

# Religious Education Programs for Children and Youth



**The Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation in Fullerton**

# Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Fullerton

Meeting Place:  
1600 N. Acacia Avenue  
Fullerton, CA 92831

Meeting Time:  
Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Web Site:  
[www.ufullerton.org](http://www.ufullerton.org)

Follow Us On:



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The content of this handbook was supported by the work of many colleagues, peers, and religious educators who I thank for providing their wisdom, insight, and experience. I also wish to thank my religious community for assistance with policies and comments that both greatly improved and influenced this writing.

## **Unitarian Universalist Association Principles The Children's Version**

**WE BELIEVE** that each and every person is important.

**WE BELIEVE** that all people should be treated fairly.

**WE BELIEVE** that our churches are places where all people are accepted and where we continue learning together.

**WE BELIEVE** that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.

**WE BELIEVE** that everyone should have a vote about the things that concern them.

**WE BELIEVE** in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.

**WE BELIEVE** in caring for our planet Earth.

## **Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Fullerton Mission Statement**

We are a welcoming spiritual community of all ages,  
Living our principles through active service,  
Embracing each other and the wider world.

## **Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Fullerton Vision Statement**

We are a diverse, inclusive, welcoming congregation  
That supports spiritual growth and education for all.  
Guided by our Principles, we provide caring service to one another and the larger community, bringing purpose to our lives and meaning to our existence.

## From the Minister

At UUCF, religious education isn't just a thing we do on Sunday mornings—it's a way of being in the world. Understanding who we are, exploring our values, wrestling with ethical dilemmas, and seeing ourselves within the context of a caring faith community builds us into better human beings. Our RE program is designed so that people of all ages have opportunities to explore truth and meaning in an often confusing world.

Every Sunday, our program begins during the service with our Time for All Ages segment where the children are called to the front of the sanctuary. As a community, we learn together during this time, after which the children and teens separate into classes for age-appropriate instruction. These classes are designed to meet a variety of learning styles, and may incorporate social justice and community service activities, conversations on ethics, world religion discussions, or creating art to share with the congregation. Each activity is designed to come back to the question of what it means to be a caring, thoughtful, accountable member of the larger community.

I am very proud of our Religious Education program which I know will continue to grow and flourish. In today's world, our children have a deep need for both rationally and spiritually oriented religious education. I invite your family to become involved in all our program has to offer.

In hope and faith,

Rev. Jason Cook

## From the Director of Religious Education

Welcome to our religious education program for children and youth! Whatever your religious background – or even if you have never participated in a faith community before – there is room in our church for your family. For generations, Unitarian Universalism has welcomed and guided interfaith families, exiles, and seekers. We are enriched by each other's faith journeys and our liberal religious values.

Our values, best expressed in our seven Principles and Purposes, on many sources of wisdom, and our interaction with the wider community are the center of our religious education program. We create balanced youth programming through the Six Pillars, making sure they are represented throughout your work over the year. Revised over the years, the Six Pillars as described by the Web of Youth Ministry ([www.uua.org/youth](http://www.uua.org/youth)) are:

1. **Building Community:** The social aspect of the religious education program, community building offers time to bond, share values, establish trust, generate intimacy and practice acceptance. It is the time we spend getting to know one another.
2. **Social Action:** One of the ways we, as Unitarian Universalists, express our faith in the world. This can take many forms, including service projects, witness events, education, and community organizing.
3. **Worship:** Worship may take place as part of youth group gatherings, as non-traditional "circle worship," or with youth involvement in weekly Sunday services.
4. **Learning:** Curricula, discussions and skill-sharing sessions are great opportunities for learning. Learning also happens during many youth group events, whether they are social action, leadership, worship and even social gatherings.
5. **Leadership:** Making space for youth leadership gives youth the opportunity to learn to work together, facilitate, foster cooperation, and collaborate with others.
6. **Congregational Involvement:** Congregational involvements means having the opportunity to share one's gifts with the congregation connect across generations and participate in the life of the congregation.

The search for truth and meaning is a lifelong endeavor and begins when the child is very young. Families come to Unitarian Universalism after thoughtful search for spiritual practices and find a belief system that matches their life experiences. It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to work with this congregation, and especially our children, as we provide them the freedom to discover and express their uniqueness.

Rachel White, Director of Religious Education

## **Program Basics**

### **Overview**

The Unitarian Congregation of Fullerton (UUCF) provides a religious home and learning environment for the children and youth of our church community. We offer a friendly, accepting, and stimulating environment for children and youth to experience spiritual and social enrichment. As a church community, we commit ourselves to:

- Provide children and youth with a sense of belonging to a caring community where they feel safe and secure.
- Help children and youth value themselves and others, to accept responsibility for their lives, and to return to the community the same love and support they receive from it.
- Offer an opportunity to explore one's own spirituality while learning to respect the diversity of religious expression.
- Recognize and cherish the interdependency of life all around us.

