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COMPETENCY A: ADMINISTRATION

PART I Overview:

Administration of any program involves attention to detail and conscientious communication. In religious education, administration means performing the behind-the-scenes work which supports the mission without directly fulfilling it.

I pursued graduate coursework in experimental social science, and bring to the table my facility with data collection, descriptive and inferential statistics, and a certain detailed way of doing things. This does not mean that I regard my RE families as data points; rather, I keep them all in the soft focus of my attention, noting the changes in their needs and exploring how the UUCUV can better serve them. I keep a page on each of “my” families and during my monthly review, I note any changes .did the adults volunteer that month? Did the kids miss Sunday School? and follow up with a call of thanks or a post card. On a deeper level, I note patterns and pass names on to the minister for pastoral care, to the Membership committee for invitation to the New UU class, to the Leadership Development Committee for consideration.

I serve a congregation which uses rented space on Sunday mornings. I find that attention to detail is invaluable in managing the simple logistics of packing, transporting, setting up, breaking down, and putting away an entire Sunday School every week.

If attention to detail is the perspective, communication is the tool which accomplishes good administration. Holding my colleagues in explicit covenant, using LREDA professional standards, and employing transparent processes ensure clarity of one kind of communication. Communicating through a variety of media, both with congregants and peers, allows me to hear people in the ways they communicate best and to get my message to the greatest number. I use various forms of individual and group communication: face-to-face, telephone, e-mail, and our congregation’s print and electronic publications. I am currently exploring the use of online social networking, such as Facebook, to facilitate good communication with our Youth and Young Adult congregants.

There are many ways to construct the foundation on which congregations can build their programs. Attention to detail and communication are important strengths, and I use them to run the RE office in Norwich, Vermont.

PART II Relevant Experience

List of Academic Courses

Course: Statistics, Bowdoin College, Fall 1983

Course: Introductory Computing, Bowdoin College, Spring 1985

Course: Measurement and Statistics, Dartmouth College, Winter 1990

Course: Measurement and Statistics, Dartmouth College, Spring 1990

Course: Experimental Design, Dartmouth College, Fall 1990

Relevance: I have included all my measurement and statistics courses as one continuing course of study. I use demographic, descriptive, and inferential measurement and statistics to track my RE registrants and their patterns of participation.

Which families changed their attendance after the fall of 2008, when the market crashed and fuel prices spiked? The ones from further away!

The RE Committee and I use an occasional Sunday School questionnaire about parents' dreams, goals, and needs to keep our implicit and explicit curricula relevant. I used the Strategic Planning Committee's results to encourage the committee to explore Adult RE and Small Group Ministry. I have also assisted the UUCUV in congregation-wide assessments. Often, a group will create a questionnaire without understanding the data-collection process or data interpretation, and I have assisted with post-hoc analysis in:

The Committee on Ministry questionnaire in 1999 about the congregation's fulfillment of its mission statement;

The Board's Straw Poll in the fall of 2000 about what the foci of the UUCUV's resources should be.

The Ministerial Search Committee (2001) saw results that they didn't like (one third of the congregation self-identified as having earth-based spirituality) and I was able to teach the group about robustness and validity of data and convince them that they did need to consider this result when searching for our settled minister.

Structured Learning Experiences

Learning Experience: Administration Renaissance Module

Date completed: Fall, 2005

Offered by: New Hampshire/Vermont District of UU Societies

Led by: Sandra Greenfield and Thomas Pistole

Reflection on:

This module addressed professional relations and professional association benefits and provided all participants with a basic understanding of those covenants and contracts which are necessary to a healthy DRE-congregation relationship. While it was not designed to address day-to-day running of a program, the group was able to network and share resources for the simple logistics and scheduling which are part of our work.

Integration in Work:

This module gave me the vocabulary and motivation to include my LREDA dues as a professional expense in my RE budget rather than paying them out-of-pocket.

I have worked with four colleague-ministers during my tenure at the UUCUV, only one of whom entered into an explicit covenant with me. This module has given me the background to advocate for a covenant process with my current colleague-minister, and to advocate for the District to provide DRE-Minister team-building opportunities. We've been Adult OWL trained

Independent/Group Study

Study Topic: David Allen's Getting Things Done Method

Date completed: 2007

Group Members: Joshua Alden & myself

Reflection on:

This study including studying Allen's book, working the exercises in his workbook, and creating the paper and electronic systems which he prescribes is all about "what do I do with all those pieces of paper and email?".

Once the clutter is managed and one has trust in the system of data flow, the system encourages creativity by freeing thoughts from simply keeping up with media and mass-marketing.

Integration in Work: I have integrated the Getting Things Done system in my office, and it saves me huge amounts of time and prevents lost opportunities.

For example, when the UUA Bookstore catalogue comes in the mail, I could spend an hour enjoying the descriptions of books, wondering if I already have an item, and adding up the cost of my dream-book-list. With GTD and a bit of self-discipline, I put the catalogue into the July folder because I can't spend any new money until July and that's where I keep my book inventory. I know that in July I will get the right books for the program, and I have saved myself plenty of time from daydreaming, from searching for the catalogue, and from "rush delivery fees" by ordering in a timely manner.

I use my GTD system for all items from my job description, and each item has a running log to keep me reminded of my progress. Every task that I do I know is relevant and important to my ministry.

Personal/Life Experience

Experience: Database volunteer for the UUCUV

Description:

I volunteer about 30 minutes each week as my pledge to the UUCUV to clean up the data and do tasks like liking family members to one another in the relational database. When requested, I create lists for the Membership committee of folks who are new visitors, people who have stopped pledging, or individuals who have left our membership.

Dates: 2001 - present

Relevance:

I am contractually obligated to maintain an RE database of contact information, medical alerts, and program registration. In the past, I have had to maintain a separate database from the one maintained by our Office Administrative Assistant, and that separation is the purest hell. The UUCUV is beta-testing a particularly well-coded centrally-hosted relational database which is written on software which I know well.

By making this pledge to the UUCUV, I fulfill an obligation as the parent of Sunday Scholars to make an identifiable contribution to the UUCUV.

I keep my eye on the constant changes in our demographics, as well as on the integrity of our database. Our previous AA was not proficient in data management and had I not kept my

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hand in doing this constant small amount of volunteering, I would have spent precious DRE time and energy doing it.

Experience: Board of Directors, Birch Island Camp Company

Description:

I served for ten years as a director of the company which administers a communally-held vacation

property and supports local conservation; my duties included making off-season visits after big storms, approving maintenance and repair expenses outside the budget for emergencies, and proofreading the Secretary's minutes and Treasurer's reports.

Dates: 1998-2008

Relevance:

I have observed the board of the UUCUV and served on the board of the New Hampshire/Vermont UU District. The Birch Island Camp Company board's work has shown me, very clearly, the purpose of transparent processes and public review.

You see, the treasurer was my brother Steve. The president was my cousin Tom. My old flame Andy is the secretary-for-life. The camp company itself is a good example of a family-sized congregation, with all the inherent baggage, relationships, and character.

On one hand, after a big storm my cousin Richard (also a Director) and I got right out to the property a day later and by getting the repair folks immediately, we prevented further damage. I've seen a large expenditure like that take over a year to go through a District board.

On the other hand, I've seen the camp company funds borrowed without the permission or even knowledge of the membership.

I will never complain about the cumbersomeness of a transparent, well-run board.

Related Professional Experience/Work (non-religious education based)

Experience: Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

Dates: 1997-1998 and 1992-1993:

Description:

Statistics Consultant at Kiewit Computation Center. I consulted with undergraduate and graduate researchers in social sciences on the appropriate data analyses for their research available through the college's computer center. By creating and leading workshops, writing tutorials, meeting individuals and making office visits I often relieved the frustrations of quantitative analysis for folks whose strength was not statistical.

Relevance:

While I had taught adults before, this was my first opportunity to design curricula in brief formats: independent study lessons of about one hour each and narrowly focused workshops of two to six hours' duration. I learned about booking and checking my facilities and equipment, creating learning tools using networked computers, and doing dry runs with unfamiliar technology.

I learned that people need The Stat Lady in extremis, after they have tried to do it themselves and been frustrated by the software, hardware, or statistical concepts. I developed an effective intake procedure which gave my clients reassurance that they had been heard, a firm date for our next contact, and explicit next steps for them to follow before that time.

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I have used all of these skills as a religious educator, the first set in designing adult RE opportunities and the second in welcoming new families to our congregation, families who have been frustrated by the search for a welcoming, liberal religious home.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

Experience: Northern Vermont DRE Cluster

Description:

The religious educators of northern Vermont gather about six times per year for shared worship, brown bag lunch, and discussion of any topics brought by the group. For the first half of my career as a religious educator, I enjoyed the mentoring presence of Lisa Rubin, long time DRE of Burlington, VT.

Dates: Ongoing, November 1999 to present

Relevance: Lisa's impromptu mini-lessons covered everything from "Which matters go to Personnel Committee and which go to RE Committee?" to "Do I need a more formal contract than a handshake?" and "Why is it a bad idea to work more hours than I'm paid for?" She taught us when to call the district, when to let things slide, and when to send email to our northern Vermont sisters for support. I use these foundational concepts every week in my work and as the senior DRE in our cluster now, I pass them on every chance I get. Perhaps Lisa's most important lesson, and the one which I use as my guide for every meeting: always bring dark chocolate.

Experience: Congregational Consultant Training

Description:

As part of continuing education for the Northern New England District's congregational consultants, we met for a review of those cases which consultants had already taken. The financial specialists both had gone to help congregations and they presented their straight-up-numbers work and the story of their compassionate listening in ministry to their client congregations.

Date: January, 2009

Relevance:

While I appreciated the spreadsheets and the chance to learn in depth about strong financial plans for congregations, I learned the most from the narratives about *how* the consultants chose to interact with the congregations.

In one case, the messages the consultant received were contradictory and it became apparent that access to the consultant was being manipulated. She realized that deeper ministry was needed to this congregation. She called our District Executive, who coached her and encouraged her to do the work. She created a number of opportunities to gather data by inviting every person in the congregation's directory and showing up in person and listening. She listened and listened and before too long, people of the congregation were speaking directly to one another, bringing up ghosts and elephants that hadn't seen the light of day.

She reaffirmed for me that the deepest ministry is listening, and perhaps the most important discipline in listening is creating the silent spaces into which people will speak.

