

Sunday Schedule

Child Care (Infant-Age 3) offered in the nursery during the worship service.

Religious Education Classes (Pre-K-1; 2&3; 4&5; 6-8) and High School Youth Group meet during the worship service.

Children attend worship for the beginning of the service, and leave for class after the Time for All Ages.

The Reverend Barbara Jamestone, PhD.
Minister

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Gail M. Syring
Director of Religious Education
E-mail: DRE@ushartford.com

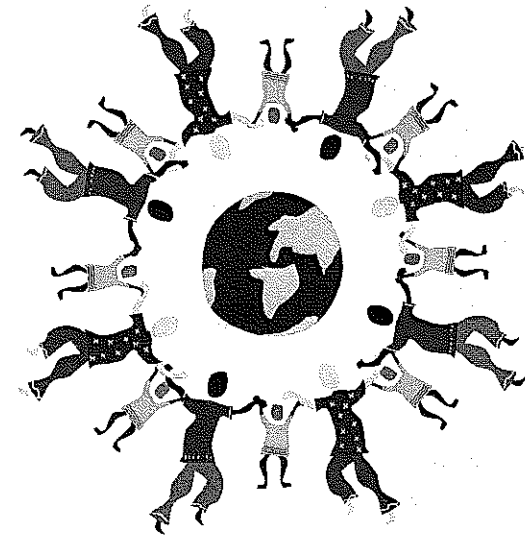
Denise Ackeifi
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"There are many paths approaching the truth that unites us"

Ministry to Families and Children

2009 ~ 2010



Unitarian Society of Hartford

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Unitarian Society of Hartford Religious Education Program

Welcome to the Unitarian Society of Hartford! As Unitarian Universalists, we strive to engage in a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning". A key purpose of our religious education program is to provide a framework for our children as they begin their path of lifespan faith development. As such, each of our classes is designed to include a wide range of religious and philosophical traditions, and to integrate a variety of learning styles. We welcome all families and children, including those with special needs, and will make every effort to accommodate all children in our program.

We encourage families to visit our classrooms to determine if our program is a comfortable fit for your belief system. To arrange a visit, please contact our Director of Religious Education, Gail M. Syring, at: DRE@ushartford.com or 860-233-9897.

Our Philosophy of Religious Education

Our goal is to help our youth:

- Gain respect and appreciation for themselves, others, all living things and the environment;
- Become integral parts of our Meeting House community;
- Develop an awareness of, and appreciation for, our Judeo-Christian heritage and other world religions that influence the formation of our religious beliefs;
- Experience the joy and inspiration of music and the arts;
- Become responsible persons who are able to make ethical decisions through which they show their care and concern for all humanity.

What Our Children Learn

Our children are taught to think for themselves, while receiving guidance on moral and ethical behavior. We allow their individual beliefs to unfold without any dogma. Our children will learn that all big religious questions have many answers, and that it is their duty to search responsibly for their own truth. Ultimately, we want our children to become mature adults who make their own decisions about what to believe and how to live.

Our religious education program strives to give children the necessary foundation for this lifelong task by providing a supportive, structured environment that allows them to focus on the 7 Unitarian Universalist principals in an age appropriate fashion.

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe:

- Each person is important;
- Be kind in all you do;
- We're free to learn together;
- And search for what is true;
- All people need a voice;
- Build a fair and peaceful world;
- We care for Earth's lifeboat.

UUA.org

How Our Children are Taught

The 7 principles are taught using a variety of methods based in the sources of our beliefs. These include, but are not limited to:

- Fostering a continuing sense of wonder using art, science, and social justice projects;
- Learning about heroes and heroines from UU history and other historical and religious figures who were dedicated to living fair and just lives;

- Discovering the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions, including our Judeo-Christian heritage;
- Encouraging the use of logic and reason to discern the answers to life's questions;
- Promoting practices that are in harmony with nature, the environment, and the sacred circle of life.

The Role of the Parent in Religious Education

Parents are the primary religious educators in their children's lives. Children learn values from their parents. They can help their children learn the importance of religious education by facilitating regular attendance, showing an interest in what happens each week, and volunteering their own time to the program.

