
by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance
of reason and the results of science, and warn us against
idolatries of the mind and spirit.
Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate
the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony
with the rhythms of nature.