UUCF's religious education is a cooperative, volunteer-led program. The Religious Education Committee (REC), working in conjunction with the Director of Religious Education (DRE), and other religious education staff plans and implements programming for Sunday mornings, after hours activities, and other special events. Loving and caring teachers in the program are part of a teaching team. They provide guidance and understanding to ethical and moral issues while offering children a foundation of safety and trust.

Creating the best possible religious learning environment for our children requires involvement from both parents and the religious education volunteer teachers. You can help by bringing your child to church regularly, talking with the teachers and R.E. staff, learning about the curricula, participating in church activities, and sharing with your child your own interests and life experiences with religion.

### **Unitarian Universalist Principles as a Covenant**

~ Adapted from the Unity Temple Unitarian Universalist Congregation ([www.unitytemple.org](http://www.unitytemple.org))

When we come to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Fullerton (UUCF), we make promises to each other, spoken and unspoken. These promises are sometimes called a "covenant." A covenant describes how we will treat each other and create a fun, safe, and sacred space for all. Our Covenant and Rules are based on our Unitarian Universalist principles. These are intended to help us as parents and as a religious education community teach our children how to be respectful, responsible, and caring persons. We shall do this by modeling the behavior we expect to see in our children and by making clear our expectations and the consequences for not meeting them.

#### **Unitarian Universalist Principles for all of us:**

##### **Principle 1: We believe that each and every person is important.**

- We respect all people through our words and actions.
- We give others a chance to share, be heard, and to be included.
- We affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

##### **Principle 2: We believe that all people should be treated fairly.**

- We welcome everyone at church and treat people fairly and with kindness, no matter what his or her age, sex, race, family, abilities or differences.
- We affirm and promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

**Principle 3: We believe that our church is a place where all people are accepted and where we continue learning together.**

- We learn together by listening to our teachers and one another, by participating in group activities to the best of our abilities, and by helping someone who is new or struggling.
- We affirm and promote the acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

**Principle 4: We believe that each person must be free to search for what is right and true in life.**

- We encourage each person's search for what is right and true in life.
- We respect the ideas, thoughts, and feelings of others without judgment, criticism, or laughter.
- We affirm and promote a free and a responsible search for truth and meaning.

**Principle 5: We believe that everyone should have a vote about things that concern them.**

- We listen to our inner voice and to the hopes and concerns of others.
- We ask for suggestions and advice, and work together to make church a safe and special place.
- We affirm and promote the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large.

**Principle 6: We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.**

- We work together to make the church and world a better place for all.
- We settle our disagreements in honest, caring, and peaceful ways.
- We affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

**Principle 7: We believe in caring for our planet Earth.**

- We care for the Earth, its creatures, and our surroundings.
- We affirm, promote, and respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

**Congregation Rules for Children and Youth**

*Adopted July 2010 Revised September 2017*

In order to keep the Congregation a fun, safe, and sacred space for all people of all ages, the following rules are to be followed. These rules are drawn from the Unitarian Universalist principles in our Children's and Youth's Covenant.

In this congregation we **DO**:

- Listen, speak, and act with respect.
- Treat everyone fairly by including people, taking turns, and cooperating.
- Share what I'm thinking or feeling.
- Challenge myself to do my best.
- Apologize when I fail to treat others the way I would like to be treated.

- Sit still and not distract others.
- Participate and cooperate in group activities even when I may not like the activity.
- Allow others to be themselves and explore and do meaningful things without judging or making fun.
- Run, skip, and jump outside.
- Share toys, play equipment, and snacks.
- Take time-outs or talk with someone when angry.
- Clean up messes, don't waste food or supplies, and recycle whatever I can.
- Help make church a fun, safe, and sacred place for everyone.
- Honor the BIG Four:
  - No illegal drugs.
  - No alcohol.
  - No sexual behavior.
  - No violence.

In this congregation we do **NOT**:

- Leave the classroom or playground without permission.
- Take things that belong to others or to our congregation.
- Damage property, grounds, or things belonging to others.
- Disrupt our group by being noisy or uncooperative.
- Yell or use disrespectful language.
- Hit, kick, shove, or punch one another.
- Throw sand or other objects that can do harm.
- Threaten others with words or actions.
- Stand or jump on furniture, roofs, walls, or fences.
- Play in violent ways or bring guns, knives, or weapons of any kind.
- Use tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Engage in sexual behavior.

In addition, the following rules for high school youth are intended to promote safety and fairness for all persons while at church or at a church-sponsored event.

1. The **BIG** Four:
  - No illegal drugs.
  - No alcohol.
  - No sexual behavior.
  - No violence.
2. Youth will participate in planned activities as a group rather than individuals.
3. Youth will behave with respect, concern, goodwill, and consideration towards one another.
4. Youth will respect the adult advisors, sponsors, and chaperones and will obey directions and guidance provided by them.
5. Youth will recognize the responsibility to leave our church and other facilities in the same condition we find them.
6. Youth will use good judgment with respect to safety and use of facilities.

