



**NEIGHBORHOOD UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

Youth Religious Education Participant Handbook

*"The great end in religious instruction 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."
~ William Ellery Channing*

**Sunday Calendar
Inside!**



2009-2010

Neighborhood Church is a vibrant and growing congregation dedicated to empowering our members to live lives of service, integrity, and joy.

OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST 7 PRINCIPLES

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth
in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and use of the democratic process within our congregations
and society at large;

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

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



THE CHILDREN'S VERSION

Every person is important and valuable;

All people should be treated fairly;

Our churches are places where we should
accept one another and learn together;

Each person should be free to search for what is true and right;

All people have the right to speak out and vote
on things that matter to them;

We should help build and keep a peaceful, fair, and free world;

We need to take care of the earth, the home
we share with all living things.

NURTURING THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF OUR YOUTH

The familiar saying, "*It takes a village to raise a child,*" is at the heart of our Youth Religious Education philosophy here at Neighborhood. From Ministers, to staff, to volunteer teachers, to you the parents, we strive to provide our children with a strong foundation for faith and spiritual growth through their relationships with the church community. As we focus our Religious Education programs on transmitting our faith, your children will be exposed to worship and ritual in many different forms and be encouraged to explore many of those rituals at home.

This year, carefully chosen curriculum will focus on our Unitarian Universalist Identity and World Religions. Our classes are taught by an incredible team of caring, dedicated **volunteer** teachers. Additionally, our children and youth will focus on social justice with regular Worship/Justice Sundays when all ages come together for worship and an Justice related activity. Our Religious Education community (including you) encourages our youth to ask tough questions, create their own spiritual path and participate in the world. We work to foster spiritual awareness and make the events in children's lives religious occasions.

Nurturing the spiritual lives of our children is our "*Gift of Faith*" to them. I hope you and your family will enjoy this exploration together. As always, I am available to answer questions and/or address concerns. I want to make your child's experience here a memorable one. I look forward to getting to know all of you and your families and to learning together!

Sara LaWall,
Director of Religious Education

THE FREE AND RESPONSIBLE SEARCH FOR TRUTH & MEANING

At the center of our UU Principles and Purposes, is the phrase: the free and responsible search for truth and meaning. This has guided our Religious Education programs for children, youth and adults since our beginnings. We are the church of the open mind and learning is central to who we are. All UU congregations are places of imagination and curiosity; here we ask the questions of our lives.

A healthy RE program takes all of us, staff and members together. There is nothing more important, or as exciting, or as fun as learning. Neighborhood Church is a place for learning and for growing – for growing our spirits and our minds and our hearts, for expanding our horizons. So be a part of this – keep on learning!

Rev. Dr. Jim Nelson,
Senior Minister

*The mission of the
Youth Religious
Education Program at
Neighborhood Church:*

*NURTURE spiritual
growth;*

*HELP develop personal
religious beliefs;*

*CREATE a foundation for
Unitarian Universalist
Identity;*

*FOSTER trust in
community, church &
humanity;*

*ENCOURAGE living a life
that makes a difference.*

Within the mission of Neighborhood Church and Youth Religious Education, the YRE Committee represents congregational concerns about religious education for children and youth and supports the professional staff in realizing the goals of the program.

Meeting once a month with the Director of Religious Education and the RE Assistant, committee members plan and implement Religious Education Events, support training sessions, serve as a sounding board for staff decision making and act as religious education ambassadors to the greater church community and families.

If you have concerns or comments about programming for children and youth, please contact the Religious Education Staff or a committee member.

Visitors are always welcome, please contact the committee chair to confirm the date and time.

YRE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bruce Austin
Kris Davey
Anne Franck
Julie Hiroto
Shari Majumder
Michelle Shechtman
Laura Whitmore

STAFF

Sara LaWall
Director, Religious Education
626.449.3470 ext. 19
slawall@uuneighborhood.org

Erika Stallings
RE Program Assistant
626.449.3470 ext. 12
reassistant@uuneighborhood.org

SCHEDULE

Church Year:

September 13, 2009 – June 6, 2010

9:30am – 10:45am* Nursery up to 7th grade

11:30am – 12:45pm* Nursery up to 12th grade

A full Sunday calendar for Religious Education can be found at the back of this booklet.