Experience: Congregational Consultant Training

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Description:

At the first training session for Northern New England District's congregational consultant team, we reviewed foundational ethical principles of confidentiality in ministry, and then spent our time discussing the nuts and bolts of how congregations work as businesses. We reviewed the ideas behind different sizes and communication styles of congregations, mission and vision statements, and our roles as consultants to congregations in distress.

Date: August, 2007

Relevance:

While none of the ideas presented were new, I attentively heard different voices expressing their perspectives on the business part of congregational life. Any congregation's work can be seen as a dynamic interchange of worship, action, fellowship, and learning but it is a mistake to forget the leadership development and governance activities which form the space in which the mission can be fulfilled.

Each congregation goes about its business idiosyncratically, and I had many glimpses into the business life of well-endowed congregations; tiny, struggling congregations; historical congregations; just-starting congregations and congregations in the winter of their lives. These glimpses helped me to broaden my perspective and see the foundational principles on which congregational life is based.

Experience: Nuts and Bolts Workshop

Description:

I presented this workshop for beginning religious educators with Jenn McAdoo at the Northeast/New Hampshire/Vermont Spring REnewal. Our presentation included how and when to contact the two different district RE Committees, the resources offered by each, the advantages of joining the Church of the Larger Fellowship, how and why to join the REACH-L e-mail list, the purpose of the Renaissance Program, the different summer conferences, how and why to join LREDA, and an overview of the RE Credentialing program.

Date: April 2005

Relevance:

Leading this workshop provided for me a review of administrative topics mentioned in the description. It afforded me the opportunity to discuss these matters with my fellow DRE, Jenn McAdoo from (then) Northeast District and gain her perspective on these ideas.

Most of all, providing this workshop allowed me to help other DREs to learn what had taken me years to glean from haphazard conversations. By collating this information, I felt I was giving a real gift and boost up to my peers. In so doing, I advanced my profession and found it a privilege to teach and learn together with fellow religious educators.

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Part III Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A. Proposing, justifying, and managing a budget

While it is inappropriate for a DRE to propose a budget, it is certainly my privilege to serve the RE Committee by keeping track of their one-year and five-year visions and to offer choices of my best recommendations to fulfill their visions, as they propose a budget to the UUCUV Board.

In June, we have a vision meeting, no-holds-barred on our dreams! We take notes all over big pieces of paper and add circles and arrows and a paragraph on a sticker next to each one...

In October, we discuss the real vision for the RE program for the following year. We've had some time to talk to others, think, and reflect on such questions as, "is it time to make Adult RE a strong priority?" The Committee articulates what to keep, what to improve, what to change, and what to research, so that they can make decisions about how to implement their goals.

In November, I come back with the budget answers to their ideas. We talk over the line items. We make changes.

In January, we hand to the Finance Committee a budget proposal which includes both the high-end of reasonable program plans and the barest-bones version.

After the pledge drive, the Finance Committee does its darnedest to fulfill everyone's requests and always comes up with a budget proposal that is between our two numbers. The proposed budget is voted on by the congregation at the Annual Meeting in May, and the fiscal year begins in July.

Note that the DRE's salary is not part of the RE budget process, but is the purview of the Personnel Committee. The RE Committee requests a certain "percent of a DRE" which it feels is in line with its program needs, and it is the Personnel Committee's duty to submit a pay proposal. I present for your enjoyment the 2009 budget proposal, as presented to the FinCom in January 2008. Fiscal 2009 began July 1, 2008.

Line 2008 bud 2009 proc 2009 minimum	Notes
6330 Sunday School \$1 ,240 C \$1 ,860 0(\$1 ,600 00	[(2 workers x 41 weeks) + (1 Summer worker)

6340 General Supp	I \$49000	\$71000	\$51000	includes Sunday School and Summer Program
6342 Adult RE	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$0.00	no curricula requested, this is for child care

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6344 Youth & Junior \$140.00 \$1 50.00 \$100.00

6346 OWL \$450.00 \$100.00 \$50.00 we'll be running programs for K-1 and grades 4

6347 Campus/Your \$100.00 \$100.00 \$50.00

6380 Professional [\$650.00 \$1,000.00 \$655.00 \$1000 is LREDA recommendation for 50% DRE

6381 Volunteer De' \$1 77.00 \$275.00 \$200.00 OWL leader training & mileage

Totals \$3,322.C \$4,270.0(\$3,1 65.00

DRE Salary 50% position recommendation of the RE Committee 2008+COLA recommendation should come from personnel c

Reflection

I submit a budget proposal to the Finance Committee, on which serve the associate dean of the Dartmouth Medical School, a professional alumni-development officer, an electrical engineer, and a professor of German. Believe me, you want these practical, bottom line people on your Finance Committee. This budget is the kind of clear, plain, organized document that will get their fullest attention.

These are the folks I see every Sunday, with whom I participate in visioning workshops, whose houses I visit with my children on Hallowe'en! There is good discussion, communication, and relationship between the RE Committee members and the Finance Committee members. We have all been together in person to discuss our dreams for the congregation. They know that line item 6381 .volunteer development .represents the fulfillment of the Board's stated goal of leadership development and the corresponding items from the strategic plan. They know what OWL is because they or their children have participated in it.

So! That's what the budget proposal looks like at the UUCUV: a document designed to deliver the best information in the manner appropriate to the learning styles of the recipients.

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Exhibit B. Scheduling and organizing program events that are coordinated with other events in the congregation

I present the file "Sparrow's Obsessive Calendar of Everything for April 2009" in order to document this competency.

April, 2009

Sunday

Reflection: Logistics is my delight .kinesthetic attention to detail. It all comes from summering on an island from which transportation is limited .I'm sure those of you with Star Island experience will commiserate .and efficient logistics are all-important.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		ay	y	3 Fun	y	

		I AM Library	2 Men BJJ:Bible	Friday	4 New UU	
5 Sunday Morning Service Sunday School Chalice Circle 1	6 LISTEN Dinner	7 Environ- comm. D- course & Pot Luck: Ethical Eating	8	9 BJJ:Bible Maundy Thursday dinner CCircle 4	10	11
12 Sunday Morning Service Sunday School EASTER (no parents)	13 Members CCircle 2	14 BJJ & 5: 1st source	15 MH Comm.	16 Women Men BJJ:Bible	17	18
19 Sunday Morning Service Sunday School (vacation) Chalice Circle 3	20	21 Writers Sunday Services Comm.	22 4:15 REC	23 Board BJJ:Bible	24	25
26 Sunday Morning Service New Member Sunday Sunday School (vacation) YRUU	27	28	29	30 BJJ:Bible		

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The calendar above shows the coordinated program (on Tuesday the 7th) of the Environmental Sustainability Committee's Discussion course and pot luck with the RE Committee's Ethical Eating study-action goals.

The UUCUV does not have a worship committee. Rather, they have a Sunday Services

committee which sees for itself only Sunday morning responsibilities. Events which might be seen as opportunities for worship or holy celebration are left to their own devices, and you can see on April 9th that my colleague minister and I sandwiched our first Maundy Thursday celebration between his Bible study class and the evening Chalice Circle. It turned out beautifully with a delicious meal, foot-washing, and old hymns brought by the participants.

Perhaps the best example of a program event which is coordinated with other events in the congregation is Guest At Your Table. Guest at Your Table Sunday is an example of a congregation-wide multi-event from the Children's Talk, the sermon, the RE classes, the community's ecumenical Thanksgiving service, the Social Responsibility meeting, and GAYT collection day. That is the kind of whole-body, whole-family learning that lights me on fire, and I love providing assistance to our families with links to GAYT resources!

Further Reflection: As of January, 2010, the UUCUV has gone to a web-based calendar, to which all leadership folks can contribute. While I love being the calendar gal, this big step forward has made it easy for everyone in leadership to take responsibility for coordinating the events for which they hold responsibility with the whole congregational calendar. Next step in our growth. I serve a 25 year old congregation, and many folks still like to operate in that "Family Size" mode. This use of technology preserves some of that feeling, while allowing our "Pastoral Size With Big Dreams Congregation" to continue to grow.

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COMPETENCY B: ANTIOPPRESSION, ANTIRACISM, AND MULTICULTURALISM

PART I Overview:

My understanding of Anti-Oppression work has three primary facets.

First, in a faith tradition which honors all our kids, their struggles, growth, and identity, I see the work as helping them find courage and strength to stand tall, choose their battles, and maintain faith in the essential goodness of humanity when they find themselves the victims of racism, oppression, or exclusion based on their identities.

Second, in a faith tradition whose members are blessedly good at holding one another accountable for walking our talk, religious education needs to be part of a supportive environment for examining one's own privilege and history of discriminatory behavior. We can begin early in their lives, helping them to be in community in ways which are not racist or oppressive. One example is the "red flags" at Youth cons. our kids have the *habit* of calling one another on discriminatory behavior.

Third, we must combine the skills and strategies from the first two ideas, helping our congregations and members and children become peacemakers. We help them recognize oppression when they perceive it done to another and stand up into a minority or even persecuted position to call out the behavior in order to change it.

This topic brings up in me a passion and compassion a kinesthetic sense of imbalance when anyone is not welcome at the table. I am compelled to practice radical hospitality. I want to advocate for marginalized people because they shouldn't have to stand alone. At the same time, I want marginalized people to be able to speak in their own voices and decide for themselves, without having to be interpreted by me, a person with privilege.

So. I examine myself. I examine my privilege. I hope that I can help folks undertake their own fearless personal inventory and find skills and strategies that help them align their behavior with their values. I hope I can find these things in myself.

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PART II Relevant Experience

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

Course: Old English, Bowdoin College, Fall, 1983

Relevance:

Through this course I got my first glimpse of old Christian writings. We worked a great deal with the writings of The Venerable Bede. His essay on the conversion of King Edwin gave me a rich metaphor with which to grasp Christianity not only as he understood it over a thousand years ago, but in a way that opened the door for me to explore the faith personally. From his essay, in fact, I take my call-name of Sparrow; he wrote that “life is like the flight of the sparrow” from storm and chaos in through the window of a shining, warm great hall and back out into the storm. The remainder of the course was devoted to Old English poetry, which I found very beautiful. Each of these old works had been recorded, of course, by Christian monks. The study of the poems became a study of how the monks made the words palatable to themselves or their superiors by adding their own material or by omitting original portions. This study of cultural gatekeeping opened my eyes to how one culture can oppress and even erase another, and it began my quest to hear the original voices in the altered records which remain to us.

