

If you have any questions or concerns about our Religious Education program, please contact Kimberly Wootan, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, at 603-772-4002 or dre@exeteruu.org.

Office hours: Mon, Wed, Thurs, Please call for an appointment.



Affiliated with the
Unitarian Universalist
Association
visit uua.org

First Unitarian
Universalist Society of
Exeter

PO Box 627
Exeter, NH
03833

Phone: 603-772-4002
www.exeteruu.org

First Unitarian Universalist
Society of Exeter

The Cooperative Young Church Religious Education for Children and Youth



We help each other on our
journey through life



INTRODUCTION

The Cooperative Young Church, program provides a structured opportunity for parents and their children to explore religious and spiritual life and what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Some parents bring their children to our church and Sunday School because they themselves seek a community to support their personal search for truth and meaning. Others seek out our church, because they want help with their children's religious education.

At the Unitarian Universalist Society of Exeter, we believe parents are their children's primary religious educators. We also believe that the exploration of life's fundamental questions is deeply enriched by the dialogue and sharing that goes on within a church community.

The word "cooperative" is critical to the success of our Cooperative Young Church religious education program. In our effort to help parents and children explore religious life cooperatively, we expect all families with children registered in our program to contribute one teacher per year to the Young Church. This means teaching what is usually a six-week block sometime during the church year, which spans the months of September through mid-June. You need not be an expert. All we ask is that you willingly give time and show children—yours and others—that you believe in their ongoing religious education.

Chances are, you'll learn something yourself in the process.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Sunday classes are offered to children up through 8th grade from September through mid-June.

Nursery

9-10:15 am and 11-12:15pm

Preschool through Grade 8

9-10:15 am and 11-12:15 am

We encourage children age three and above to join the congregation at the start of the service. After our opening words, the chalice lighting, and a song, the children are invited to attend class.

CURRICULAR FOCUS

Our curriculum seeks to spark the minds and hearts of our children and youth with a vision of the person they hope to become. Together, we explore the Unitarian Universalist value system and how we incorporate those values into our everyday lives. Teachers and children learn about our diverse religious heritage and help each other to develop and articulate their own religious philosophy. We work with a variety of materials and experiences to explore such great religious questions, including: Why was I born? What gives life meaning? What is my responsibility to others? Why do we die? Do I believe in the *divine*, which some people call *god*?



The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds on the young, but to stir up their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own. W.E. Channing

All classes, with the exception of the Nursery, will be organized according to a theme. Classes are structured into Blocks, which can range from three to six weeks. In 2009-2010, we will be covering the following themes:

Block #1 Unitarian Universalist People (6 weeks)

What better way to familiarize oneself with the teachings of Unitarian Universalism than by learning about famous UUs, who lived and breathed their beliefs and principles. Famous UUs include Henry Bergh, William Ellery Channing, Quillen Shinn, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Beatrix Potter, Alexander Graham Bell, P.T.. Barnum, Kurt Vonnegut, and Christopher Reeve.

Block #2 Social Justice (3 weeks)

The Sixth Unitarian Universalist principle sets the goal of creating a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. This Block will focus on Sacred Dance, which shows our children how to actively connect their spiritual ideas with meditative practice, while also providing a way for teachers and children to grow together as a community.



Parents are like lighthouses. They point out the rough spots in the sea of life

Block #3 The Christian Bible (6 weeks)

The Unitarian Universalist Church is a child of a long and rich Judeo-Christian heritage. We believe it is critical for all children living in our world to have some familiarity and appreciation of the Christian Bible.

Block #4 Across the Generations (4 weeks)

In this block, members of the Adult Religious Education Community will work with the Youth Religious Education Committee to coordinate youth curriculum that reflects themes being covered in adult RE.

We must be willing to learn as well as teach



Block #5 The Environment (4 weeks)

During this block, we will help our children develop awareness of the interdependence of living things and of each child's place within the web of life.

Block #6 Social Justice (5 weeks)

Similar to Block#2, this final block shows our children another concrete, tangible way—the Labyrinth—to incorporate a meditative practice into their lives. Children and adults will also learn about or work on a project for social change.

* * *

The above themes are taught using: Worship, Spirit Play and Traditional curriculum

Worship is an integral part of our children's religious education. Most Sundays, children worship with the adults in the sanctuary, but only for the first 15 minutes. Special music or a story may be devoted to the children before they go downstairs to Sunday School. On occasion children stay with friends and for these services the Minister, the Director of Lifespan Religious Education, and the Minister of Music put together an interactive program of inter-generational worship. Children's Chapel is another form of worship, which only involves children. Typically, the children set up the worship table, help

with chalice lighting, and have a vote about which songs and meditations to use.

Spirit Play, for grades preschool-kindergarten, is a Montessori-based curriculum centered on story-telling and multi-sensory "work time". Stories present core themes of our faith and theology and help the children make meaning through wondering questions and art.

Traditional Curriculum is based on a lesson plan. Children start class with a chalice lighting and a check in. Following check in, there is a review from the previous week's lesson, followed by a story, exercise, or discussion of a particular concept or principle. Classes often end with students participating in a project, game, or music.

OTHER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFERINGS

FOR INFANTS TO TODDLERS, AGE 3-4,

Nursery Room The Nursery is open for both services every Sunday there is Church. The Nursery is headed by two adults, usually University of New Hampshire students or graduates, who are majoring in teaching. Each Sunday the nursery teachers are prepared to teach a lesson, using *We are Many We Are One*, a curriculum based on the philosophy that young children learn about religion through relationships. In it they will explore questions like what is a person? Who am I? How do I treat others? What kind of world do I want to live in?

FOR 6th-8th GRADERS

Jr. Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) Once a month, 6th-8th graders get together for fun, service and food. Last year they hosted the Halloween party, made wreaths, and went to Boston.

FOR 7th AND 8th GRADERS

Our Whole Lives (OWL) This comprehensive 19-week sex education program is grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, addressing not only the physical aspects but

the spiritual, emotional and cultural dimensions as well. Participants are given a unique opportunity to deepen their faith, develop and articulate their religious and sexual values, and learn to make responsible, healthy decisions based on those values. This program takes place throughout the church year and works around the middle-school calendar.

FOR HIGH SCHOOL AGE YOUTH SR. Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

This group meets Sunday morning at the 11:00 service. We will use the small group ministry model. They pick a topic relevant to what is going on in their lives and talk about it. In years past they made the dessert to go with the Salvation Army meal, read tarot cards with the DRE and went bowling.



Here we learn about relationships

Coming Of Age This is a place for High School youth to explore their Unitarian Universalist beliefs. They will start in November and meet monthly. The first activity will be a ropes course. During the year they will make death masks, visit the UUA youth office, and plan a service. Coming of Age will be offered if there is enough interest.

Youth are the future