**Parents are asked not to pick up their children until quarter past the hour, allowing time to complete the lesson and bring class to closure. Your consideration is appreciated.*

REGISTRATION

Registration forms are available on the YRE table. If you have not done so already, please fill one out for your child(ren). **Registration is required after 3 visits for infants, children and youth.** Mailings and emails describing programming events along with teacher to parent communications are sent **only to those registered.**

To maintain a familiar, comfortable environment and a sense of continuity, **parents are asked to choose one service**, either 9:30am or 11:30am. This way we can be sure of having teachers and children/youth at the same time, every Sunday for every class.

*When placing a child in YRE, please place them into the same grade level they attend in school.

YRE CLASSROOM POLICIES

Below are some of our classroom policies the YRE committee has created over the years.

We also use a detailed policy handbook for all volunteers and staff working with children which can be made available upon request.

ELECTRONICS IN THE CLASSROOM

Any and all hand-held electronic devices will **not be permitted** in the classroom though grade 8. This includes, but is not limited to, the following items: Cell phones, Gameboys, ipod's. Please have your children leave these items at home or in the car for the hour they are in their classes on Sundays.

Should a young person bring one into the classroom, the teacher will ask him/her to place it in a holding bin for the duration of class. Should the young person refuse, a YRE Staff member will be called and the young person will be escorted to the Sanctuary to join his/her parents for the remainder of the service.

MOVIES AND MEDIA FOR JR. AND SR. HIGH YOUTH

Any movies or TV programs that are shown at YRE events will be **consistent with the age of the YRE participants.** For children in grades K-8 we rarely use media during the year unless it is integral to the lesson and curriculum. During the summer we often run programs that explore our UU values in certain movies and television programs.

Movies shown at youth overnights will not include films with MPG ratings of R or NC-17 or any unrated movie that may warrant an R or NC-17 rating. Movies that are rated G, PG or PG-13 do not need approval by parents or the YRE committee.

TV programming will not include TV ratings of TV MA. Programming rated TV Y, TV Y7, TV Y7 FV, TV G, TV PG, TV 14 do not require approval by parents or the YRE committee. If the leadership desires to show an R-rated movie or TV programming rated TV MA, due to an exceptional teaching opportunity, a request may be made to the YRE committee. These events would necessitate parental approval. Once approved, such events must be held outside the regularly scheduled YRE programs and not at sleepovers, Sunday YRE, family camp, etc. These events would necessitate parental approval.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE

Come 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 to their classmates and the church. Parents who possess an attitude of cheerful expectancy about weekly church school 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.

INVOLVEMENT

Lifelong learning, especially where our youth are concerned is a cooperative venture. We need the help of ALL parents and non-parents to make our program a success. We do not charge a fee for participation in our program. The RE program is paid for through your pledge to the congregation. **In order to ensure our success, the expectation is if you have a child or youth in the program, you will volunteer some of your time.** Please fill out the parent commitment form with your registration materials.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO YOUR CHILDREN'S TEACHERS

Teachers are forming relationships with your children and they want to meet you too. The DRE and the staff are also interested in hearing from you. Look over the available literature and follow the activities of your child's class.

YRE COMMITTEE CLASSROOM LIAISONS

Each class will be assigned a YRE Committee member who will serve as a Teacher/Parent Liaison. The role of this liaison is to provide an additional layer of support to teachers while also acting as a communications link between teachers, parents and the DRE. Your liaison will serve as a point of contact to field questions, concerns, feedback and praise. The liaison will then share the feedback with the DRE and assist with follow up if needed.

ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

In deference to our teachers, please drop children off **on-time, but no earlier than 15 minutes before class start time** and pick them up 15 minutes after the service ends—please do not pick them up early. This schedule provides an opportunity for adults to visit during coffee hour and affords teachers and children sufficient time to complete lessons and projects.

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

Please help your child observe appropriate behavior at church. We believe children need classrooms where they will be safe and feel respected. Any behavior difficulties will be reported to parents, and together, parents, teachers, and the Director of Religious Education will address any situations.

TRANSITIONS

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

WAYS WE WORSHIP

WORSHIP/JUSTICE SUNDAYS

Periodically throughout the year, all our children will gather together for youth worship and/or an activity focused around a social justice issue. This year's activities will include Tree Planting, an Earth Day Celebration and much more! We want to provide children with the experience of ritual; to learn about the ways in which Unitarian Universalists worship, what it means to be part of a larger faith community and to forge relationships with our ministers and staff.