Our program is cooperative, and parents are an integral part of every aspect from curriculum development through chaperoning field trips. Every adult's unique skill set is a blessing to our children. Parents are expected to volunteer for a variety of helping roles during their child's religious education experience. The members of the Religious Education Sub Council and the Director of Religious Education will assist each parent in determining which roles will best suit them during each school year.

The Role of the Congregation in Religious Education

One of the primary roles of the Religious Education program is to help families become integrated into the life of the congregation. It is the responsibility of each congregation member to be welcoming to families and children, and to act in accordance with the role of spiritual companions for adults and children alike. Enthusiastic participation in intergenerational services and other family events, support for appropriate child care during church events, and consideration of the needs and rights of children when creating policy and protocol are just a few of the responsibilities of the adults in the congregation.

Summary of Programs



Nursery:

Infants to 3 year olds are welcome to play in our supervised Nursery. The Nursery is available shortly before and during the worship service.

Spirit Play: *Grades Pre-K - 1*

A Unitarian Universalist adaptation of the Godly Play and Montessori methods, Spirit Play uses the morning-as-worship approach for the structure of the class. The key elements are the classroom environment and the teachers. These elements free the children to work at their own pace.

The focus of the class is a story told using a variety of props. The stories are gleaned from Unitarian Universalist history, World Religions, and mythology. After the story, the children will be working in creative centers where they are free to respond and create on their own. This technique allows the students to begin their own personal search for truth and meaning by wondering.

Communication and Community: *Grades 2-3*

Using two curricula, *Heart Talk* and *UU Superheroes*, the students will learn the skills and history of their faith community.

Based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg, *Heart Talk* teaches children the essential language of nonviolent communication. Using the language of universal feelings and needs, this curriculum focuses on responding to self and others with empathy.

UU Super Heroes is a values-based Unitarian Universalist identity curriculum that encourages children to explore the lives of famous people who were Unitarians, Universalists or Unitarian Universalists. Using history as inspiration, students are encouraged to imagine how their faith will be put into action in the world.

The Tapestry of Faith: Grades 4-5

Unitarian Universalism and Moral Development will be explored using two curricula: *Spirit of Adventure* and *Toolbox of Faith*. Both of these programs explore the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism and universal spiritual tools like integrity, courage and justice through a variety of methods. Designed to stimulate and engage visual, auditory, kinesthetic and visual-spatial learners, these lessons examine faith through the lens of science, medicine, exploration, sports and other unique perspectives.



Neighboring Faiths and World Religions: Grades 6-7-8

This curriculum helps youth learn about their own faith and other faith traditions through interactive experience such as field trips and interviews. Students will have the opportunity to explore the Abrahamic traditions as well as several Eastern and Earth-based religions. These encounters with other religions are given meaning through periods of reflection and discussion about Unitarian Universalist and personal beliefs and values. This program is a cornerstone of Unitarian Universalist religious education that promotes understanding and respect for other cultures and valuing pluralism and diversity while nurturing Unitarian Universalist identity.

Coming of Age: Grade 8

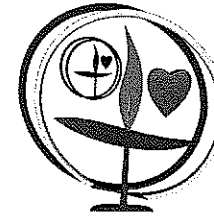
These youth will explore who they are, what they believe and what faith means to them. The program is structured as a small group ministry experience, and culminates with a Coming of Age ceremony with the congregation.

High School Youth Group: Grades 9-12

On Sunday mornings high school youth will gather to worship, talk, and build community with their peers and advisors. Social justice and community service are a strong focus of the program, as well as the continuous spiritual self exploration. The youth group will work together to support each other, socialize, and improve the world in which we live. The youth also work together to produce a worship service for the congregation in the spring.

Children's Music:

Children of all ages have the opportunity to sing together and with the congregation. Led by a member of our illustrious music staff, music is incorporated into the curriculum of each classroom and is a major component of our multigenerational services.



Worship Services

Each Sunday, prior to the beginning of the Religious Education classes, the children join the congregation in the sanctuary for the first fifteen minutes of the service. This is a time for the children to be part of our spiritual community, and to witness the rituals of the liturgical year. A children's message, or "Time for All Ages" is offered each week by our Minister or Director of Religious Education, designed to compliment the adult sermon.

Holidays and holy days are often celebrated with a multigenerational service, during which the children are invited to participate in the entire service in lieu of classes. These services are designed to speak to both adults and children, and to reinforce our connection as a spiritual community.