Course: Spring Proseminar .Social Psychology, Dartmouth College, Spring 1990

Relevance:

This seminar introduced me to the ideas of social influence, leadership, power, and that trinity of fear, stereotype, and prejudice which permit racist and oppressive behavior. As a religious educator, I use my understanding of these concepts to create multiple paths to peace. By encouraging my congregation to use the gentlest of social influence methods, I further the cause of AR/AO/MC. By doing my part in the development of leaders in my congregation and by explicitly developing the leadership skills of junior youth and youth I do this work. I offer and support programs which help congregants explore feelings (fear), thoughts (stereotypes), and behaviors (prejudice).

Course: Seminar in Special Topics .Society and the Individual, Dartmouth College, Winter 1991

Relevance:

This course examined the roles of peer pressure, conformity, non-conformity, rebellion and individual expression on the fabric of society. The struggle of the individual to be separate and yet part of society defines many people’s spiritual lives, and I have kept this idea in mind when I design learning experiences for children. In particular, lessons I create for children about the civil rights struggles and non-violent protest include gaining courage to challenge the status quo and seeing society as a useful Beast which protects us in many ways and must be kept from becoming huge or full of itself by the occasional well-placed challenge. I felt myself particularly influenced by our examination of “frontier” as an agent for societal experimentation and the pressures on people particularly young people in our culture without a physical frontier. My work on getting children outdoors and on helping parents trust their children to be outdoors is integral to my ministry.

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Course: Tutorial Reading .Gait and Perceived Levels of Power, Dartmouth College, Summer 1991

Relevance:

This reading course covered nonverbal communication of power status. While most research in the field has focused either on facial nonverbal expression or gender cues, I picked up on the simple variable of gait. I discovered that violent criminals use gait as one factor when assigning potential victims as either “hard” (too risky to attack) or “soft” (easier to attack successfully). The reading led to a brief field study which identified posture and bounciness as the strongest non-

gender-related cues for power status.

I use what I found with every age of children in my program. Preschoolers who are talking and thinking about feelings play my game: Walk Like! “Walk like you’re sad,” the teacher says, “Walk like you’re strong.” Children move in a variety of ways and then discuss and re-act-out the relationship between their gait and physical attitude and those feelings. Learning to communicate power and confidence is part of my plan for them as they grow into their abilities as peacemakers.

Structured Learning Experiences

Experience: Special Needs Workshop

Date Completed: May 1, 2009

Offered by: Spirit Play Conference

Led by: Joy Silver

Reflection:

I attended this workshop to learn about techniques for integrating special needs students into a Spirit Play classroom. We discussed getting the parents’ advice and making them part of the RE team and offering volunteers in the congregation the opportunity to become special aides to children who need them.

Integration:

While the ideas were far more general than I had hoped, this workshop renewed my desire to make home visits to parents with special needs children. I am working hard on the idea of aides in the classroom; in a congregation of 124 members, we have trouble getting once-a-month volunteers. Rather, I am considering expanding the training for the GateKeeper of the Spirit Play classroom to include sessions with parents. There’s a chance that the local high school’s Special Education department chair would come be a speaker at our volunteer training session, or could introduce me to an elementary school special educator for the same. In essence, every special needs child is different, so any particular technique can’t be guaranteed to work, but I am hoping to increase my repertoire of strategies to try and to pass on to my volunteers. Making our RE programs fully accessible is perhaps the most important anti-oppression work I can do.

Experience: Multicultural Renaissance Module

Date completed: Summer, 2002

Offered by: New Hampshire/Vermont District

Led by: Cindy Spring and Don Davenport

Reflection:

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This very valuable module emphasized confronting racism at every level. It gave me the vocabulary with which to challenge racist and oppressive language with children. I felt empowered to speak up against bullying behavior (previously outside my comfort zone). We examined children’s literature for explicit and implicit racist language, which was particularly eye-opening!

Integration:

All books I recommend to parents have been checked if the castle of the Good Guys is white and the fortress of the Bad Guys is black, the entire rest of the work must be exemplary to get on my list. Illustrations need to show children of multiple ethnic appearances and physical abilities in order to be marked with a “Sparrow Recommends” bookmark!

My writing now avoids the use of dark=bad and light=good.

Perhaps I am most proud of the Junior Youth group which has been struggling with attending the Dartmouth PowWow each year .it’s a beautiful cultural celebration of northern New England Native American life. The kids and I struggle with feeling like tourists, with wanting to celebrate with our native neighbors, with feeling like outsiders, with wanting to be deeply respectful. It’s not easy, but we’ve learned that sometimes you just have to ask, “How do I learn from you in a

respectful way?" The kids one year even helped write and publish the Pow Wow's "Welcome to Our Guests" brochure! Thanks, Renaissance program.

Independent/Group Study

Study Topic: Gender Identity, Gender Dysphoria, and Gender Wholeness

Date: ongoing since 2001

Members: Julie Mann, Grace Annam, Patrick Callahan & myself

Reflection:

Three transsexual friends allowed me to study with them during different phases of their transitions. We read Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*, considering gender identity issues in terms of civil disobedience. Through Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors* and Sun-Tzu's *The Art of Warfare*, we examined the orthogonal ideas of masculinity and warrior identity. Finally, we are using Lewis Mehl-Madrona's *Coyote Healing, Miracles in Native Medicine* to help us understand and celebrate our journeys through gender fluidity.

Integration:

As an OWL instructor of many modules, I use my work in this group study to educate students (and parents of minor students) with factual information, case stories, and provocative questions to enhance their personal growth with these ideas.

English is fraught with gendered pronouns and idioms. I had worked intellectually on improving my use of language out of an inchoate sense that the English I had been taught was biased and then the door opened in my heart. There are transgender teens committing suicide and genderqueer folks getting bashed and murdered because of the lack of understanding about and compassion for transgender folks. That understanding threw the switch for me in my habits of language, both written and oral. I have an improved appreciation for gender issues in my gut, rather than in my intellect, which has led me to celebrate humanity's marvelous diversity in ways I could not have done before. I understand better how much of a slap in the face a thoughtless term can be. That deeper understanding influences my interactions with all congregants, because I know that any of them could be trans, whether or not they choose to proclaim it. I welcome

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and support all trans people, visible and invisible, and model that welcoming and support for others. In the programs I direct, trans people are as safe as I can make them.

Personal/Life Experience

Experience:

Alden, Sparrow **F.** (2008) "The Great Laundry Mystery," collected in www.BirchIslandBooks.com. The protagonist in this short story is excited about her mother's approaching same-sex marriage and finds ways to build relationship with the girl who is about to become her sister. They solve the mystery of the missing laundry and we get to see this family blending event from her perspective.

Date: 2008

Relevance:

I've used this story in the Children's Message at church and at public story times as my small part in combating oppression.

A few years ago, I assessed my life ministry; I want to express to children that they, their lives, and their families are great in any configuration. If the model of two hetero-gender same-color parents with normative bio-children is harming the real kids by making their own backgrounds feel less than the ideal, the answer is to write up good stories with families in every shape and size. Early children's books featuring same-sex parents are explanatory (such as *One Dad, Two Dads, Red Dads, Blue Dads* or *Heather Has Two Mommies*), but they communicate their

message to the attentive, learning, forebrain. My stories, of which “The Great Laundry Mystery” is one, communicate to the vigilant, stereotype-forming hindbrain that, “this family structure is absolutely normal because it is not remarked; the children in this family have fun adventures.” The narrator of the story, by the way, speaks in long and rambling sentences and describes herself always in motion. I hope that my diction expresses the busy mind of a child with “attention abundance”, and that some kids who need a boost will see themselves in this zippy young detective.

Experience: *History and Reality of Wicca*. As an annual guest in local high schools, I present the history of European Witchcraft and modern Wiccan practices. I cover prejudice, cultural misappropriation, and harmful cults and field any questions from the teens. At one school, I am the first speaker of the year to present a particular faith (I am preceded by a confirmed atheist and a theist who does not present for any particular faith tradition) in a class which uses Huston Smith’s *World Religions* as their text.

Dates: 1998 .present.

Relevance:

Not only do I take my message of multiculturalism to youth who are not in my regular influence, but I model tolerance and multi-cultural celebration by listening respectfully to the teens’ questions and comments. This activity takes my ministry on the road and allows me to put a hiccup in habitual stereotyping practiced by some of those young people. Human brains will form habits of thought, it’s the nature of our nervous systems, but it’s my privilege to interrupt these habits and bring them forward for examination.

It’s very exciting for me when one of the high school students is someone who grew up in the UUCUV Sunday School. Each one of them has confirmed to me that this high school course

Sparrow F. Alden, Religious Education Credentialing Competencies Portfolio page 17 of 146 opened their eyes to the religious intolerance of some peers who have been raised in other faith traditions.

For myself, I grow in my profession by fielding the wide-ranging questions of these youth at every level of depth. Youth demand that I speak clearly and honestly about my particular faith path and with depth about my vision of tolerance, celebration, and world community.

Related Professional Experience/Work

Experience:

Granite State College, Lebanon, NH, Instructor for “Society and the Individual” course toward the B.A. in Sociology. I generally instructed two terms out of each four-term year at the community college. We covered group behavior, stereotype formation, leadership, and the struggle between individual expression and societal conformity. The class used original social psychology research as primary sources of knowledge, many of the students for the first time.

Dates: 1992 .1997

Relevance:

Teaching this course allowed me to prepare an environment wherein students could explore racism and oppression. While most students approached the topics academically, I found that about a third of them were able to examine stories from their own experience to find examples of oppression against them and in rare cases were able to articulate prejudicial behavior of their own. In one class, a leader of the group reported that in our mostly-European region, she had encountered oppression when she was out and about with her African-American grandson. The stories she told were enough to convince students that the problem exists even though they hadn’t witnessed it.

Teaching the course relates to my competency in anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multicultural ministry because of the huge amount of experience I gained in approaching this topic with adult learners. My students ranged in age, and the largest group were women about 40 years of age; I

learned to use practical evidence and their own experience as the jumping-off points for their discussions.

Experience:

Special Education Assistant Dresden School District, Hanover, NH; Norwich School District, Norwich, VT. I acted as an individual aide to a child with severe emotional disorders; I was the academic classroom aide in a residential treatment facility for boys with severe emotional and/or behavioral disorders; and finally I was the educational assistant in the Special Education resource center of a public high school, tutoring teens with mild to moderate learning, emotional, behavioral, and developmental disorders in every class from Freshman English through Latin and Physics.

