

# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Programs to foster religious growth for  
Unitarian Universalist families  
at

May Memorial  
Unitarian Universalist Society

2009-2010



**GROWING  
LEARNING  
DOING  
in  
FAITH**

**GROWING**

It is our hope that each child or youth will grow in wisdom and maturity as they gain a deeper understanding of our Unitarian Universalist principles and sources.

**LEARNING**

We hope that our children and your will learn about Unitarian Universalist identity and history. And that they will learn about other faith traditions in order to deepen their understanding of their own beliefs.

**DOING**

It is our hope that our program will provide a variety of hands on experiences or Social Justice work for our children and youth. We often learn best by doing. As our children and youth "do" their faith they will naturally grow in their faith and learn what their faith is.

There is a playfulness in childhood that is an expression of trust, hopefulness, and creativity - all things we hope to nurture here at May.

We also hope that the RE community is a place where families, parents and children can find a place of belonging.

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## What's the Sunday schedule?

9:30	Nursery opens
10:15	Jr. High OWL class begins
10:30 - 10:45	pre-K - 6 <sup>th</sup> grade children join adults in sanctuary
10:30	Teenz group begins
10:45	Children process downstairs to Creekside Chapel for children's worship
11:05 - 12:00	Small Groups classes pre-K - 6th
12:00	Programs conclude; Parents pick up their children downstairs at their classrooms

Worship is a time for celebrating and deepening our connections to self, other, and to the mystery of life. It is a time to reaffirm our principles and a time to gain wisdom from the sources of our living tradition. Each Sunday, families have the opportunity to worship together according to their own needs.

Regular services begin at 10:30 a.m. Childcare is available for infants. At approximately 10:45, children ages 3 to 11 years old are welcome to follow a chalice flame downstairs to the Creekside Chapel. Parents may join their children or choose to stay in the sanctuary.

### Creekside Chapel Worship

Worship includes some of these elements each week: Welcoming song, Chalice lighting, UU Principles, Grateful Sharing, Story from a UU Source, Challenge from Sam May for social justice, Closing circle. Our Grateful Sharing will be an offertory of coin or non-perishable food item. Parents are encouraged to help children consider this act of giving as part of their Sunday morning spiritual practice.

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## **Intergenerational Services**

These worship celebrations mark special occasions such as Water Communion, Memory Tree, and Flower Communion, among others. Our goal for these services is to present worship in a way that engages most or all of our senses and can be meaningful for a wide variety of ages.

### **Small Groups (Class groupings)**

Small groups are aimed to create little communities for the children. From within these groups they can explore their own beliefs, others beliefs and the history and identity of the UUA.

Led by volunteer guides from the congregation, children engage in different activities that encourage their spiritual growth. Time for a weekly sharing of joys and sorrows and a "feast" is included.

Most groups rotate through a different room each week. These include: art studio, theater, nature center/outdoors, chapel/movement, and gym.

Our aim is to support natural curiosity and depth of discovery through various learning modalities.

- \* What will I create in the world? How will we make something together? (Art studio)
  - \* What role will I play? How will we act together? (Theater)
  - \* What does my body tell me about the world and its mystery? (Chapel - yoga, gym - movement)
  - \* What is my part in the interdependent web of life? (Nature room)
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## TAPESTRIES OF FAITH

In 2009-2010, we will be using the new curriculum, "Tapestries of Faith". We are very excited to be able to bring this curriculum to you and your children. The vision of this curriculum is shaped by these key beliefs:

- \* All people are lovable beings of infinite worth, imbued with powers of the soul.

- \* We carry on our Unitarian Universalist religious heritage and honor our responsibility for the care and creative transformation of our religious heritage and community of faith.

- \* We are moral agents who can make a difference by:

- Challenging structures of social and political oppression

- Promoting the health and well-being of the planet

- Acting in the service of diversity, justice and compassion

- \* We recognize the need for community and affirm the importance of families, relationships and connections between and among the generations.

- \* We appreciate the value of spiritual practice as a means of deepening faith and integrating beliefs and values with everyday life.

- \* Joy and Sadness are all part of our lives: hope, mystery, joy, healing, and personal transformation come together with life's challenges.

What are the goals of this program?

-  Ethical development

-  Spiritual development

-  Unitarian Universalist identity

-  Faith development

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## Small Group Descriptions

### NATURAL WONDERS GROUP PRE K (AGES 3-4)

Using a story telling approach this group affirms children's deep sense of wonder through the use of story and child directed play.

### WONDERFUL WELCOME Grades K-1 (AGES 5-6)

The Wonderful Welcome curriculum engages and challenges leaders and children alike to explore how and why we are willing to welcome others into our lives. We welcome not only strangers, but also family, our peers, our neighbors and even entities that are not people such as our animal friends and nature itself.

### FAITHFUL JOURNEYS Grade 2-3 (AGES 7-8)

Interacting with stories from our Sources which illuminate our UU Principles strengthens children's UU identity. From stories about contemporary Unitarian Universalists and stories from our faith heritage, children learn how UU faith helps us empathize with others and affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

### WINDOWS AND MIRRORS Grade 4-6 (AGES 9 -11):

Through a lens of UU faith and justice, children look closely at themselves and the communities to which they belong, especially their congregation. How do they experience true affiliation with others who may, at first, seem very unlike themselves? What actions do their observations demand, as they move out from "me" to "we?"