### **Health, Safety, and Parent Accountability**

The health and safety of children is one of our most important concerns at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Fullerton. Creating the best possible religious learning

environment for our children requires involvement from both parents and the religious education volunteers. For this reason, parents are to abide to the following:

1. Register your child. A Registration Packet must be completed and signed (or updated) by the parent/guardian each year. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep all pertinent information current. Children must officially be registered after three visits.
2. Class assignments are made at the beginning of each school year or upon registration. If a parent feels that their child should be moved to a different class, this must be done in consultation with the Director of Religious Education. Class placement generally remains the same for the duration of the congregation's school year and no child should be moved to a class different than the one assigned without consultation.
3. Children are never allowed to remain on temple/congregation property and grounds unsupervised by a parent/guardian or Religious Education (RE) staff. Children are not permitted in classrooms before the start of the religious education program (when children are invited to go to their RE classes) or after checkout time at 12:15 p.m.
4. If a family chooses to remain at church and visit, they can do so in the social hall or on the patio. All religious education areas are off limits during non-program hours. Continued lack of parental supervision may result in the child and/or parents being suspended from the program and/or congregation.
5. A parent/guardian must remain on the grounds of the congregation at all times while the child is at church. This includes religious education program hours. If after reasonable efforts and the parents/guardians cannot be found, it may be necessary to contact emergency authorities for assistance.
6. All infants and toddlers must be checked in/out by a parent/guardian between 10:15 am and 12:15 pm. Children and youth must attend the beginning of the sanctuary service from about 10:30 a.m. to 10:45 am or be accompanied by their parent/guardian.
7. A parent/guardian must pick up elementary age children by 12:15 p.m., unless prior arrangement is made with the Director of Religious Education/designee. Those enrolled in 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades will be released on their own volition to the social hall between 11:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.
8. Children are asked to leave personal belongings (toys, games, personal listening devices, cell phones purses, etc.) at home or with their parent/guardian during the RE program.
9. Our program can only function with the generous volunteer help of all our families. Parents are expected to volunteer in the Religious Education program at least four times during the year.

### **Disruptive Behavior Policy**

Our Religious Education program welcomes all who wish to participate. Each Sunday morning, we hope children will make friendships, have fun, learn from each another, and respect one another. The UUCF has a responsibility to hold children and youth responsible for their conduct at church. Parents will be held responsible for difficulties that the UUCF RE may have with their children and have the responsibility for communicating to their children the consequences of their conduct.

If our Unitarian Universalist Principles are not being followed in our church, we have a responsibility to respond. Depending upon the situation, actions may be taken to ensure a fun, safe, and sacred space for all. Such actions may include: naming the behavior and asking that it be stopped, having a child sit quietly for several minutes in a specified place, talking with the child about what happened, offering an alternative activity, speaking with a child's parent/guardian about the troubling behavior, asking the parent to attend the child's group, retrieving the parent from the sanctuary, or returning the child to the parent.

If a child is chronically disruptive or unable to participate with the group in a positive manner, the child's parent/guardian will be contacted by the Director of Religious Education to discuss the problem, explore alternatives, and agree upon a plan that meets the needs of the child, his/her peers, and the church. The Covenant and Rules report will be used as a tool to help keep parent/guardian informed of any difficulties or problems a child may be experiencing at church.

The following incremental measures will be taken to identify and resolve disruptive behavior:

1. **Verbal Communication:** Inappropriate or disruptive behavior will be discussed with the child, parent/guardian, teacher, and/or Director of Religious Education.
2. **Written Communication:** The Covenant and Rules Report will be used to keep the parent/guardian informed about the difficulties a child may be experiencing at church. A child who is issued three reports within one year may be suspended from the next Sunday school class. A written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian indicating the reason for suspension. The Minister and the Board President will be notified when such action has been taken.
3. **Meeting/Action Plan:** If there continues to be inappropriate or irresponsible behavior and the above disciplinary actions have proven ineffective, the parent/guardian will be asked to meet with the Director of Religious Education, the Minister, and/or the Board President to discuss an action plan as appropriate. A parent/guardian may request a meeting with the Director of Religious Education to discuss concerns, behavior management strategies, or review status. For example, the Director of Religious Education may require the parent/guardian of a child to attend religious education in the child's classroom.
4. **Suspension:** A child may be suspended from the Religious Education program if the Director of Religious Education, the Minister, and/or the Board President determines that the child has:
  - a. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon another person, except in self-defense.
  - b. Possessed, sold, used, or otherwise furnished any firearm (or imitation firearm), knife, explosive, or weapons of any kind.
  - c. Possessed, used, sold, otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
  - d. Stole, attempted to steal, or knowingly received stolen church property.
  - e. Caused or attempted to cause damage to church property.
  - f. Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine.
  - g. Possessed, offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia.
  - h. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.