Dates: 1993 -1995 and 1992 -1993:

Relevance:

For the children in my care, the opportunity arose often for me to teach social skills. Many kids with emotional disorders whom I worked with had learned discriminatory behavior against people of different skin colors, sexual orientations, really any way you can think of separating “us” from “them”. Working with these students forced me to speak in the clearest terms and find constants so that I could articulate rules for the kids to follow (since “rules” to memorize were very much a comfortable mode for many of these students).

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The basic rule it came down to is that you can judge a person by what they do, but not by what they are. First principle. What you *are* is inherent, and therefore worthy and dignified.

These young people also could find themselves the victims of discrimination as some of their various disorders have defined traditionally marginalized groups. Not only did this experience help me to examine and lay aside any prejudicial feelings I might have and by getting to know my students any stereotyping thoughts, but it was my privilege to lift these kids up and give them some strategies for their own lives. While my explicit job was to help them with their academics, we also worked on ways to work around their own disabilities, stand up for themselves, like themselves, and get into dialogue with people who are being difficult!

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

Experience:

Rainbow Kids: Religious Education in support of children in BGLATIQ families. Coleader Leanne Tigert and I presented resources and techniques for religious educators to support all of our kids through stories, curricula, and activities. Presented at an ecumenical conference on Welcoming Faiths, Hanover, NH.

Date: September 2001.

Relevance:

This ecumenical conference allowed religious leaders from our whole region to come together to support one another’s efforts and ministries to be accepting and welcoming of all constellations of families. It happened early in my career, and gave me the chance to gather my resources and articulate UU values and beliefs on the subject.

We approached the workshop by affirming that there are kids with BGLATIQ parents and less-common parent affiliations as well as BGLATIQ kids in families of all levels of supportiveness. Our goal was to combat oppression.

The conference took place 10 days after 9-11-2001.

William Sloan Coffin gave the keynote address and while he had planned to speak on the faithful response to all families, he spoke of our faithful response to the attacks of 9-11.

Our workshop became a forum of parents and religious educators to talk about all the stressors facing our kids. We stayed on the topic of strategies to help kids, but expanded our vision to include those whose parents were being deployed and children of all ages who were becoming

stressed, fearful, and confused.

We still worked against oppression by encouraging one another to keep our hearts open, and reminding each other to hold our children in acceptance and love.

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Part III Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Creating Programs that incorporate anti-oppression resources and experiences

Access-Ability a curriculum developed by me for use mainly by our Sunday School, to honor the third principle, during the 2008 season.

Learning Objectives

Students will articulate the second and third UU principles in an age-appropriate manner.

Students will articulate the connection between Accessibility and the UU principles in an age-appropriate manner.

Students will engage in service to improve the accessibility of resources at the UUCUV and in the community.

Students will be able to list actions they can take their whole lives to improve accessibility for themselves and the members of their community.

Preparing for a Fire Drill: students improved the fire drill plan to account for wheelchair access at all points

Children’s Chapel: worship focused on the Third Principle	/			
Ability Games: class talked about the third principle and tried out blindfold games, mobility-impairment games, social impairment games. They also got to touch a Braille book and take home a coded Braille message.		/		
Ability Songs: Children’s Chorus began preparing “All God’s Critters Got a Place in the Choir”, “Come, Come, Whoever You Are”, and “The Seven UU Principles” song.			/	

Event	Pre-school	Active Ages 6-10	Quiet Ages 6 - 10	Junior Youth	Adults
Preparing for a Fire Drill: students improved				√	

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Event	Pre-	Active Aces	Quiet Ages	Junior	Adults
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	school	6-10	6-10	Youth	
Different Just Like Me: Over three Sundays, students read this book, studied the characters, talking about the differences between them, articulating their own uniqueness, and going on a scavenger hunt to find other congregants who were different, just like them.	/				
Shoveling the Accessibility Ramp: the OWL 789 class in January, February, & March was given the responsibility of clearing the Meeting House ramp each time they met.				/	
Accessibility Challenge: the class brought doll carriages and scooters to church and detailed a map of the building and neighborhood with accessible routes marked.		/			
Ability Games: adapting indoor games for toddlers, trying out the Ability Games from earlier with a larger group	/	/	/	/	
No Fair to Tigers: students listened to the book, worked on the difference between unfairness and not getting what they want, and made signs encouraging fairness.					
Diversity Scavenger Hunt: students engaged in a scavenger hunt for people in the Sunday School with certain differences.	/	/	/	/	
Field Day: We played our ability games and added classic mobility-impairment games such as a wheelbarrow race and three-legged race.	/	/	/	v'	
Children's Sunday: Shared our stories, songs, and triumphs of the Sunday School program; invited congregants to participate in Ability Games as part of worship.					

As **the** sister of a person who lived for five years with ALS, accessibility is a topic close to my belly, and I find a lack of access to be oppressive and unjust. In the congregation I serve, I actually heard a good, liberal, UU member say, "Well, if someone in a wheelchair is going to come to church, they can call ahead and tell us they need us to shovel the ramp." I was thunderstruck. I've been including ideas about access - from assisted listening devices to wheelchair ramps - ever since.

I find it hard to articulate my passion for this topic, but I will append here my newsletter article from the summer of 2006 in an attempt to show the RECC my heart:

Work gloves, work boots, eye and ear protection...

The Religious Education Committee has engaged in meaningful and productive discussion this summer concerning our "Spiritual Toolbox". What are the skills which we have (or wish we had) which we will incorporate into the core curriculum of religious education at all ages? We have discussed skills for multiple learning modalities - and you and your children can look forward to more dance, yoga, meditation, singing,

knitting, drumming, prayer, and guided visualization woven through the Sunday School curriculum and offered in our adult programming. In exploring this deepening of our program, I've begun to examine my own spiritual toolbox. As many of you know, I use ritual, prayer, dance, and outdoor contemplation almost every day in my own spiritual practice. But what other skills might I already have in my spiritual toolbox which are so much part of me that I do not notice or name them?

Hatchet, axe, peavey, pick axe, mattock...

I learned this summer that mattock is to stump as pick axe is to rock. I've generalized my pick axe skills (no, really) to enthusiastic mattock work at my family's summer camp. This place has been our retreat, our slice of heaven, since 1929 when my mother first arrived. This summer, I'm not leaving it in its untouched condition, but reducing and ripping up stumps and roots and popping out rocks; they trip up my brother Steve as he continues to defy the odds of ALS and work hard as a professor and play hard at Birch Island. Steve's feet have become sluggish, and sometimes betray him by catching on irregularities in his walking surface, causing a stumble or fall. Steve responds by building his own wheelchair-accessible outhouse.

Chainsaw, wood chipper...

Here's the thing of it. I'm really afraid of power tools. They're loud, require good upper body strength for control, and accidents with them happen quickly and thoroughly. I've managed to handily avoid or minimize using them for a long time by letting those who enjoy them do the work. I am so afraid of loud noises. But if I can use the chainsaw, I can get through the youngest stumps; if I can use the wood chipper, I can clean up the brush around the cabin and make the fill which I need where I've taken out stumps, roots, and rocks. How do I face the terrifying noise? How do I face my brother dying? What tools can I call on to face fear and grief?

Stubbornness, love of family, tradition...

Are these spiritual tools? They certainly helped me take a deep breath and flip that switch on the wood chipper. You see, Steve's daughter will be married this fall in our beautiful island chapel. He will walk her from the cabin and down the aisle. I will make the path smooth.

Peace,

Sparrow

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Exhibit B: Developing and implementing educational activities to prevent or eliminate racist bias in our congregation.

The UUCUV has partner church is in the village of Mukhap in the state of Meghalaya, India. We have been corresponding, sending pictures, boxes, and letters to our friends for about two years. Most of the folks here at the UUCUV are of European ancestry; some of the adults are fortunate to have children from Korea, India, Ecuador, the Ukraine, Russia, Kenya, and Guatemala.

Right now, the most practical, hands-on experiences which I have been privileged to help provide to the UUCUV have been focused on India and our Partner Church:

Sumptuous Indian dinners, prepared by adults with ample assistance from among the Sunday Scholars;

Using stories from Hindu and Indian tradition as sources of wisdom in our Sunday School

classes;

Guest visits from the Maitra family (personal friends) to tell stories and show pictures from their daughter's recent Indian wedding;

Writing letters together to our partner church friends as a Chapel activity;

Making tiny dolls of ourselves to be included in a Spirit Play story, written by me, which was shared by my colleague-minister Bruce Johnson when he visited our partner church;

Making up boxes of clothing and school supplies to share with our friends;

Sharing at Chapel all the pictures and letters from our partner church friends;

Supporting the "kajingaling" which is as close as English can get to the Khasi word for "committee" by providing resources such as curricula, books, web sites, and materials and with logistical and communication tasks.

Reflection:

Addressing the issue of race here in the Upper Valley is an odd little dance. This population, primarily of European ancestry, is liberally sprinkled with folks of many other ancestries, primarily as professors at Dartmouth College, professionals at the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, and research engineers at the Cold Regions Research Lab.



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As you know, one of the struggles that Unitarian Universalism has worked with is homogeneity of affluence and education level of our congregations.

So most of the folks whom our children meet are their parents' well-educated upper- middle-class peers, and those folks of color whom they meet are in that group. To open a discussion about racism, particularly with younger folks, is to be met with stares of confusion.

Now what a happy thing that the kids in our Sunday School think that skin color is irrelevant! We've worked very conscientiously to fill their hearts with knowledge of their own and others' beauty, and that's all to the good.

And on the other hand... they just don't know.

The most useful tool here at UUCUV and it's not an RE program at all! is our monthly turn holding a "LISTEN" dinner. The LISTEN Center is the hub of local outreach to folks in socioeconomic crisis; if you need help with your heating bill, if you need a place to stay when your spouse has attacked you, LISTEN is the place to call. And every night, the LISTEN dinner is served to anyone who walks through the door. The cost and work is taken on by a different group each night, and the UUCUV has been serving on first Mondays since forever.

This is where we enact our AO/AR/MC ministry. There are Abenaki neighbors who come in for a good meal, Viet Nameese immigrants, and folks who have skin of any color who need fellowship, food, and a neighborly chat.