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## Our Junior High Program

Coming of Age is our program that fosters religious growth for young adolescents grades 7-8 (ages 12-13, approximately) and their families. The program includes small group meetings, and regular overnights. This is designed to be a two-part two-year program.

### OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL)

In 2009-10 the COA small group is using the Our Whole Lives (OWL) curriculum. OWL equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, OWL provides education about anatomy and human development, and helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality.

### COMING OF AGE (COA)

In 2010-2011 we will offer a Coming of Age program for our Junior High students. This curriculum will allow our 7-8<sup>th</sup> graders an opportunity to more deeply explore their faith and the UUA denomination. This grouping will focus on the journey and on the exploration more than the answer. In addition it is planned that there will be a UU heritage trip to Boston in the spring.

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## OUR SENIOR HIGH PROGRAM

We have an active and vibrant high school youth group - "The Teenz." Each Sunday this group meets from 10:30 until 12 noon in our Teen room across from the social hall. Rachel Wood, one of the young adults in our congregation, is the youth advisor for this group. The group has self-directed discussions each Sunday on a topic of their choosing. Our Teenz are a welcoming and inclusive group. They seek to welcome all teens 9 -12 grade who are also interested in being part of an open and supportive community.

Members of the Teenz are an active part of May. We have had Teenz on the Social Justice Committee and on our Safe Church Task Force. Our Teenz regularly host coffee hour for a month each year. The Teenz lead a youth service for the entire congregation each spring. This is an opportunity for them to share with all of May their reflections of their year in the Teen group. It is a service that the congregation looks forward to each year.

Our Teenz are also an active part of the larger St. Lawrence District. We have had members of the Teenz serve on the District Youth Adult Committee (YAC), the district Social Justice committee, and on the District Board. Our St. Lawrence District also sponsors a number of youth events. These events come in many shapes and sizes, from full youth conferences with about 150 people, to bowling outings with small youth groups. There are other district events such as cluster sleepovers/lock-ins, LDC's (Leadership Development Conferences), SDC's (Spirituality Development Conferences), and YAC meetings.

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## **Unitarian Universalist Principles**

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

**The inherent worth and dignity of every person;**

Let us value others and ourselves.

**Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;**

Let us show compassion and be fair.

**Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth;**

Let us learn with and accept each other.

**A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;**

Let us share questions to find what is true.

**The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process;**

Let us have a voice and work for the common good.

**The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;**

Let us make choices that make the world more fair and peaceful.

**Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.**

Let us respect the web of life that makes us one.

(Children's principles or promises written by Sheila Schuh 2001)

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## Support for Families

From time to time, families experience stress or sorrows that can be difficult to manage without the support of others. Children's needs can be great during these times, especially when parents' lives are heavily affected. Don't hesitate to call Jean Wahlstrom, our settled minister, or Jennifer Hamlin-Navias, Director of Religious Education (DRE), if you need some care or help.

### What is the Role of Parents?

We recognize parents and guardians as the primary religious educators of their children. Our community aims to support you as parents. This support is built on good communication, care, and responsibility.

### Registration

All parents will need to complete registration information and indicate authorization for emergency medical treatment, especially if they want their child to participate in any off-site events. Overnights involve special permission. Email addresses will be put on the Parents email list so that updates and reminders can be sent to parents.



2/21/10 Special Programming Sunday  
2/28/10 Regular classes  
3/7/10 Regular classes (Schedule continued on p.11)  
3/14/10 Regular classes  
3/21/10 Regular classes

SPRING SESSION

3/28/10 Regular classes  
4/4/10 Special Programming, Easter  
4/11/10 Regular classes  
4/18/10 Intergenerational Service Earth Day  
4/25/10 Regular classes  
5/2/10 Regular classes  
5/9/10 Regular classes  
5/16/10 Regular classes  
5/23/10 Regular classes  
5/30/10 Special Programming  
6/6/10 Kid's Annual Meeting  
6/13/09 Intergenerational Flower Communion Service

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## SCHEDULE FOR 2009-2010

### FALL SESSION

9/13/09	Intergenerational Water Communion service
9/20/09	Special Programming Sunday (Unirondack weekend)
9/27/09	RE programming begins, Regular classes
10/4/09	Regular classes
10/11/09	Special Programming Sunday
10/18/09	Regular classes
10/25/09	Intergenerational Memory Tree Service
11/01/09	Regular classes
11/08/09	Regular classes
11/15/09	Regular classes
11/22/09	Regular classes
11/39/09	Intergenerational

### SEVEN WEEKS OF UNITY CLASSES

12/06/09	First Week of Unity
12/13/09	Second Week of Unity
12/20/09	Third Week of Unity
12/27/09	Fourth Week of Unity Special Programming Sunday
1/03/10	Fifth Week of Unity
1/10/10	Sixth Week of Unity
1/17/10	Seventh Week of Unity Special Programming Sunday

### WINTER SESSION

1/24/10	Regular classes
1/31/10	Regular classes
2/7/10	Regular classes
2/14/10	Regular classes (schedule continued on page 11)

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