- i. Disrupted classroom activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of teachers and others in authority.
  - j. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated another child or authority figure, or created an intimidating or hostile classroom environment.
5. **Parental Cooperation:** We expect full cooperation from every parent/guardian. Failure by parents/guardians to communicate expectations to children and for parents to follow these rules may result in parents and children being suspended from the program and/or congregation.

Some egregious infractions may require the Director of Religious Education, Minister, and/or Board President to report to directly to law enforcement. These include assaults with a deadly weapon, possession of a firearm, unlawful use, sale, or possession of drugs, or the offer/sale of any substance represented as drugs. Parents will be notified immediately thereafter.

An appeal to the suspension may be filed with the UUCF Board President. The Board President shall forward this appeal to the UUCF Board of Directors. The Board President shall make all reasonable efforts to investigate any appeal. The UUCF Board of Directors shall vote on a remedy to an appeal within a reasonable period of time such as 60 days from the date that the appeal was received.

### **Sick Child Policy**

Please use your best judgment in determining whether your child is well enough to attend RE classes. If you are unsure whether your child's symptoms are contagious, please err on the side of caution and keep your child at home. While we sympathize with the needs of each parent and their child, we must provide a healthy environment for the other children in the classrooms.

If your child presents any of the following symptoms or has had them within the past 24 hours, please keep him or her at home:

- Abdominal pain, diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever
- Severe sore throat
- Excessive runny nose, coughing or other respiratory symptoms
- Eye drainage
- Head lice
- Mouth sores
- Rash
- Unexplained irritability, lethargy or crying

## Parents are Important

At UUCF our staff and volunteers work hard to create an environment that is safe, educational and nurturing for our children – but that's only the groundwork. We believe in empowering families in the work of religious education, secure in the knowledge that ultimately, a child's spiritual development is firmly in the hands of you, the parent. Our goal is to involve you actively in the timeless work of building a theology that is meaningful to you and your family. Below are ways you can contribute to your child's religious education.

- **Come to church together.** Parents who wish to foster a trusting and close community and demonstrate the value of religion in your family attend church regularly and together as a family. Make a special effort to be with your children at family activities and intergenerational social events of the congregation.
- **Attend church regularly.** Children develop a sense of belonging by attending regularly. A child who attends regularly not only gets more out of the curriculum, but also feels more connected with classmates and the church. Parents who possess an attitude of cheerful expectancy about weekly church attendance will have fewer difficulties with their children's involvement each Sunday. We hope that your family will make church a priority in your lives.
- **Volunteer.** Lifelong learning, especially where our children and youth are concerned is a cooperative venture. We of course love and rely on our teachers, but they aren't the only volunteers we need in our program! We need the help of ALL parents and non-parents to make our program a success. In order to ensure our programs success, the expectation is if you have a child or youth in the program, you will volunteer some of your time. There are a variety of ways you can help. Find one that fits your abilities and interests, and get involved in building our community!
- **Get to know your child's teacher, classroom, and curriculum.** The more you know about the people, materials and spaces involved in your children's experience, the more comfortable both of you will be in our program.
- **Keep informed.** Look over the available literature and follow the activities of your child's class. You can also keep informed by reading the weekly Facebook posts and the Religious Education News in our church's monthly newsletter, The Communicator.
- **Communicate.** The Director of Religious Education, RE Assistants, Youth Coordinator, and teachers happy to hear from you. Share with our DRE and teachers any information about your children that may affect his or her participation in our classrooms. This can include allergies, learning disabilities, phobias and fears; special interests...anything you believe may positively or negatively influence your children's experience.
- **Provide feedback.** Please share your thoughtful input, as well as, the joys or concerns you have about what occurs in our program. We strive to create an environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy for our children. We rely on your feedback to make sure we are doing our best. Our staff will treat any information you give us compassionately, confidentially and in a professional manner. Together we can build a strong program.

- **Stay active.** Attend parent and adult religious education classes. Show interest in your child's program and accomplishments by attending parent meetings and the annual R.E. Open House.
- **Be responsible for your children's whereabouts.** Parents must supervise their children while at church. Inform teachers directly when picking your children up. This allows us to keep an accurate headcount, be aware of which children are still in our care and maintain proper adult-to-child ratios. Please pick up your child by 12:15.
- **Ask your children about what they experience in class.** Spend some time each week discussing what was learned and experienced that Sunday. Follow up with discussion questions at home about the themes your children are exploring in religious education. Let your children know your thoughts, opinions, and values. Allow your young person the time and space to develop their own spirituality.
- **Model Unitarian Universalist principles for your children.** We are all on a journey. Share with your child, in terms they can understand, your own triumphs and struggles to develop your personal theology, embody your values and make a positive difference in the world.
- **Share your own spiritual beliefs.** Tell them why you have chosen UUCF as your family's spiritual home, and Unitarian Universalism as your religion. Share what our church and religion mean to you.
- **Support our church.** Make a pledge of financial support to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Fullerton appropriate to your family's situation. Consider becoming a member.

