

How Does a Family Get Started with UU Religious Education?

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Entering religious education is one of the most important decisions a parent makes for his or her child. All religions seek to build character and provide comfort and guidance, but how a religion defines its goals makes all the difference. Therefore, a parent should take the time to experience and explore our religion before making a commitment to our religious education program.

Step One: Laying a Foundation

More and more families are choosing to explore our religion by attending worship together. Our worship service welcomes everyone. There are usually baskets of quiet activities to keep children's hands busy. This allows them to absorb UU worship as a secure, comfortable environment for their family.

Your child is also welcome to experience UURE, but please let us know your status and whether there are questions we can answer specifically about UURE. We also ask that you fill out a Visitor Form, so we have safety and contact information on everyone in our area.

As soon as a child feels comfortable, we expect the parent to sign up for some kind of stewardship, at least bringing snacks and maybe sitting in as a classroom assistant.

Once your family has decided you enjoy our worship and religious education – a decision which can take as long as a year – we encourage you to contact our Membership Committee about the New UU membership class. Even if you come from another Unitarian Universalist congregation, you will want this introduction to our congregation's unique heritage, vision and leaders. Youth are welcome in New UU, and membership here is available to anyone 16 years or older.

Some families attend New UU, maybe also UURE, and still want more time to consider the decision to join. We agree that gaining information is only one step in entering the congregational relationship.

Step Two: Coming In

When your family feels at home, we welcome your child to UURE. Young people's worship and religious education begin at 10:25.

- We do not require attendance every Sunday, but we do appreciate knowing anything we can about your likely attendance pattern.

- We do not charge tuition. Our programs are supported by pledge and plate donations to the Society. Please do your part to serve all the ministries of this congregation.
- UURE can begin at any age. Our religion's older elementary and junior youth programs are widely respected, because they are designed to introduce options from the full range of faith expressions: worship, service, learning, personal relationships. We do not introduce the Bible until fourth grade, when young people are old enough to respond to it with clarity of reason and emotion.
- Please see the Prospectus for details about our full program.

Step Three: Sharing Stewardship

Once you have decided to make a commitment to UURE, we expect you to begin learning about stewardship in our program. There are many ways to serve, so look for the one that is right for you. You will be delighted to learn that one of the benefits of such a large congregation is that each stewardship commitment is time-limited, in order to maintain your worship life. A teaching commitment is only nine or ten of the year's Sundays.

Getting started with UURE stewardship is a scary step! If your child is very young, you have probably gotten started by staying in class with her or him a few times, just as family reassurance. For older classes, we have slightly more structured ways to achieve the same goal. Every classroom needs to have 2 or 3 adults on hand at all times, so it's easy to sign up to fill in as a support player – and assistant or a classroom angel – when you feel ready. The teacher for the day will speak with you beforehand, to let you know what is needed.

This year, we are also introducing a “New Stewards’ Information Hour.” The first one was held during Steward Enrichment in September. It will be repeated at the beginning of Winter and Spring Terms. These repeat offerings will give you time to worship, attend New UU, talk things over, and then join us in laying a foundation for the next year. “New Stewards’ Information Hour” explains our routine, what’s in a curriculum and how to use it, and some of our basic safety procedures. It is run by our Director of Religious Education, assisted by members of our RE Committee, and includes plenty of discussion about how we support each other while doing UURE.

So that's it! We look forward to getting to know you and your children and youth!