SECOND SUNDAYS

Children gain an understanding of the ways in which we worship together by attending the first fifteen minutes of services in the Sanctuary on the second Sunday of every month (Chalice Children – 8th grade). Seated with their families, they join with people of all ages in singing hymns, silent prayer and listening to a story. Please see the YRE calendar for specific dates.

INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICES

Throughout the year, we will have Intergenerational services in which the children and youth (Kindergarten – 12th grade) are in the sanctuary for the entire service. These services provide an important opportunity for children to witness first-hand the way their parents worship in the sanctuary when they would usually be in their classrooms. These services tend to be more interactive, plus children and youth have opportunities to co-lead the worship. These services are great for families learning and worshipping together.

THEME BASED MINISTRY

Our ministers have begun using monthly themes in worship and we are working to expand those themes into all areas of church programming from Chalice Circles to Religious Education. Each month's theme will be the focus of one or more sermons and include a story. Our YRE program will work to include lessons that correspond with the theme into our curriculum. We invite all of you to consider using these themes at home in family rituals, meditation or other spiritual practices. Share them with your children. Discuss them over dinner, before bedtime or on your Saturday morning walks—create your own family rituals.

We will provide helpful resources for weaving these themes into your home life. Including chalice lighting words, stories, discussion questions, guided meditations, activities, songs and more! We all strive to integrate our faith into our daily lives. In so doing, we hope you will find these themes and their resources a useful bridge between your home life and church life.

2009-2010 Themes

September	Transcendence	January	Freedom	April	Humility
October	Atonement	February	Evil	May	Sin
November	Creation	March	Salvation	June	Silence
December	Peace				



THEMATIC APPROACH—UU IDENTITY & WORLD RELIGIONS

Our Youth Religious Education Program uses a modified theme-based approach for our Kindergarten through fifth grade classes. Our fall months, September—December always focus on **UU Identity**. We choose curriculum which helps children explore questions like, “What does it mean to be a UU? What do UU’s believe? And Who are some of our important UU Ancestors?”

Beginning in January we shift to four annual rotating themes. This year’s theme is **World Religions**. Classes will explore the beliefs, holidays and cultures of other religions of the world including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other Christian denominations. Using their prior discovery of UU Identity, they will have a UU foundation and context from which to approach and understand this new theme.

We hope this refined theme-based model will provide a greater foundation for our own faith and values as well as an expanded view of the world through a UU lens. All of our classes use curricula written by UU religious educators with clear lesson plans. Parents are provided with a week-by-week curriculum plan as well as **home links** and resources to bring the classroom into the home.

INFANTS & TODDLERS UP TO AGE 2 9:30AM & 11:30AM

Our infants are lovingly cared for in our infant room inside the preschool building. The room has infant friendly toys & books, a pint-sized table & chairs, a quiet room with rocking chairs and cribs. We ask that parents provide their own labeled changing supplies and food if necessary. Parents are welcome anytime. Parents MUST sign their children in and out of class.

PRESCHOOL AGES 2-3 1/2 9:30AM & 11:30AM

Preschoolers are encouraged to have fun while learning. Activities and crafts incorporating our UU principles are offered as well as games, puzzles, music, movement and books. Weather permitting, the children are allowed to play in the outside yard that is enclosed with a gate. We ask that parents please provide their own labeled changing supplies. Parents are welcome anytime. Parents MUST sign their children in and out of class.

CHALICE CHILDREN (SENIOR PRESCHOOLERS) AGES 3 1/2 -5 9:30AM & 11:30

CURRICULUM: CHALICE CHILDREN

Following the premise that children learn best through direct experience, *Chalice Children* is designed to nurture children’s spiritual growth, creativity and connection to their UU community by involving them in hands-on rituals—simple rhymes, finger plays, games and other activities. Here, young ones are introduced to the Unitarian Universalist chalice, discover the concepts of birth and death, explore the great forces of nature and the difference between animate and inanimate objects and consider how to make choices and overcome difficulties.



GRADES K – 1
9:30AM & 11:30AM
CURRICULUM: PICTURE BOOK UU
& WORLD RELIGIONS

This year our elementary students will combine themes of Unitarian Universalist Identity with World Religions, incorporating some of the most well known children's picture books. The *Unitarian Universalist* sessions focus on one of our UU principles or sources while incorporating values expressed in our faith like tolerance, reason, love and good works.