## **Religious Education Teachers, Staff, and Volunteers**

### **Screening and Selection of Workers with Children and Youth**

1. All paid and volunteer workers providing direct care or supervision of children or youth will meet the following criteria:
  - Teachers or youth advisors must be a member in good standing of UUCF or another UU congregation for a minimum of 6 months, or be a professional employee of the church.
  - Advisors for high-school youth must be at least 25 years old, advisors for middle-school youth must be at least 21 years old, and all other teachers must be at least 18 years old.
  - Workers in the nursery (with infants 1-5 years) must be at least 14 years old.
  - Caregivers supervising children at UUCF events must be at least 14 years old.
2. All paid workers in the RE program over the age of 18 and all volunteer staff providing direct care or supervision of children or youth must consent to a background check and such a check must be performed.
  - The congregation Administrator will be responsible for the coordination with the screening vendor and for the security of the screening materials.
  - Only the congregation Administrator will have access to information relating to criminal background checks on other staff or volunteers of UUCF. Information will be shared with the Board of Trustees, Minister, and/or DRE as appropriate.
  - The DRE will be responsible for the distribution, completion, and collection of volunteer screening materials.
3. All paid and volunteer workers in the RE program must abide by and sign a Code of Conduct.
4. Applicants for compensated positions over the age of 16 in the RE program or childcare must complete an application form and supply two references. These references should be people who have known the applicant for at least three years, preferably in relation to previous work with children or youth.
5. All compensated employees must provide a social security number at time of employment.
6. All compensated employees over the age of 18 must provide government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license, at time of employment.
7. Any church worker with children or youth who disagrees with any provisions is free to discuss their opinions with the leadership of the church. However, until such a time as the church chooses to alter any portion of its provisions, the worker must abide by the code.
8. Any paid or volunteer worker who refuses to abide by any of the above provisions will not be permitted to participate in any UUCF programs on or off premise that involve working with children or youth.
9. The Board of Trustees will determine if past criminal record(s) impede an individual to participate in any UUCF programs on or off premise involving children or youth.
10. Individuals convicted of, under current indictment for, or who self-disclose any act of sexual misconduct involving a child or child abuse is precluded from participation in any UUCF programs on or off premise involving children or youth.

### **Procedures for Reporting, Response and Removal of an RE Staff Member or RE Volunteer (Teacher, Classroom Assistant, or Teen Advisor)**

Any person with concerns about an adult shall immediately contact the Minister who will then assess the situation. (The board president of UUCF should also be informed of the situation.)

The Minister should take immediate, precautionary measures to protect the safety of the children when he or she believes that circumstances or events indicate that a volunteer, caregiver, or staff member may have engaged in behavior harmful to children. Precautionary measures the Minister may take include promptly relieving the affected worker from his or her work to the extent that it involves interaction with the children. This removal will be done pending a fair hearing as outlined below.

The Minister will provide the affected worker or volunteer with an opportunity to know the charges against him or her. Whenever possible and without risk of further harm occurring, the affected worker or volunteer will be given an opportunity to know the evidence, and source thereof, supporting such charges, and the right to reply to or rebut such charges.

After assessing the situation, the Minister will consult with the board president (unless there is a good reason not to do so). If the Minister considers it appropriate he or she may also consult with the DRE. In consultation with the president, the Minister will decide if action should be taken. The Minister will then inform the District Services Staff Group of UUA.

All actions will be in accordance with the UUCF Disruptive Behavior Procedures.

## **Ways We Worship**

Worship is what we do when we come together to celebrate the community and all that is of worth in and around us. It is also a time for us to acknowledge our struggles and hopes. During these times together we acknowledge our heritage, share our values and affirm who we are and what we believe. Music, quiet reflection, stories, sharing, and simple rituals enhance our worship. There are many opportunities for children to worship, such as:

### **Sunday Morning**

Children and youth in pre-school through high school gain an understanding of the ways in which we worship together by attending the first ten to fifteen minutes of services in the Sanctuary each Sunday. They join with people of all ages in the lighting of the chalice, singing hymns, opening words, and reciting our affirmation. Following the introduction of guests, children collect canned food and dried goods for Pathways of Hope. Children and youth are dismissed to their classrooms following the food collection or Time for All Ages. Infants and toddlers (three and under) may be brought to childcare at 10:15 a.m.

### **Classroom Worship**

Worship is an integral part of the religious education program each week. It is what we do when we come together to celebrate the community and all that is of worth in and around us. It's a time for us to acknowledge our hopes and our struggles. On Sunday morning, each class gathers in an opening circle to affirm Unitarian Universalist values, share joys and concerns, and be thankful for those around us. Our goal is to make our children and youth feel connected by way of learning some of our Unitarian Universalist rituals, stories, and songs.

