

Welcome to the Religious Education Program for Children and Youth at UUFWS!

We are excited to begin our new Program Year for Children and Youth. Included in this packet is a lot of information about our program – please read through it and then contact me if you have questions or need any other information.

The Youth Services Committee and I are committed to providing a quality Sunday School program for all of our children and youth. We also want to provide unique opportunities throughout the year for growth, learning and enrichment – as well as the chance to gather socially and bond as a group. Please refer to our Calendar for activities that are already planned – and be sure to read the Fellowship’s monthly newsletter for updated information.

Many volunteers are needed this year – to teach a Religious Education class on Sundays, teach an Adult Religious Education class, assist with the YRUU youth group on Sunday evenings, clean up and maintain the playground, coordinate or assist with holiday events, chaperone a youth group on an overnight or weekend retreat. Every family is asked to contribute time to RE so that we can continue to offer valuable and enriching programs throughout the year. Your volunteer commitment is much more than another obligation on your over-extended schedule – it is an opportunity to share something important with your children, build relationships with other families, and strengthen your Fellowship community.

We look forward to spending time with your family this year. Please feel free to contact me at anytime should you need assistance.

Welcome!

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Rainbow Principles

Unitarian Universalists believe in seven principles to help us get along with each other. You can remember these promises by thinking of a rainbow:

R RED - Respect all people

O ORANGE - Offer fair and kind treatment to all

Y YELLOW - Yearn to accept and learn about ourselves, others, and the Mystery

G GREEN - Grow by exploring what is true and right in life

B BLUE - Believe in our ideas and act on them

I INDIGO - Insist on freedom, justice, and peace for all beings

V VIOLET - Value our home, Earth, which we share with all living things

Sunday Morning in RE

The Sunday RE class and other activities are designed to provide a safe and educational experience for your child while you attend service. Each class must have two teachers in order to provide an effective lesson and to provide adequate supervision for the children. Our religious education program is *volunteer* driven – we cannot have such a wonderful place and provide such meaningful opportunities without the help of many volunteers.

Our nursery is for infants and toddlers age 3 and under. It is staffed by a volunteer childcare provider and a parent of one of the children in the Nursery. The volunteer staff person is in attendance from 10:15am until 12:00pm Sunday mornings. **The parent volunteer should also arrive no later than 10:15am**, ensuring that the nursery is fully staffed during the time when parents are dropping off their children before going to service.

RE classes begin at 10:30am, but children may enter their classroom as early as 10:15am and quietly talk with one another, play games, or read a book. Classes will end when the sermon ends, between 11:30am and 11:45am. ***Teachers are expected to arrive by 10:15am – parents must supervise their children until a teacher has arrived. Teachers will depart at 12 Noon – parents must pick up their children from RE by that time.***

After the Worship Service, all children through the 5th grade should be picked up from RE class promptly by their parent or guardian – no later than noon. Teachers need to be able to leave at that time to take their families home for lunch and other family activities. Any child remaining in RE at noon will be escorted (in the nicest possible way) by the teacher or DRE to find their parents. Once children are picked up or brought to their parent, they should remain under their parents' supervision until leaving the fellowship.

Our Playground Area is newly renovated and ready for play – children should be supervised by either a parent or RE teacher at all times.

Children in grades 2 through 5 may play outside in the non-fenced play area located at the side of the RE wing (outside the Emerson/Thoreau rooms). Children in Pre-Kindergarten-1st grade and Nursery Age children will play in the section of fenced playground area designated for their class use. Older children will not play in the fenced playground unless assisting with the younger children and with an adult's permission. Children should not leave the designated areas without permission or unless under the direct supervision of a parent. Parents, please let your child's teacher know when you are leaving with your child. It can get somewhat busy on the playground and our teachers need your help to monitor the comings and goings of your children. Please check in with your child's teacher when you get to the room or playground so the teacher knows you have taken over the supervision for your child.

After RE class, youth in grades 6-12 can mingle with adults and other teens or participate in Fellowship business meetings. We ask parents to remind your youth that this privilege also carries a responsibility for behaving appropriately in the worship areas, as well as the kitchen and common spaces.

The Role of the Parent/Caregiver

You, as parents, play the most significant role in the religious education of your children. Here are some ways you can work with us:

Come regularly and on time. Children develop a sense of belonging to their classes when they attend regularly. It can be uncomfortable for children to come into a group already in progress. Being on time also helps them to develop a sense of “specialness” about services.

Volunteer. Show your child that their spiritual growth is important enough that you will spend your time teaching in their class. Sharing of yourself in this way will not only encourage their search for truth and meaning, it may also help you in your quest as well. Families are asked to volunteer at least 20 hours per year in our Religious Education Program. Without our volunteers, we could not have such a developed program. Please see the volunteer opportunity sheet and fill out the Volunteer Commitment Form.

Introduce yourself. Let your child’s teacher and the DRE know who you are. Follow the activities of your child’s class and participate as the opportunities arise. Please remember to thank your child(ren)’s teachers.

Dress children in play clothes for active participation. Many of our activities involve painting, gardening, and cooking and children may get messy. They will come home covered in paint and dirt at times.

Share your point of view and spend time together. Let your children know your thoughts, opinions, and values. Make a special effort to be with your child(ren) at fellowship family functions. Your children will learn to express their views from hearing you express yours.

Nurture your own spiritual development. Try to participate in at least one of the adult education courses at the fellowship. The process of sorting out your beliefs is a valuable experience for dealing with your child’s questions.

Support RE! It’s important that you, as parents, participate in your child(ren)’s religious education program by understanding what your child is studying, communicating with teachers, teaching and helping with special activities. In addition to registration fees, monetary contributions to help defray costs of RE materials and supplies is always appreciated.

UUFWS RE Safety and Respect Rules

In order to provide a safe and comfortable environment for people of all ages in our church community, we ask that the children attending our programs follow some basic guidelines for behavior. Parents are responsible for their children before and after scheduled programs. Other Fellowship members and friends also help advise and discipline the children when necessary. Therefore, everyone should review these guidelines.

During RE class and other activities:

We have many people in our religious education program space each week – both new and returning – and we must be respectful of each other and of our spaces during these busy times.

- Participants need to be considerate of each other and listen when others are speaking; use indoor voices in the building.
- Everyone must move carefully in our indoor space without running or using outdoor equipment such as roller blades, balls, or Frisbees.
- Children attending activities should participate in the activity or join their parents to be under the parent's supervision.
- Teachers use a series of steps to encourage a student. A supervised "time out" will be used by the teacher or DRE when a child is disruptive to the group.
- Parents will be notified of their child's behavior so that parents and RE staff may find ways to work together with the child in constructive ways. Other members are encouraged to discuss behavior problems directly with a child's parent or with the DRE.

General Safety and Respect Guidelines:

- Hitting, pushing, rough housing is unacceptable.
- Calling names or teasing is unacceptable.
- Throwing items like rocks and things not meant to be thrown is unacceptable.
- Toys and materials should be put away after use – including outdoor play equipment.
- Older children should leave the fenced playground area for the younger children. Children should stay in the RE wing or behind the Fellowship in the play areas. Avoid the Memorial Garden unless with an adult. Avoid the parking lots, banks, and the Fellowship front area unless with an adult.
- Do not climb on fences or trees. Respect our bushes and plants.
- Use pianos and other musical instruments only with permission and in a responsible manner.
- The kitchen is a busy area. Children in the kitchen must be supervise