The *World Religions* portion introduces children to Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam in a gentle and respectful way. Stories illustrate the concepts and values of wisdom and loyalty in Hinduism (Savitri) the importance of family in Islam (The Hundredth Name), and the practice of compassion for all living beings in Buddhism (Tenzin's Deer).

GRADES 2 – 3
9:30AM & 11:30AM
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GRADES 4 - 5
9:30AM & 11:30AM
CURRICULUM: TOOLBOX OF FAITH &
WORLD OF NEW FRIENDS

Toolbox of Faith invites participants to reflect on the qualities of our Unitarian Universalist faith, such as integrity, courage, and love, as tools they can use in living their lives and building their own faith. Each of the sessions uses a tool as a metaphor for an important quality of our faith such as reflection (symbolized by a mirror), flexibility (duct tape), and justice (a flashlight) .

A World of New Friends is designed to introduce a multi-aged classroom to the eight largest world religions Unitarian Universalism teaches us that there is some wisdom to be found in all the great religions of the world. These lessons are designed to use a child's curiosity flavored with stories, art, drama and song to introduce our youngest UUs to the many truths and many faiths that richly color our earth and enrich our lives.

GRADES 6 - 7
9:30AM & 11:30AM
CURRICULUM: NEIGHBORING FAITHS

This two year curriculum helps youth learn about their own faith and other faith traditions through interactive experiences such as field trips and interviews. The encounters with other religions and denominations are given meaning through periods of reflection and discussion of UU and personal beliefs and values. This year (year one) the program will focus on other Christian denominations & worship styles, Hinduism, and Earth Traditions; exploring these other faiths through the lens of our own seven principles.

**GRADE 8
1 1:30AM ONLY**

CURRICULUM: RITES OF PASSAGE:

This program is also known as Coming of Age and honors, celebrates and explores the transition from childhood to youth. Exploring personal beliefs about God, death and the meaning of faith, the curriculum helps them to bring together all that they have learned and experienced in their lives and at church. The program uses the five elements of initiation, ritual, learning, testing and celebration. This yearlong journey also incorporates tools youth can use to shape their own spiritual journeys.

This bedrock class culminates in June with the presentation of their personal faith statements from the pulpit, a bridging ceremony into the senior high class and a opportunity to become official members of the church and sign the membership book.

**SENIOR HIGH—YRUU
YOUNG RELIGIOUS
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS
1 1:30AM ONLY**

YRUU is the denomination's title for self-directed, youth-empowering groups made up of senior high students. With the guidance of adult advisors, this group empowers teens to create their own vision and mission for their program. Largely discussion-based, YRUU also takes part in social justice projects, organizes social gatherings, and will plan and lead a Sunday worship service for the congregation. This is an opportunity for youth to continue where the Rites of Passage program left off, as they and their advisors explore what it means to be young and UU, how our UU principles inform how we live our lives, and what power young UU's have to change the world.

**OWL (OUR WHOLE LIVES)
OFFERED TO 1ST GRADE,
4TH-5TH GRADES, 7TH-9TH GRADES,
SENIOR HIGH AND ADULTS**

Our Whole Lives is a series of sexuality education curricula for multiple age groups. OWL is a positive, comprehensive, and age-appropriate educational program that promotes sexual health and is informed by the guidelines of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

Our Whole Lives helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It 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, Our Whole Lives provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality.

Once this class begins, it will be a closed class. **A separate permission registration form will be offered. There is a mandatory parent meeting before each class begins.**

The 1st grade program is 10 weeks beginning in March 2010.

The 4th-5th grade program is 10 weeks beginning in March 2010

The 7th-9th grade program will be during the 9:30 service beginning with an overnight in January 2010.

For more information, please contact Sara LaWall, DRE, at slawall@uuneighborhood.org

CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Our Child Care program has several goals. The first and most important is to provide a safe, warm, inviting and supportive atmosphere that both parents and children will enjoy. Our second goal is to encourage independence, creativity, and a sense of discovery and exploration. Each child will be encouraged to grow and find new ways to have fun and feel secure in new relationships.

The caregivers, supervised by our RE Assistant, include a number of paid caregivers and occasionally youth or adult volunteers from the congregation. Child Care is a program administered with a warm and caring spirit. NUUC is pleased to provide this service and parents are encouraged to participate as volunteers or visitors any time. **If you are interested in assisting in the Child Care program, please contact the RE Assistant.**

DROP OFF TIMES: Please do not drop off your children more than 15 minutes prior to the service. Infants and crawler/toddlers may be brought to the North side of the Preschool building. Preschoolers (age 3 1/2 to 5) may be brought to the South side of the Preschool Building where the play structure is located.