### **Time for All Ages**

Children, youth and adults need to learn and grow together in order to build a faith. In the spirit of a multigenerational congregation, we offer a Time for All Ages each Sunday morning. Reading the story or listening to it, children and adults of all ages are given the opportunity to understand their innate connection with their creative, cosmological origins.

### **Intergenerational Services and Special Holidays**

Throughout the year, we will have intergenerational services in which children and youth (elementary through high school) remain in the Sanctuary for the entire service. The nursery will be staffed for children age five and younger. These services provide an important opportunity for children to witness first-hand the way their parents worship. Intergenerational services tend to be more interactive, and may provide children and youth to co-lead the worship.

### **Flower Communion**

The Flower Communion service was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He introduced this special service on June 4, 1923 as a symbolic ritual that would bind people together. Capek turned to the native beauty of the countryside for elements of a communion that would be genuine. Unitarian Universal congregants around the world continue to celebrate the Flower Communion by bringing a flower

of their choice, either from their own gardens, or from the field or roadside. Congregants are invited to bring a flower of their choice to be placed in a large communal vase as a symbol of the united fellowship. During the ceremony, young people distribute a flower, different from one that was brought to each member of the congregation.

The significance of the Flower Communion is that no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, as thus it is with our church community, it would not be the same without each and every one of us.

### **Water Communion**

The Water Communion was first used in a Unitarian Universalist worship service in the 1980's. Congregants bring to the service a small amount of water that is special to them. At the service, the samples of water are placed in a large bowl and allowed to mix. As the water is added, the person who brought it shares why this water is important to them. The combined water is symbolic of our shared faith coming from many different sources.

The Water Communion is held at the beginning of the new church year in September.

### **Bread Communion**

Bread is sometimes referred to as the stuff of life. The grain from which it is made comes from the Earth, fed by the rain and sun, just as we come from the Earth and are fed by the elements. Every culture, everywhere in the world, makes its own bread. At the Bread Communion, families are invited to bring bread to commemorate and share their cultural heritage with the congregation. Before the bread is divided, each family gives a brief talk on the bread that was brought and why it is special.



*We are not human because we think. We are human because we care. All true meaning is shared meaning.*

~ Forrest Church (Unitarian Universalist, clergy, author) ~  
*Love & Death: My Journey Through The Valley of The Shadow*

## **Our Religious Education Classes**

### **High School – Grades 8 through 12**

YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) offers the youth of our congregation a balanced program to support them in their continued personal growth and religious exploration. The five components of the program include worship, community building, social action, learning and leadership. Philosophical discussions related to issues teens face in everyday life are the cornerstone of Sunday meetings. The group engages in a variety of other activities in addition to regular Sunday morning classes. Meetings can be social action activities, movie nights, or holiday parties. Youth and their advisors determine the schedule for the year.

High school students are invited to attend and participate in any or all of the activities. (For example, we do not require attendance on Sunday morning for a teen to participate in the after-hours youth group activities and vice versa.) We encourage all of our high school youth to find ways to be active in the congregation and our high school program. Some trips may require mandatory meetings and other obligations.

### **District Youth Events**

Youth ages 14 – 18 can participate in several Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) youth conferences a year. Youth advisors from the church accompany the youth group; parents are invited to help with transportation. These conferences offer workshops, worship, fun, new friends and joyous reunions. In addition, a Youth Caucus meets as part of the annual Pacific Southwest District Assembly. Youth (grades 9-12) participate in all regular activities and workshops, as well as some special activities planned by and for them.

### **Middle School – Grades 6 through 8**

Middle school youth have an opportunity to demonstrate their community building, social action, and leadership skills by applying their many talents to projects such as this year's social action events, annual R.E. Halloween Party, and winter play.

### **Grades 4 and 5/6**

Children are encouraged to search for truth and meaning, while striving to be active in peace-making and other efforts to improve our world.

Crafts, games, and hands-on activities encourage children to explore the many ways that they can share their thoughts and feelings with one another. Participants physically explore what it means to be linked to others and how one person's actions can affect the whole system to which they belong. Many activities involve participants in teams or small groups, emphasizing their experience as individuals working together in community.

### **First Grade through Grade 3**

As Unitarian Universalists, we are intentional in turning to a diversity of sources as we seek to discover truth and make meaning in our lives. All sessions highlight gifts as a way to explore the many ways that people connect with one another throughout their lives. With games, crafts, and hands-on activities, children develop a sense of self while learning to be a part of a greater community.

## **Preschool**

Each Sunday begins with an opening ritual. Children learn and recite our Unitarian Universalist pledge: *We as Unitarian Universalists believe in open minds, caring hearts, and helping hands.* Children have the chance to share their joys and concerns and give a personal reaction to the opening question. Importance is given to each child without pressuring those children who are not quite ready to contribute their ideas. After a story, there is a brief focused discussion connecting the theme of the story with the children's own experiences. Children are given time and encouraged to express themselves artistically with planned activities that include drama, movement, music, and visual arts. When the class has finished its last activity, children gather in a closing circle and sing a song.