This dinner is an event of our Social Responsibility Committee, and RE has jumped onto the coattails of such a great program .the Youth group makes cookies to freeze for the dinners, and the Bread Baking group (officially intergenerational, but usually just adults) has made delicious rolls for the dinners. The Junior Youth have recently voted to begin doing set up and serving as a group

I reflect, then, on how to do deep and meaningful AO/ARIMC in rural northern New England. What we know how to do is be generous and neighborly. Maybe that's the best starting place after all.

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For the RECC: I include one of our exercises from Access-Ability curriculum, which we used to help us experience a learning disability. This poem by Gerard Nolst Trenité caused much hilarity in the elementary

grades.

The Chaos

Dearest creature in creation,
Study English pronunciation.
I will teach you in my verse
Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.
I will keep you, Suzy, busy,
Make your head with heat grow dizzy.
Tear in eye, your dress will tear.
So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.
Just compare heart, beard, and heard,
Dies and diet, lord and word,
Sword and sward, retain and Britain.
(QVLind the latter, how it's written.)
Now I surely will not plague you
With such words as plaque and ague.
But be careful how you speak:
Say break and steak, but bleak and streak;
Cloven, oven, how and low;
Script, receipt, show, poem, and toe.
Hear me say, devoid of trickery,
Daughter, laughter, and Terpsichore,
Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,
Exiles, similes, and reviles;
Scholar, vicar, and cigar,
Solar, mica, war and far;
One, anemone, Balmoral,
Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel;
Gertrude, German, wind and mind,
Scene, Melpomene, mankind.
Billet does not rhyme with ballet,
Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet.
Blood and flood are not like food,
Nor is mould like should and would.
Viscous, viscount, load and broad,
Toward, to forward, to reward.
And your pronunciation's OK
When you correctly say croquet,
Rounded, wounded, grieve and sleeve,
Friend and fiend, alive and live.

Ivy, privy, famous; clamour
 And enamour rhyme with hammer.
 River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,
 Doll and roll and some and home.
 Stranger does not rhyme with anger,
 Neither does devour with clangour.
 Souls but foul, haunt but aunt,
 Font, front, wont, want, grand, and grant,
 Shoes, goes, does. Now first say finger,
 And then singer, ginger, linger,
 Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, gouge and gauge,
 Marriage, foliage, mirage, and age.
 Query does not rhyme with very,
 Nor does fury sound like bury.
 Dost, lost, post and doth, cloth, loth.
 Job, nob, bosom, transom, oath.
 Though the differences seem little,
 We say actual but victual.
 Refer does not rhyme with deafer.
 Foeffer does, and zephyr, heifer.
 Mint, pint, senate and sedate;
 Dull, bull, and George ate late.
 Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,
 Science, conscience, scientific.
 Liberty, library, heave and heaven,
 Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven.
 We say hallowed, but allowed,
 People, leopard, towed, but vowed.
 Mark the differences, moreover,
 between mover, cover, clover;
 Leeches, breeches, wise, precise,
 Chalice, but police and lice;
 Camel, constable, unstable,
 Principle, disciple, label.
 Petal, panel, and canal,
 Wait, surprise, plait, promise, pal.
 Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, chair,
 Senator, spectator, mayor.
 Tour, but our and succour, four.
 Gas, alas, and Arkansas.
 Sea, idea, Korea, area,
 Psalm, Maria, but malaria.
 Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean.
 Doctrine, turpentine, marine.
 Compare alien with Italian,
 Dandelion and battalion.
 Sally with ally, yea, ye,
 Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, and key.
 Say aver, but ever, fever,
 Neither, leisure, skein, deceiver.

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Heron, granary, canary.
 Crevice and device and acne.
 Face, but preface, not efface.
 Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass.
 Large, but target, gin, give, verging,
 Ought, out, joust and scour, scouring
 Ear, but earn and wear and tear.
 Do not rhyme with here but crc.
 Seven is right, but so is even,
 Hyphen, roughen, nephew Stephen,

Monkey, donkey,
Turk and jerk,
Ask, grasp, wasp, and cork and work.
Pronunciation - think of Psyche!
Is a paling stout and spikey?
Won't it make you lose your wits,
Writing groats and saying grits?
It's a dark abyss or tunnel:
Strewn with stones, stowed, solace, gunwale,
Islington and Isle of Wight,
Housewife, verdict and indict.
Finally, which rhymes with enough -
Though, through, plough, or dough, or cough?
Hiccough has the sound of cup.
My advice is to give up!!!

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**COMPETENCY C: HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

PART I. Overview:

My understanding of Unitarian Universalist religious education is that philosophy is the perspective the body of values-laden assumptions with which we approach the subject. Our faith tradition's philosophy is constantly growing, and certain basic ideas form our foundation:

Children are not adults, and need learning experiences geared to them;

Youth are not children, and need learning experiences which honor their particular gifts and graces;

Parents are their children's primary religious educators, and supporting parents in their own quest has enormous ripple effect;

Uniform statements of belief are not conducive to individual spiritual development;

Our congregational polity will remain strong by the encouragement of individuals' personal spiritual journeys;

Individuals of all ages are lovable and capable and will be guided to undertake their search for truth and meaning in the way and with the constantly-changing result that is best for them.

In a field which must evolve, articulated philosophy will continue to change. In a faith tradition which supports individual search and congregational polity, there can never be a static statement of philosophy. This topic is a dance, and my own perspective is that it's fun to dance along!

Bronson and Abigail Alcott's philosophy of mutual respect between teacher and pupils led to their setting aside the then-traditional model of religious instruction: the memorization of catechism. Bronson Alcott believed in the divine spark within the children that he found and fanned within himself.

In the late 1890s, Sophia Lyon Fahs began taking this philosophy of religious education further, encouraging children's exploration in ways that were developmentally appropriate and with texts beyond the Bible. She articulated the already-emerging expansion of the sources of Unitarianism, including the individual's own experience, the observations of science, and the conclusions of reason. By the middle of the twentieth century, she was the leader of the child-centered Unitarian religious education philosophy of multicultural wisdom and personal growth.

Abigail Adams Eliot added to the richness of Fahs' philosophical legacy by holding up Bible education as a necessary component of modern Unitarian Universalist religious education, as a source of wisdom stories and of cultural literacy.

The recent embracing of Maria Montessori's educational philosophy (in Spirit Play), the philosophy of faith development through activity rather than study (the children's chapel and social action Sunday of the Way Cool Sunday School model), and recent lifespan faith

development movement have pulled the philosophy of Unitarian Universalist religious education into the twenty-first century. We are becoming communities of learners, encouraging one another on our spiritual journeys, respecting our diverse learning styles.

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PART II Experience

Structured Learning Experiences

Learning Experience: Spirit Play Training Workshop

Date completed: May, 2003

Offered by: Spirit Play Developers

Led by: Nita Penfold, Bev Elute Bruce, Ralph Roberts

Reflection:

This one-day training introduced me to the Spirit Play method of religious education, a very personal experiential learning paradigm based on Maria Montessori's philosophy. The training included resources for administering a Spirit Play program in a local congregation. Integration in Work:

The UUCUV has used a Spirit Play classroom as part of Sunday school since 2004, and it's an integral part of our Quiet/Active Choice paradigm.

Most important, the training helped me clearly understand that our task as children's religious educators is to encourage the development of young ethicists and theologians within the framework of a strong faith tradition.

Spirit Play encourages individual congregations to define their own identity, liturgy, and images of reverence and to raise our children within that sacred space. The children in a Spirit Play classroom are treated with dignity, and they are trusted with permission to listen for themselves to the voice of Spirit.

I have striven to keep this philosophy uppermost in my heart as the program of the UUCUV has developed over the past decade. With the encouragement of my colleague-minister, I have created a few experiences for adults which incorporate the Spirit Play philosophy.

On the first day ever of a UUCUV Spirit Play classroom, I invited OH, a six year old girl with a habitually guarded demeanor, to share a bit about her work with me. She had created a soft sculpture in shades of blue and purple woolen roving s with streaks of silver chenille and a navy blue construction paper base. She looked up and said, "It's a portrait of Sadness."

Experience: Philosophy of Religious Education Renaissance Module

Date: August, 2000

Offered by: New Hampshire/Vermont District

Led by: Cindy Spring

Reflection:

This Module was my first exposure to the Renaissance Program. It was a survey of the history of the development of religious education in the world and within our movement, and a snapshot of current religious education philosophy. I learned about our formal professional association, experienced the support of informal peer networking, and heard about current philosophies, frustrations, and best practices of my fellow DREs.

Integration:

Philosophy, of course, underpins all that we do in a mission driven profession. From the Alcotts' work in education through the vision of Sophia Fahs to Way Cool Sunday School, every program is based on a philosophy of education, learning, and leadership. It is our shared philosophy that learners of every age are lovable and capable and that the learning outcomes are skills, not factual information.

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At the UUCUV, I have integrated these ideas into my work with the RE Committee in creating their mission statement, into my consulting with parents who are assessing their role in their child's religious life, and into creating the program experiences of learners.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

Description: Joint Spring RE Conference with the Northeast UU District and New Hampshire! Vermont UU District. As one organizer in a team of this event, I prepared and presented a visual representation of a combined district, participated in a panel discussion of our vision for a combined district future, and led worship focused on deep listening.

Date: April, 2006

Relevance:

Encouraging peer support and collaboration seems to be a keystone to sustainable use of religious education resources and personnel. By facilitating this workshop, I have embodied my philosophy of UU religious education and been part of the smooth transition to one unified Northern New England District.

The benefits to the UUCUV's program includes shared Spirit Play resources, combined OWL programming, and DRE-mutual-aid when my neighbor congregations have been in transition between DREs.

For my own professional development, the opportunity to work with Pat Hoerdoerfer, Helen Zidowecki, and Jenn McAdoo to present this conference has been invaluable. These religious education leaders help me keep my eye on the goals of strong and faithful congregants of all ages, a broad faith tradition and movement with deep impact on the world, and joy.

Description: "Big Questions" I created a curriculum for the 2005-2006 Sunday school year exploring the idea of a "Language of Reverence". With support from Jeanne Nieuwejaar, I encouraged the UUCUV families to explore the concepts of Blessing, Sanctuary, Death, Grace, the Golden Rule, and Creation!Birth!Rebirth over the course of the year. Not only were these the topics of Sunday School classes, but families used these words and ideas at home, reporting back on the experience.

Date: 2005-2006

Relevance:

Bill Sinkford's message about searching for our faith tradition's language of reverence sparked association-wide conversation. In his 2003 sermon, Rev. Sinkford stated, "That is my experience and that is my language for my experience." He called for UUs to challenge themselves by finding ways to name what is holy.

