Our religious education curriculum is designed to be lively and engaging, to embrace storytelling, music, and the arts, as well as the wonder of science, and to rest on the foundation of Unitarian Universalist identity and history. Both our 9:15 and 11:00 sessions draw on our new Soul Matters curriculum and our Way Cool Sunday School framework – but the feel and the format will be different for the session during each worship service session. Here’s how:

**Cool Beans! (9:15 Service)**

Our **earlier session** will be more intergenerational (parents can participate, too!), offer more individual attention from leaders, and since it will be a little shorter (9:15-10:00am) with a more relaxed vibe, will offer a better option for kids who have trouble sitting still for Sunday School. As we cover a bit less material, our learners may retain a bit more of it. With a broader grade group (pre-school - 5th grade), our earlier session will offer more opportunities for connection and community, especially among peers across age groups. Our earlier session will generally start downstairs with Chalice Circle - with singing and affirmation and a guided meditation - and then feature guest teachers (plus regulars) to lead us in project-based, activity-based learning related to their particular passions, UU principles, and our Soul Matters themes, writ large. One Sunday a month we’ll be upstairs for an all-ages worship!

**Awesome Sauce! (11:00 Service)**

Our **later session** will feature age-specific classrooms (with grade groups of preschool-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-5th grade, and junior high). It will also run a little longer (11:00am-Noon), drawing on more traditional behavioral and cognitive learning models and more curricular-based learning in a more structured learning environment – though still with all the awesome variety of the Soul Matters curriculum. First and third Sundays we’ll be together in the sanctuary with adult worshippers – on first Sundays, we’ll then head to the lower level for classes, while third Sundays will feature all-ages worship for the full morning. Second and fourth Sundays, our later sessions will start out in our grade-group classrooms, and finish out with Way Cool Worship!, lifting the energy to raise our spirits and lead us into another week of service in the world, on purpose. Fifth Sundays (for both Cool Beans! and Awesome Sauce!) will offer a community service project!

Our experienced and caring **Preschool (3- and 4-year-olds) – First Grade** staff teachers support our young learners in exploring their world consciously from their own perspective, and also imagining how it might look different from another’s perspective. Most of our discussions at this stage center on self in the context of family and friends, through story, song, crafts, and games.

**Second & Third Graders** in our program will have opportunities to experience faith in concrete stories and spiritual practices and will begin to consider their own beliefs in the context of other people’s, especially within the classroom.

**Fourth & Fifth Graders** in our program will also combine concrete stories and rituals with discussion with peers and trusted adult leaders, learning about what ideas are held in common and where the differences lie, especially within our UCE community.

Our **Junior High (6th, 7th, and 8th grade)** Sunday morning experience will blend a focus on the Soul Matters curriculum, emphasizing UU history and identity, with participants’ own spiritual journeys as UUs, culminating in the students’ preparation and presentation of credo statements during the worship service March 17, 2019 – and see below about our Boston trip coming this spring!

Our **Senior High Youth Group** will also meet on Sunday mornings, drawing on Soul Matters resources for small group ministry – and look for more information below about a new monthly Friday night series of social and service events!

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**Nursery care for infants and toddlers** is available during both services. Our nursery staff provide a safe and nurturing place for our youngest children during both services, helping to foster in them a lived experience of nurture and caring, and to experience faith as trust and appropriate connection with their caregivers.
Soul Matters Curriculum

Soul Matters Sharing Circle offers a whole-church, lifespan approach to spiritual learning, through monthly themes explored in worship, in small group ministries like our youth group and adult covenant groups, and in Religious Education. Whether used in a one-room schoolhouse-type program, as with our 9:15am Cool Beans! session, or a grade-level program, like our 11:00am Awesome Sauce! session, our learning experiences based in the Soul Matters curriculum will help to foster conversation about our spiritual themes shared across the lifespan!

Each Soul Matters monthly RE packet is rich with session plans and building blocks to help our teachers create engaging and vibrant learning experiences and serve as wise spiritual guides to our young people. Parents are encouraged to review the sample packet at the Soul Matters site (https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com) and to talk with their child’s teachers and/or the Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Mary Shelden, (msheldenuce@gmail.com) to learn more about this vibrant curriculum.

Other Opportunities for Learning & Community:

Our Whole Lives sexuality education (OWL) offers an age-appropriate approach to sexuality education as part of the lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and values about identity and relationships, intimacy, and health. Offered this year for kindergarten/first-graders and fourth/fifth-graders.

Boston Bound will focus on spiritual and financial preparation for the opportunity to take a trip to Boston to learn more about the historic roots of Unitarian Universalism. Offered for Seventh- and Eighth-graders in alternating years – and 2018-19 is our year!

Friday Night Youth Group Series offers opportunities for high school-age youth to socialize, and to be part of community-engaged service projects with peers and adult guides. Whether they attend Youth Group on Sunday mornings or not, church youth are invited to attend this Friday-night series and explore what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist in the context of community!

Children, youth, and families will also enjoy participating in intergenerational events, such as Ornament Sunday, Night of the Arts, and Pi Day, which happen throughout the year. And many of our youth enjoy participating in our general programming, being part of the choir, yoga, or our Forum Sunday morning discussion group.

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