

Sunday Mornings at the Unitarian Church of Evanston

9:00-noon

- Childcare (nursery and preschool)

9:15-10:15 am

- Spectrum:Arts (for kindergarten-sixth grade)
- Parents' Forum
- Adult religious education
- Crackerbarrel discussion group

10:30-11:30 am

- Worship Service

10:30-11:45 am

- Religious education classes for preschool through 8th grade

11:45 am-1:00 pm

- Senior High Youth Group

Mission Statement

The Religious Education program for families at the Unitarian Church of Evanston exists to prepare our children for lifelong faith development by

1) creating a feeling of community where the children and youth feel safe to be themselves and explore ideas;

2) fostering a way of thinking about and experiencing faith, grounded in our principles;

and 3) teaching content on Unitarian Universalism and other faiths.

The program encourages children to think independently, develop strong moral fiber and respect for all people, and to reflect these beliefs in their actions towards others. The program is not fee-based and depends on volunteer support.

Adopted by
Religious Education Board, March, 2008

Program Content

Our Religious Education Program for Children and Youth is structured to be appropriate to developmental levels and to explore:

- what it means to belong to this religious community
- Unitarian Universalist principles
- the natural world and our place in it
- our Jewish and Christian heritage
- the world's religions
- ethics, decision making, and relationship building

2011-2012 Programming

Nursery (infants and toddlers not yet three years old as of September 1, 2011)

9:00 am-noon: Caregivers provide a safe and caring place where our youngest children can play and become comfortable.

Preschool (three- and four-year-olds)

9:00-10:30 am: Preschoolers are offered a warm and welcoming place to play and interact with each other and their caregivers.

10:30-11:45 am: "Celebrating Me and My World" explores the wonders of objects, people, and animals; offers children opportunities to develop their self-identity and sense of connectedness with the world around them.

Spectrum:Arts (Kdg-Sixth Grade)

9:15-10:15 am: Children explore and experience Unitarian Universalist principles and values through music, drama, and/or visual art.

Kindergarten and First Grade

10:30-11:45 am: "Around the Church, Around the Year" acquaints children with their own Unitarian Universalist community: the people, building, rituals, traditions, celebrations, and basic values of Unitarian Universalism.

Second Grade

10:30-11:45 am: "Free to Believe" focuses on Unitarian Universalist principles, values, and beliefs through activities, stories, games, songs, and discussions and introduces the lifelong process of finding our own answers to life's big questions.

Third and Fourth Grades

10:30-11:45 am: "Keepers of the Earth/Hands-On Nature" fosters an awareness of the relatedness of all living things and encourages environmental stewardship using Native American stories and hands-on explorations of the natural world.

Fifth and Sixth Grades

10:30-11:45 am: "Jesus and His Kingdom of Equals" explores stories of Jesus as told in the Christian scriptures, focusing on themes such as forgiveness, equality, and justice. Uses insights from modern Biblical scholarship to provide context about the historical Jesus and his times.

Seventh and Eighth Grades

10:30-11:45 am: "Neighboring Faiths/Building Bridges" explores the religions of today's world and our relationship to them by visiting houses of worship, talking with practitioners of other faiths, and hearing from Unitarian Universalists of various theologies.

6:00-8:30 pm, dates as scheduled: "Our Whole Lives" sexuality education provides age-appropriate information about human development and helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality so they are equipped to make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior.

2011-2012 Programming (continued)

Senior High Youth Group (Grades 9 – 12)

11:45 am-1:00 pm: Senior High Youth are supported and challenged as they discuss issues important in their lives and continue their commitment to their Unitarian Universalist faith and church community. The group will present a worship service for the congregation in the spring.

Calendar and Communication

Watch the Religious Education bulletin boards, the newsletter, and electronic announcements for information about special services, social action projects, and other community events. The Religious Education Calendar for the year is posted on the bulletin boards and on the website. If you have a question, please ask the Rev. Connie Grant or any member of the Religious Education Board.

Child Dedications

In this ceremony, the child's name is recognized, parents' hopes for their child are expressed, and the congregation dedicates itself to the well-being of the child and all the world's children. Dedications are performed at the early service on Christmas Eve and at other times by arrangement with the ministers.

Congregational Involvement

As a community, we explore ideas and learn together. Our Religious Education Program for Children and Youth provides many opportunities for adults to engage in their own religious growth and learning while supporting that of our young people. Adults are needed to serve as volunteer teachers and classroom assistants, leaders and helpers for social and social justice activities and special projects.

Enrollment and Visitors

Each child and youth who participates in our Religious Education Program must be registered each year. Forms are available the Guest and Member Services Table in the lobby and at the Welcome Table on the lower level. Visiting children are always welcome to attend. Please see the Religious Education Greeter to have your questions answered and to be directed to the appropriate classroom.

Expectations of Parents

There is no fee for participation in our Religious Education Program for Children and Youth. The program is supported by the congregation as a whole through our operating budget, and parents are encouraged to contribute as they are able through the annual pledge drive.

Parents are expected to support the Religious Education Program in which their children and youth participate by teaching classes and/or helping with other activities on a regular basis.

Parents of children who participate in Sunday morning programs are expected to remain in the church building, and are encouraged to participate in discussion groups, classes, and worship services.

Social Action Involvement

Social action is integrated into many of our classes, and there are many opportunities for children and their families to participate in congregation-wide projects, including year-round food pantry donations; winter holiday Guest at Your Table and Mitten Tree programs; and fall and spring soup kitchens. Watch the newsletter and electronic announcements for opportunities.

Special Events Include...

Family Friendship Dinners

Get to know other families by joining them for potluck dinners throughout the year.

Ornament Sunday

Together with people of all ages, trim the tree and make ornaments and decorations to take home.

Family Winter Retreat

Families gather in Lake Geneva for a weekend of relaxation, fellowship and winter fun.

Night of the Arts

Create a variety of arts and crafts together with people of all ages.

Worship Opportunities

Participation in worship provides an opportunity for children to celebrate and explore the mysteries of life and to experience and reflect on their connections within their religious community and to the universe. At 10:30 am most Sundays, children in Kindergarten through Sixth Grade gather in Room 3 for a Children's Worship Service incorporating songs, stories, and meditation. An offering is taken, and at the end of the year children decide on an organization to receive their collected donations. Following this service, children will go directly to their classes with their teachers.

Approximately once a month at 10:30 am, the whole community participates in Worship for All Ages, designed to engage children as well as adults. On these Sundays, all children and youth are invited to attend the worship service in the sanctuary with their parents.



Religious Education Board

Barbara Badr (Preschool liaison)
Lee Bannor (Kdg-1st grade liaison)
Andrew Bernstein, Co-Chair (Nursery liaison)
Dana Deane (High School liaison)
Michael Drennan (3rd-4th grade co-liaison)
Kat Falls (3rd-4th grade co-liaison)
Ann Gadzikowski, Co-Chair (2nd grade liaison)
Ilyse Mechanic (5th-6th grade liaison)
George Monical (7th-8th grade liaison)

The Rev. Connie Grant Minister for Lifespan Religious Education

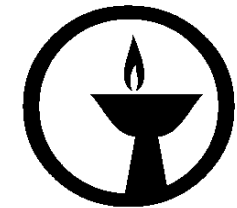
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Religious Education Programming

for Children and Youth

September 2011- June 2012



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