In creating this program experience for the UUCUV families, I rose to the challenge he posed. This vehicle was part of a local effort to grapple with the future of our faith tradition's identity. As our understanding of reverential language deepens, the implications for religious education are obvious. I find that Sinkford's challenge is very much in line with the Spirit Play philosophy of religious education, emphasizing the private experience of mystery and wonder, admitting that it is the business of religion to face and name and consider Spirit.

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Part III. Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Collaborating with the RE Committee to articulate an overarching RE philosophy and vision.

In 2002, the UUCUV undertook a whole-year visioning process to articulate and affirm a new Mission Statement:

UUCUV Mission The UUCUV is a liberal religious community that

- welcomes and supports all who search for meaning and truth
- celebrates and respects life in all its diversity

- nurtures honesty, love, and freedom in people of all ages
- fosters spiritual growth and promotes compassionate social action
- expresses UU ideals, views, and heritage to the community at large

In 2003, the Religious Education Committee began a process of mission review during the first of our now-annual RE-Treats, with the assistance of District RE Consultant Mark Glovin. Our goal was to review our strengths and challenges, our dreams for RE, and most important to support the whole congregation's mission with our RE mission and programming. That event sparked our own year of inquiry and study, which resulted in 2004 in this final form of the RE Mission statement:

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE The mission of the UUCUV RE Program is to create a safe, secure, and comfortable environment where our community is encouraged to explore religious and moral values and is provided with the resources necessary for lifespan faith development.

To achieve this mission we will

- celebrate and respect life in all its diversity
- explore UU history and beliefs and their relevance to our daily lives
- educate the community on the history and beliefs of Christianity, Judaism, and other world religions
- foster and promote compassionate social and environmental action
- stimulate a desire to understand others and ourselves
- encourage the growth of intellectual and emotional spirituality
- integrate children into the church fellowship
- provide laughter, love, and activities that will make Sunday School a desirable place to be.

Reflection:

Here's some of the beauty of professional religious education I get to encourage this to happen. It does feel strange to put this in *my* credentialing portfolio: it's the RE Committee who did the hard work, who talked and got bogged down and lifted each other up. It is they who should be given the accolade, of course!

And still it was I who nagged gently. I asked the Chairs to invite folks from the Mission committee and from the Board. I took a thousand notes and took dictation onto big

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sheets of newsprint. I arranged for the pot-luck supper and ran the vacuum cleaner afterward. I invited the district RE Consultant, and worked with him beforehand to make the best use of his time.

Our response to the congregation's new mission statement coincided with the beginning of our covenant with Bruce Johnson, and I was so pleased that he was an integrated part of the process. I know that I work hard and enthusiastically.

I know that it's the volunteers who get things done.

I think that magic is somewhere in the spaces between the things we can see.

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Exhibit B: Explaining to teachers and parents what makes RE “religious”, articulating a position on the place of world religions within UU RE curriculum and explaining how and why science is incorporated into UU RE.

This open letter from me to Sunday School parents can be found on the UUCUV's web site.

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Sunday School! What can you expect from religious education at the UUCUV? You will find support here in your efforts as your children's primary religious educators within a friendly community.

Our children will learn about the world, ethics, faith tradition, and themselves from a variety of sources, and we will focus on **The Six Sources of Unitarian Universalism: Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life. In other** words, we respect your child's own experience of Spirit, and we will teach and promote activities like labyrinth walking, journaling, quiet sitting, yoga, breath work, art response, and prayer as tools which your child might choose to help her remain aware of her natural sense of mystery and wonder.

Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love. In our Sunday School we will learn the stories of historical Unitarian and Universalist and Unitarian Universalist leaders, writers, theologians and activists who model for us how to use justice, compassion, and love. We will meet some of these people in stories, in art, sometimes in person through volunteer actors, and even through stamp collecting; we will try to exemplify them through our collective and individual efforts in the causes we hold most dear.

Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life. We respect any religion which seeks to enlighten. In Sunday School, we learn stories and celebrations of the many religions of the world not as anthropologists, but in our search to deepen our own ethical and spiritual life. Questions about birth, death, relationship, community, and Spirit have been addressed by every faith tradition, and the answers we find help us to form our own answers and to find the commonalities between and among people.

Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves. Your child will join us in using the lens of "beloved community" to working out our covenants of behavior and mutual responsibility. We'll practice reminding one another of our promises, mediating conflicts, and forgiving one another in order to remain in community

Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit. We understand our world through science; the perpetual questions of existence, answered in previous generations by mythology, we now answer with science. Your child will practice observing, wondering, and using her reason and research into science to study her world rendering the world even more wondrous for having discovered it!

Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature. When we listen to our

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body's wisdom to nature's rhythms we have a better handle on our precarious place in the modern world. Our children face stresses that our grandparents never imagined; your child will learn about keeping Sabbath, observing the changes of the seasons, and the sacredness of her own body all in support of her trusting her inner voice of Spirit and managing her life in a way that deepens her and ennoble all of us.

The education your child will experience at the UUCUV is above all religious. Facts are abundantly available, so are opinions. Here, we will ask one another "What does your heart say?" "Are you listening for Spirit?" "How does that make you feel?" and we will bless each other by saying, "I honor the Source in you."

Welcome. Enjoy the adventure along with your child. Ask, wonder, celebrate. It's a pleasure to be in fellowship with you.

Reflection: Parents worry. In a community with a high level of education and professional

achievement, parents like to keep a close eye on their children's activities and learnings. A UU religious education won't *directly* raise a child's SAT grade or improve her tennis arm. It can be frustrating to design and deliver a program so hard to pin down; once a child is grown, we can see what kind of adult she turned out to be, and still never know if our work had any influence. In an effort to help parents past checking off a list of "things to know", I try in my ministry to frame the purposes of Sunday School in terms of going deeper. "We learn about Kwanzaa not in order to memorize facts about Kwanzaa," I've said in my presentation at the New UU class for prospective members, "but to create the opportunity to consider Unity or Self-Determination."

The above document on our web site helps answer questions about curriculum; more importantly, it helps parents get past the idea of learning "things to know" and encourages us all in "ways to be".

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Exhibit C: Aligning the RE program with the RE philosophy and vision of the DRE and the congregation, supporting the exploration of leading and emerging issues in religious education and congregational life.

One element of the UUCUV's Mission Statement is that the congregation "promotes compassionate social action".

The RE Committee's corresponding Mission element is the affirmation that we "foster and promote compassionate social and environmental action."

RE added the words "and environmental" to reflect the real-world fact that the UUCUV 's most exciting action events are directed toward our ministry for Earth and within our identity as a Green Sanctuary.

As I weave the pattern of our program offerings, I keep the mission statements right in front of me. They are posted on the wall above my desk. I refer back each time I am tempted by a new book, new idea, new curriculum .mission is in the foundation, all else must grow from it.

In the course of our three-theme triennial rotation, Welcoming Congregation, Green Sanctuary, Partner Church, we find abundant opportunity to implement our mission.

To this end we have at various times included these events and activities in our program; these descriptions are taken directly from the various education brochures which I write and publish as DRE.

Action for Adults

Environmental Sustainability Discussion Courses and Pot Luck

The Low Carbon Diet course and the Global Warming Discussion Course are planned for the fall. First Tuesday of each month at 6 PM.

LISTEN dinners On the first Monday of every other month, our congregation hosts a free community dinner for anyone who would like a good meal. Anyone is invited to come help with meal set-up (3:30), preparation or clean-up afterwards. The meal is served at 5 PM at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on route 5 in White River Junction. To sign up to help or to donate a home-made dessert, contact Rich Greenlee (802-436-1150)

First Monday of every other month, beginning in October.

Nonviolent Communication can it be the key to Peace? Come explore this aspect of our association wide Study Action Issue: Peacemaking. Participants will need to obtain a copy of the reader .Marshall Rosenberg's book, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*. Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and 17.

Ethical Eating

Come explore our newest UU Study Action Issue. Justice for farmers, sustainable land use, and love for all our fellow beings will guide our discussions.

Wednesday evenings beginning February 25th.

Coming of Age Action

Outward Reach

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You will perform a service project to your community, whether that's your family, school, neighborhood, or planet.

Examples: writing to your legislators to let them know what you think on a subject; making & serving cookies for blood donors; reading to little kids at a library story time; helping to lead a Clean Up .Green Up day; a project that you're already involved in this year through scouts or school.

Church Participation

It takes a hundred or so volunteers to make the UUCUV run each year. What is your special way of contributing?

Examples: helping paint the Meeting House; participating in the book sale or a soup-athon; setting up and breaking down our space on a Sunday morning; folding, addressing, and stamping the newsletter. Your mentor will have a lot of suggestions!

Junior Youth Action

Tire-Check station

The kids set up a tire-pressure checking and air-compressor station at the Mucus's annual apple pie sale in 2007 and 2005

Our Whole Lives for grades 7 & 8

Sunday School Action

Parcels for victims of hurricane Katrina

Parcels for our partner church in Muckheap, India

Sorting and making up school bags for Afghanistan

Sunday School Curricula

Caring for our Planet Earth

In Our Hands

Reflection:

There's no way to find *every* example of compassionate social and environmental action at the UUCUV .from Guest at your Table to opening our doors for the Casey Family Services (local foster care) offices when their own were flooded, it's just a natural expression of what the UUCUV is. This congregation is solidly one-third humanist, those members feeling atheistically or agnostically about cosmology. Often the congregation has asked, "Why are we a *church*, rather than a social justice club?" and being skittish about theological language, they haven't gone too far with that question... but *dang* they're a fine social justice club!

I'll tell you, this is where I've been challenged. I came from the sort of (economically) conservative background in which it was expected to donate money and blood .out of a sense of *noblesse oblige*, of duty rather than the right of it. Government assistance was to be decried. Don't get my mother started on FDR.

And so it is from the natural outpouring of generosity and kindness in this congregation that I have learned social justice. .And then the lesson came home. I was approached, two or three Christmas seasons in a row, by a member (parent of elementary children) who said,

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essentially, "It's December, I want my kids to do a charity project." I took me that long to articulate why her demands rankled: I want compassionate social action to be part of the fabric of everything we do, because it is right, not because it is Christmas. We begin in June to weave that thread in, every year, because this is how to live.