## **Infant-Toddler Care: Children up to age 3**

Our childcare program provides loving care and supervised activity for the youngest members of our congregation. Our goal is to provide a warm and nurturing environment where trust naturally grows, helping children to become comfortable and happy with their first association with the church. Simple toys, picture books, and music are part of their environment. Please introduce yourself and your child to our caregivers and take some time to help your child feel at home. Parents may remain with their child as long as needed for the child to become comfortable with the caregivers and surroundings.

We ask parents to let our childcare staff know how to locate you during the service. You may indicate where you expect to sit in the sanctuary, leave a description of what you are wearing, or leave your number and set your cell phone to vibrate.

## **Curricula**

A curriculum is selected annually and used have been prepared professionally and may be published by the Unitarian Universalist Association ([www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)) and Unitarian Universalists religious educators and leaders. Teachers may use additional resource material to enrich the program. Parents are encouraged to meet with or call the Director of Religious Education for more detailed information.

## **Class Assignments and Transitions**

Class assignments are made at the beginning of each school year or upon registration. Class placement generally remains the same for the duration of the church school year and no child should be moved to a class different than the one assigned without consultation.

If a parent feels their child should be moved to a different class, this must be done in consultation with the Director of Religious Education and the teachers of both classes. No child should be moved to a class, different from the one assigned without this consultation.

Whether your child is new to UUCF or moving up a grade level to a new class, transitions can be scary. Please prepare your child for this change by talking with them about what to expect, about their new teachers, and the new children in their class. Parents are always welcome to stay with their child in the classroom for as long as it takes to make them feel comfortable.

## **Children with Special Needs**

It is our goal to have our program available to all young people. If children have special needs, we want to know about them so that we can make arrangements that meet their needs. Parents are the most knowledgeable about their own children and we appreciate your communication with us. Our teachers and Director of Religious Education are available to help.

## **Summer Programs**

Religious education runs throughout the summer for children and youth; and age groups are often combined. Our elementary-age summer program emphasizes hands-on activities and experiments, and includes themes such as world religions, stewardship, our senses, and our connection to the Earth and universe. The summer program for teens have included discussions of theological and ethical issues structured around films as a media, special guest speakers, and participation in adult services.



*We do not divide experiences into compartments and say, "These are religious; those are secular. These problems are in the realm of ethics; those have no ethical implications." Life becomes religious and ethical whenever we make it so:*

- *When some new light is seen;*
- *When some deeper appreciation is felt;*
- *When some larger outlook is gained;*
- *When some nobler purpose is formed;*
- *When some task is well done.*

*The function of the church for both young and old is not to give us on Sunday certain religious kinds of experiences different from the experiences of every day. The function of the church is rather to teach us how to put religious and ethical qualities into all kinds of experiences.*

~ Sophia Lyon Fahs ~  
Pioneer in child-directed education

## Our Special Programs and Opportunities

There are many opportunities throughout the year for fellowship, worship, and service in addition to the Sunday morning programs.

### Social Responsibility

The religious education program is designed to encourage our young people to develop a sense of social responsibility and to take action to influence change. Our children and youth help with projects of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, as well as other activities to benefit people in need. Children and youth are encouraged to generate their own ideas of how they can improve our world and the health and well being of its inhabitants. Past and present projects have included preparing and serving meals to the homeless, collecting backpacks and school supplies for Orange County's Share Our Selves organization, rebuilding and maintenance projects at our Camp deBenneville Pines Conference Center, hosting a Hunger Banquet and Behind the Orange Curtain movie night and dinner. Children and their families are encouraged to bring canned or non-perishable items for our weekly food collection for Pathways of Hope.

### Dedication Ceremony

The birth or adoption of a child is a major event in the life of any family. There is a new person to care for; roles and routines change. The ceremony is a public celebration of the inherent worth, dignity, and beauty of each child. In this special time the congregation confirms our commitment to nurturing and supporting the spiritual journey of you and your child. Child dedication is open to any committed family seeking the love and support of our beloved community. Child dedications are performed during Sunday morning services and typically on Flower Communion Easter Sunday. Alternate arrangements can be made; please meet with the minister to discuss your hopes.

### Music

Music is an important part of our religious service. Children discover and share the special feelings that come when music is done well. Through music, children find a place to connect with each other, learn a new skill, be creative, and contribute to the church community. People often think that the purpose of a children's choir is to perform during worship from time to time. UUCF offers many opportunities for children and youth to participate in music and share their talents with the congregation.

- **Golden Chimes:** Nurturing a love of music in our youth is a very special part of congregational life at the UUCF. The children's chime choir is one avenue for young people to express themselves and share the gift of music. No previous experience is needed and even children who don't read music are quick to pick up the chimes.