PICK-UP TIMES: Please pick up your child by 10:45am after the first service and 12:45pm after the second service. This gives our Child Care providers time to re-set the classroom.

AGE GUIDELINES: Infant and crawler/toddler care is for children up to age 2. Children ages 2—3 1/2 join our preschool class and older pre-K children (ages 3 1/2—5) will be part of our Chalice Children class. Older children, including siblings of infants/toddlers should attend the class with children their own age and with age appropriate activities. We request that parents adhere to this guideline as too many older children take away from the care of our infants and toddlers.

FOOD AND CHANGING SUPPLIES: Please provide our caregivers with your child's own changing supplies, food and drink (if needed). Please make sure all bags and drink containers are **well labeled** so we can prevent the sharing of bottles and sippy cups.

MEETINGS & EVENTS: We are committed to providing childcare for church meetings and events as long as you let us know your needs. **Please reserve space for your child by calling the RE Assistant at least one week prior to the event, please include the number of children and their ages.**

CHILD CARE CONTACT: Erika Stallings, RE Program Assistant
reassistant@uuneighborhood.org

CHILDCARE STAFF:
Evelyn Espinoza, Infants/Toddlers
Cathy Jimenez, Preschool
Claudia Zaragoza, Preschool
Vivien Hoang, Chalice Children



**NEIGHBORHOOD UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

**Youth Religious Education
Calendar**
Subject to change

SEPTEMBER - *TRANSCENDENCE*

- 6 Final Summer Service at 10am
- 13 Intergenerational Welcome Back Service
(no classes K-12)
- 20 Classroom Sunday
- 27 Classroom Sunday

OCTOBER - *ATONEMENT*

- 4 Classroom Sunday
- 11 Classroom Sunday
(1st 15 minutes in service for story)
- 18 Classroom Sunday
- 25 Worship/Justice Sunday-Tree Planting

NOVEMBER - *CREATION*

- 1 Intergenerational Service –
Day of the Dead *(no classes K-8)*
- 8 Classroom Sunday
(1st 15 minutes in service for story)
- 15 Classroom Sunday
- 22 Intergenerational Service –
*All in Sanctuary – Apple Communion &
Child Dedications (No classes K-8)*
- 29 Thanksgiving Weekend – ONE Service
(All Youth Activity in Ross Chapel)

DECEMBER - *PEACE*

- 6 Classroom Sunday
- 13 Classroom Sunday/Yule Logs
- 20 Intergenerational Holiday Pageant
(No classes)
- 27 ONE Service 10am
(All Youth Activity in Ross Chapel)

JANUARY - *FREEDOM*

- 3 Classroom Sunday
- 10 Classroom Sunday
(1st 15 minutes in service for story)
- 17 Classroom Sunday
- 24 Classroom Sunday
- 31 Worship/Justice Sunday
All Youth Activity (no classes K-8)

FEBRUARY - *EVIL*

- 7 Classroom Sunday
- 14 Classroom Sunday
(1st 15 minutes in service for story)
- 21 Intergenerational Service (No classes K-8)
- 28 Classroom Sunday

MARCH - *SALVATION*

- 7 Classroom Sunday
- 14 All Youth Activity - *Canvass Sunday*
One service
- 21 Classroom Sunday
- 28 Classroom Sunday

APRIL - *HUMILITY*

- 4 Easter – Intergenerational Service
(No classes K – 8)
- 11 Classroom Sunday
- 18 Classroom Sunday
- 25 Earth Day – All Youth Activity
(No classes K-8)

MAY - *SIN*

- 2 Classroom Sunday
- 9 Classroom Sunday (**Mother's day**)
(1st 15 minutes in service for story)
- 16 Classroom Sunday
- 23 Classroom Sunday
- 30 ONE SERVICE 10am – Memorial Day Week-
end (all youth activity in Ross Chapel)

JUNE - *SILENCE*

- 6 Final Classroom Sunday
(8th Grade ROP Service- no classes 6 – 12)
- 13 Annual Meeting – One Service at 10am,
meeting follows - Juneteenth BBQ

*Families should have a
copy of their child's
Sunday by Sunday
curriculum plan which
outlines specific lesson
topics for each class.*