I hope this means that I'm growing in this area! Whatever I may have done, something good has

been nurtured: last spring one of our Youth approached me for the first time and asked if she could have the congregation's support on a social justice project she was interested in (Yahoo!!! And she was enthusiastically supported by the adults!), and this fall, the Junior Youth Group took on part of the responsibility for Guest At Your Table and even made and sold treats at coffee hour in order to make their own donation!

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COMPETENCY D: HUMAN AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

PART I -Overview:

My Earth-based spiritual path leads me to take a scientific view of development, relying on the cycles and seasons of life to understand the constant changes of each individual. Each learner is a fluidly dynamic, organic, and complete individual. Our changes over time are not advances to a "better" way of being, but rather to a different way of perceiving, knowing, and behaving, which maintains intact personality.

As an undergraduate, as a graduate student, as an educator, and as a religious educator, I have studied human and faith development for over half my life.

I bring research from psychobiology to my ministry in planning programming.

I educate parents on realistic expectations of their children based on their developmental age and help them to appreciate the children where they are.

I incorporate the educational needs of adult learners into our programming.

Since humans are not static, they cannot be arranged into nice developmental boxes, except with broad strokes and plenty of room for overlap. Rather, I have some glimpses of the dance .

interdependent, whole beings who change constantly internally and within relationship with one another.

PART II Experience

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

Course: Introduction to Psychology, Bowdoin College, Fall 1982

Relevance:

While the course itself was a survey of the different branches of human psychological study, I gained some central ideas about social science inquiry and the delicate balance between scientific methods in the psychobiology laboratory and the arts of communication in the field of counseling psychology.

This course was the first in my academic career which made use of primary sources .reports of experimental results; my public school education before college relied on textbooks. Getting my hands on original ideas, original data was very exciting for me, and opened up the idea that *we are still learning*, that knowledge about human nature and experience is not closed. The beauty and complexity of humans began to unfold, and I've been learning about us ever since.

Course: Developmental Psychology, Bowdoin College, Spring 1983

Relevance:

I learned about many developmental models of human development in this course, beginning with a strong foundation of embryo-to-adult physical development. I learned about Piaget's and Erikson's theories of cognitive and personality development.

My term project for this course related pre-natal development with dietary recommendations for pregnant mothers.

The great flaw in the subject was that development seemed to stop at age eighteen. Without a discussion of human changes beyond the beginnings of adulthood, I knew that the story was incomplete.

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Course: Personality, Bowdoin College, Fall, 1983

Relevance:

I learned in more depth about developmental theories of personality including Piaget's, Freud's, Erikson's, Jung's, Kohlberg's, and Kubler-Ross's theories. Like any student of human development, I made the connections between the stages identified by each of the theorists who discussed children.

With this structure, I was ready to grasp James Fowler when I read his work many years later, linking his developmental model of faith development to Kohlberg's stages of moral development. I have since produced materials for parents based on these developmental models, and can discuss separation anxiety in the Nursery both in terms of Piaget's concept of object permanence and Fowler's pre-stage of learning "Faith in things not seen".

Course: Tutorial Reading in Human Biological Cycles, Dartmouth College, Fall 1990

Relevance:

The cycles which effect human behavior reflect the natural forces which drive them. I examined infradian, circadian, and ultradian cycles and prepared a week's worth of lectures, visual aids, and handouts suitable for undergraduates. I have kept many of the principles I learned in front of me as I design my own and the UUCUV's activities.

In exploring infradian cycles, I learned about the Basic Rest-Activity Cycle which informs our Sunday School classroom management at UUCUV. This cycle, which is driven by activity of the suprachiasmatic nucleus, runs about 90 minutes in healthy human adults, and defines periods of physical quiet and physical action which our brains crave. People of smaller mass and faster metabolism, however, have faster BRACs. Toddlers rest and go-go-go on a roughly 45 minute cycle and elementary students have about 60 minutes between the start of each BRAC. Learning this, I developed the physically active parts of Sunday School at UUCUV in order to allow each child to be comfortable, rather than an older paradigm of listening quietly to a story, quietly taking turns speaking and listening, and quietly working on a craft project which forces children to struggle against their bodies' natural rhythms.

Course: Independent Research, Dartmouth College, Spring 1991

Relevance:

This project explored the development of mood and associated cognitive behavior. While emotions are brief, focused, and measurable by biometric means, moods are long-lasting affect with global, pervasive and diffuse effects.

One fascinating result from my research is that mood is elevated for the longest time by recollection not of happy memories, but of affectively neutral memories. Good mood is the result of neutral, safe, all-systems-go stability. In my work, I remember to provide a safe, predictable environment for learning. Happy memories lifted mood only briefly.

I learned also that negative memories depressed mood for a long time; I apply this to my ministry by giving congregants plenty of time for reflection on and processing of their own grief or sadness. Spirit Play classrooms in particular allow this kind of support: one little boy in my program worked for three months with the story of Buddha and the Mustard Seed Medicine, and my work in the course reminded me to *let him take his time* in his work.

Course: Independent Research, Dartmouth College, Summer 1991

Relevance:

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My follow up research investigated the evolutionary causes of mood. I learned about metabolic load the physiological price paid by each individual for each automatic or chosen action. In religious education, this idea translates directly to Appreciative Inquiry, to the notion that all communication (and action) serves the individual's idiosyncratic drives.

In other words, asking a learner to step outside his or her comfort zone must have a reward information for the curious, snack for the toddler, comfort for the aggrieved. This basic and

respectful principle is one of my tools when I design programs.

Structured Learning Experiences

Experience: OWL Leader Training, Adult Module, 2005

Experience: Ministry with Youth Renaissance Module, 2003

Experience: OWL Leader training, Grades 4-6 module, 2002

Experience: OWL Leader training, Grades 7-9 module, 2000

Offered by: New Hampshire/Vermont District

Led by: Various leaders

Reflection:

These learning experiences are part of a complete mosaic of religious educator continuing education within the vision of the greater UUA. They each focused on the developmental stages and needs of a particular developmental group and allowed for deep discussion among the participants and greater understanding of the stages.

Integration in Work:

I have used each one of these trainings directly. As an OWL leader, I have offered OWL classes through the UUCUV and experienced the pleasure of hearing about human sexuality, values, and relationship through the perspectives of these different groups of learners. OWL has been offered at the UUCUV, one or two modules per year, since 2002.

The Ministry with Youth module encouraged me to act as Youth con advisor for the district from time to time, to learn about and be in communion with these amazing people, and to attempt to develop a youth program at the UUCUV. Our Junior Youth program has benefitted greatly and grown over the past ten years, our Youth program is still waiting for the fire of an excellent youth leader and a cluster of committed young people. The Renaissance module helped me, by the way, to understand and accept that while I'm a great support and logistics person for youth, I don't have the charisma necessary as a start-up Youth advisor to form the group and advise until the group's own power takes the leadership role.

Personal/Life Experience

Experience: Alden, Sparrow F, *Storm Children*, collected in www.BirchIslandBooks.com
(part I

is titled *Fog's Children*.

Date: 2007 and ongoing

Relevance:

This serial novel is my attempt to work with what I have learned about the spiritual needs of middle school readers. Through adventure, self-discovery, failure, and success, I tell a coming-of-age story. Our main character must work with families of different cultures from her

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own and different constellations. I am reaching out through this novel to the junior youth in my own congregation and in the wider world with modeling of many of the issues they face.

The big conflict in the tale is of societal conformity, and I'm trying to give our kids some courage to stand up on their own when they see societal injustice and when they need to make a choice about when to conform and when to push against social restrictions.

Experience: Alden, Sparrow F. "The Children's Spirit: Preschool Joys," The Upper Valley Parents' Pages, Hanover, NH

Date: September, 2003

Relevance:

I wrote an article for the local parents' free newspaper which expressed James Fowler's "faith is caught" stage, most commonly seen in preschoolers and primary students. I emphasized children's natural ability to be in communion with the Spirit, and reassured parents that the

experience of a loving family, participation in a supportive faith community, and honest, age-appropriate answers to life's big questions.

By expressing these ideals and values to the community at large, I support the UUCUV 's mission; more important, I support the notion that spirituality is about joyfulness and to some readers introduce a non-threatening glimpse of liberal religion.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

Experience: *One for the Right Brain: Visual Art as a Tool for Spiritual Development.* Visual artist Laura Finn and I presented this hands-on experiential workshop at the NH/VT District Annual Conference.

Date: April 2003

Relevance:

Working with Laura was quite a privilege .we developed individual and cooperative exercises based on charcoal and pastel sketching and tempera painting designed to examine and challenge adults' self-critical habits.

I have used these exercises in committee work to encourage openness to unexpected outcomes and awareness of self-judgment. Using this launching pad, we can discuss the nature and etiology of the judgment and each name first steps to demonstrating acceptance of oneself.

Bruce Johnson observed in a sermon that if you ask a room full of Kindergartners which of them are artists, you get a room full of raised hands. In our culture, as we age, we decline in our ability to accept our creative work as "good enough" (a result, I would argue, of the media message that one cannot be good enough without spending money the way the marketers dictate). Our spiritual development depends on witnessing and assessing this critical inner or interjected voice and gaining control over the self-criticism, developing it into realistic and loving self-assessment.

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Part III .Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Developing age appropriate rites of passage

Please enjoy the framework of our congregation's Coming of Age program, also [found on our web site.](#)

*Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of the Upper Valley*

Coming of Age

***a program, a celebration, a part of the path
for young people***

in junior high or high school

What is it?

The Coming of Age program supports and celebrates young people who are coming into their own in our community.

This four-faceted approach to spiritual development and Unitarian Universalist identity marks the end of "Sunday School" and the beginning of the Youth stage of congregational life.

Your own spiritual life constantly unfolds; this church community is here to support and encourage you.

Who participates?

Young people who have completed seventh grade are invited to participate. There are also parents, mentors, peers, a minister, and a religious educator who are part of the program.

Coming of Age is a personal project .not a "class", but a series of challenges undertaken on your own time and on your own initiative with the support of the adults in your life.

In ward Challenge

Each young person in the program, with the help of your adult mentor, will identify a personal

challenge an area of growth and personal difficulty to work on. Your mentor will encourage your progress, not judge it.

Examples: improving a school grade; managing anger better; biting your nails less; working on your family relationships; facing your fears on a ropes course.

Outward Reach

You will perform a service project to your community, whether that's your family, school, neighborhood, or planet.

Examples: writing to your legislators to let them know what you think on a subject; making & serving cookies for blood donors; reading to little kids at a library story time;

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helping to lead a Clean Up Green Up day; a project that you're already involved in this year through scouts or school.