The Golden Chimes is open to children in grade 3 and older. The Golden Chimes rehearse on Sundays following the service about 30 – 45 minutes. Parents are required to remain on congregation grounds during rehearsals. Performances vary throughout the year, but include Christmas, Senior High Bridging, and other times of celebration.

- **Other Music Opportunities:** UUCF invites teens to participate in a variety of musical programs. From the choir to the adult hand chime group to solo performances, there are plenty of ways to participate and experience the joy of music. Children and youth are encouraged to share their musical talents with the entire congregation by coordinating specific performance dates directly with the Music Director.

### **Coming of Age**

Coming of Age is a Unitarian Universalist rite-of-passage program in which a congregation fosters the transition of its children into youth. Program components include the Sunday morning class, a social justice project, development of a personal belief statement and a mentoring relationship with an adult member of the congregation who supports them through this process. At the end of the program, the youth prepare a service in which they present personal belief or “credo” statements.

### **Senior High Bridging**

One of the most important things we can do for our youth is to support them into adulthood, to keep them connected to Unitarian Universalism, and continue to minister to them, as they become adults. Our Bridging Ceremony celebrates the transition from youth to young adulthood of graduating high school seniors.

### **Our Whole Lives**

***Our Whole Lives***, or the ***OWL*** program, is a series of sexuality education curricula for six age groups: grades K-1, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, grades 10-12, young adults (ages 18-35), and adults. Our Whole Lives helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. Participants typically meet once a week for about three hours in a safe, supportive peer group environment with specially trained leaders. Young people have an opportunity to explore values, sexual language, respect, gender issues and roles, responsible sexual behavior, friendships, and much more. The goal of the ***OWL*** program is to nurture healthy, loving relationships with others.

### **Camp DeBenneville Pines**

DeBenneville Pines, our Unitarian Universalist Camp, is located in the Barton Flats area of San Bernardino National Forest about 90 miles east of Los Angeles. At an elevation of 6800 feet, towering pines, cedars, and oaks surround the camp. Cabins feature rustic comfort in a range of accommodations from semi-private to mini-dorm rooms. The heated cabins have modern bath facilities and the beds have comfortable mattresses. The kitchen staff serves hearty, home-style meals and offers vegetarian and vegan fare.

Our congregation’s weekend family camp at deBenneville is the second or third weekend in November. Highlights include workshops for adults, children’s activities, worship, games, nature walks and lots of time to be together. Please watch for announcements or check the congregation’s website [www.ufullerton.org](http://www.ufullerton.org).

A variety of camps are offered throughout the year, catering to families, adults, teens, and children. For more information, please visit the Pacific Southwest District at [www.pswduua.org](http://www.pswduua.org) or the camp’s website at [www.debenneville.org](http://www.debenneville.org).

## Religious Education Committee

The Religious Education Committee (REC) ensures that the philosophy of our program is conducted in a manner consistent with the policies approved by the Unitarian Congregation in Fullerton's board of trustees and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The committee is charged with planning and implementing the religious education programs and events. These responsibilities require team effort, and include recruiting and supporting classroom teachers, selecting curricula, establishing program goals, policies, and procedures, and creating enriching activities to enhance the UUCF's children and youth religious education church community.

Parents, teachers, and friends are welcome to attend and/or submit comments and suggestions to the Co-Chairpersons of the Committee in advance of the meeting date. The committee meets every other month. Please check the congregation's calendar at [www.uufullerton.org](http://www.uufullerton.org) for meeting dates and times. Childcare is provided upon request.



*The great end in religious education is not to stamp our minds upon 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; not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rule, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment ... to excite and cherish spiritual life ... so that they may discern for themselves what is everlastingly right and good.*

~ William Ellery Channing ~  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Unitarian Minister

### **Our Children's UUCF Pledge**

We as Unitarian Universalists

Believe in...

Caring Hearts

Open Minds and

Helping Hands

### **Lighting of the Chalice**

This flame affirms the light of truth,  
The warmth of community,  
And the fire of commitment.

### **Our Affirmation**

Love is the doctrine we share,  
The quest of truth is its sacrament,  
And service is its prayer.  
To dwell together in peace,  
To seek knowledge in freedom,  
To serve human need,  
Thus do we covenant with one another.

### **The UU Principles Song**

*Words: Carol Benson Holst*

*Sung to the tune of Do-Re-Mi*

One – Each person is important.

Two – Be kind in all you do.

Three – We're free to learn together.

Four – And search for what is true.

Five – All people need a vote.

Six – Build a fair and peaceful world.

Seven – We care for Earth's lifeboat.

That will bring us back to me and UU ... (*Repeat*)

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Fullerton is a member congregation of the Association of Unitarian Universalists Churches and was established in 1967. As a Welcoming Congregation, an inclusive community, we embrace diversity of belief, of age, of race, or color, of sexual orientation, of gender identity, of physical or mental challenge, and of national origin.