Church Participation

It takes a hundred or so volunteers to make the UUCUV run each year. What is your special way of contributing?

Examples: helping paint the Meeting House; participating in the book sale or a soup-athon; setting up and breaking down our space on a Sunday morning; folding, addressing, and stamping the newsletter. Your mentor will have a lot of suggestions!

Faith Development

By choosing a spiritual practice to participate in such as meditation, hiking, sacred dance, writing you can expand and deepen the ways you have available for spiritual exploration.

As an outward expression of this work, you will articulate a credo a work-in-progress statement of your beliefs. This credo is yours alone; you will show your mentor that you've taken it seriously, and you will find a safe way to express some of it in the Coming of Age celebration in the spring.

Mentors

A number of UUCUV adult members have applied to be mentors for Coming of Age participants and they have passed a screening process. You will select the mentor that seems best for you. The DRE will give your mentor any training, information, or support she or he may need.

You and your mentor can meet at UUCUV coffee hour, pot luck dinners, or any other UUCUV event where you can talk together.

Celebration

Each part of this program can be a lot of fun; it also can be hard work. Your church wants to celebrate you, your life, your hard work, and your future.

A ritual called "Coming of Age" will be held in the spring. You will be part of the worship team to develop this Sunday Service. It is a celebration of you.

Interested or curious?

To discuss your own involvement with the Coming of Age program, please contact Sparrow F. Alden, the Director of Religious Education:

Reflection:

When I first was involved with the UUCUV, "Junior Youth" meant fourth and fifth graders. We now have a half dozen 7th, 8th, and 9th graders who have shared an OWL class, are planning a trip to Winchester, NH, and have hilarious overnights at the Meeting House.

We've come a long way, and I'm proud of the families who have chosen to model that "church is something we do", not something we can choose or not choose on a Sunday morning, like a TV channel, even when their children reach junior high school age. Even

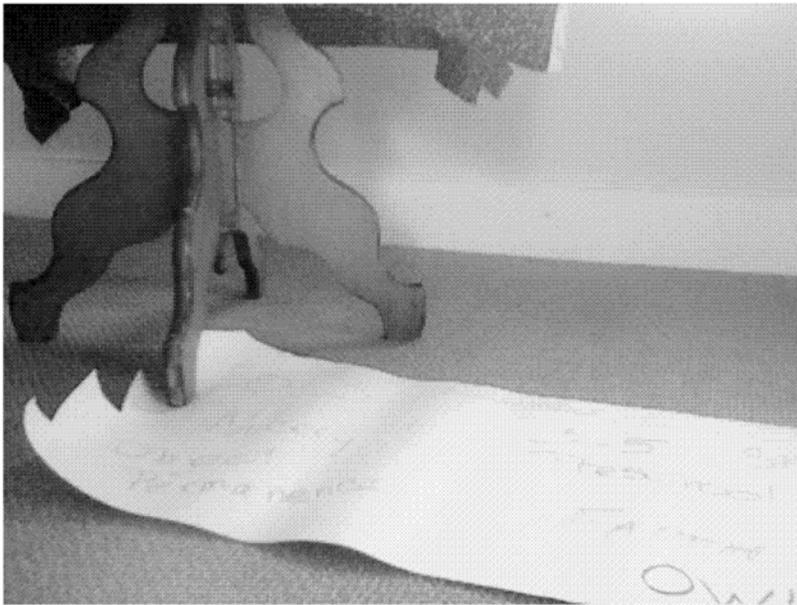
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more, I'm thrilled to read the applications of the church elders and curmudgeons who would like to be considered by the kids as mentors.

We've offered the program for about five years now. As you can tell, it is an independent study, taking advantage of our rural nature and small church school size. Before 2008-2009, we only had one young person who chose to do this program. Participation in the Coming of Age program is now explicitly expected of UUCUV eighth graders, and we had two young people participate in the program in 2009.

Exhibit B: Offering Parent education (classes and materials) regarding faith development:

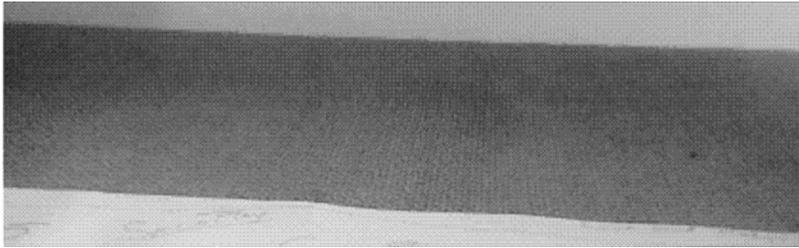
Here's the visual aid I use during new UU parent orientation events:



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This great scroll is my “Faith Development” tool for parenting classes and New UU classes (membership). It’s how I show folks directly how the stages interact with one another and how our program embraces all stage as we currently understand them.

Reflection:

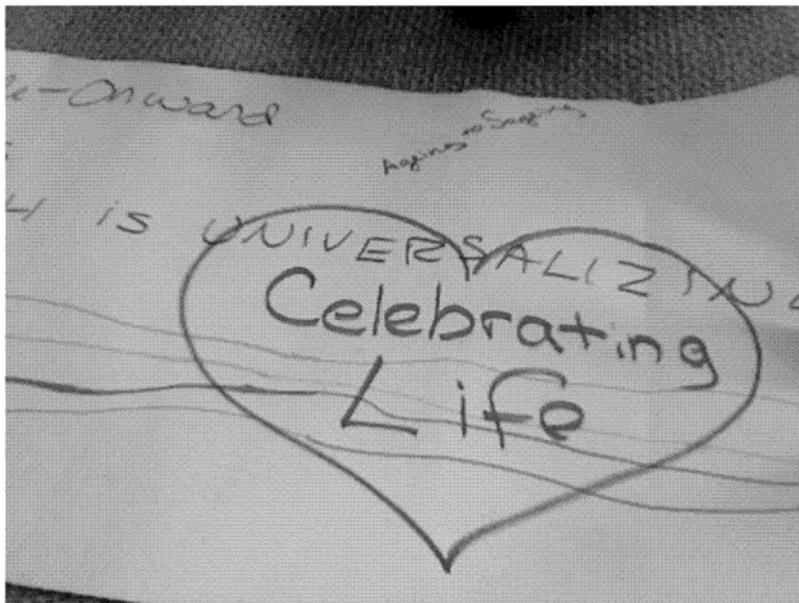
Often parents come to a UU church for the first time because they want support as their children’s religious educators (or to learn that they *are* the religious educators). About a quarter of the UUCUV’s new visitors are previously unchurched, and have not considered faith as a process of development, let alone a lifelong adventure.

In parent gatherings and as a guest speaker in the New UU class, I use this scroll to demonstrate

two things. Explicitly, of course, I share information about the basic changes in approaches to and understanding of faith as each of us changes over time. Implicitly, by bringing color and movement to the learning, I expand people's expectations of how learning is offered and can be achieved at the UUCUV.

By stretching out on the floor and moving along the scroll .it's about 12 feet long .I invite new friends into a mode of learning that does not look like our generation's public school experience. I invite them to picture their children's religious education experience as well as understand the principles of the kids' faith development. Even better .I invite these folks to know that they can develop their own faith in a supportive, creative community of fellow-travelers.

Fairly often, I hear that parents want a Sunday School experience for their kids to help with answers to cosmological questions. I suppose I'm a bit frustrating when I reply that



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that's the parents' job which I'm here to support! "Just tell them the truth," I say. "We don't know the truth! I'm trying to figure that out!" they answer. "That's a good answer," I reply.

Exhibit C: Using Fowler's Stages of faith development to educate the congregation on the underpinning philosophy of the various children's programs and on the importance of adult religious education programming.

The following sermon on the topic of Fowler's stages of spiritual development was delivered in October of 2003 by me and can be found on the UUCUV web site.

Hiking Similar Trails

Unitarian Universalists have been challenged to compose an "elevator speech". In the course of my duties, I share the essence of our faith with visiting parents and children, frequently in the time between a cracker spill and the next squished finger. So I have my "elevator speech" down pat. It has to do with diverse people climbing the same mountain on different paths, experiencing that mountain from an idiosyncratic perspective, helping one another when our paths cross with encouragement and respect for one another's inherent worth and dignity. We may not encounter everyone as we walk our path, but we know they're somewhere hiking their own trail. It's all the same mountain and everyone is on it.

I love to canoe. I've done it since I was small, and when I was twelve began taking long paddles including

overnight canoe-camping trips. I learned that it's not about getting to Black Cat Island. The destination is arbitrary; actually arrival is of negligible importance. The point of this particular paddle stroke... is this particular paddle stroke. Once I figured that out, I learned to truly love the swirling water, the power in my arms and shoulders, the sound of drops running off my paddle back into the lake.

So, frankly, where I am on my faith path and where my friend may be on her own path, is arbitrary. The point of this step on my path is this step on my path. Not one of us is more spiritual. We are where we are. Knowing this, I'll discuss Dr. Fowler's "stages" of spiritual development, knowing that each stage is really a completely different way of approaching, appreciating, and hiking the mountain.

James Fowler is a researcher and theologian who has professed at Harvard and at Boston College and at Emory University. OK, confession:

when I first picked up his seminal book, I flipped to the methods and statistics appendix. (You can take the Sparrow out of the lab...) For a researcher studying qualitative data, Fowler does a darned good job. He and his research team interviewed hundreds of people from age three to "61 and over". He structured the interviews consistently. He spent over two hours with each interview subject; his subjects represented many different faith traditions including atheists and agnostics and, reflecting the US population at large, his sample has a majority who identified themselves as Christians. Each interview was rated by multiple judges on the themes expressed, the images used, the type of thinking shown by the subject.

Fowler found some very clear patterns, which have remained reliable over his follow-up research. He found that he could group people's patterns of spiritual beliefs and the skills they could use to explore and express those beliefs into "stages". Shakespeare claimed seven ages of man, so does Fowler. But if we all live until very old age, we will pass through all of Shakespeare's stages until "second childishness and mere

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oblivion." Not so for stages of spiritual development. The stages come in order, but we only reach a different one by actively transitioning to it. When we are fulfilled at a certain stage, then we are where we are, and that's the right place to be, and we can be there for the rest of our lives, appropriately and meaningfully, like the sound of the drops falling off our paddles into the water.

Dr. Fowler, of course, couldn't interview babies and toddlers, so he hypothesizes that at the very beginning of our lives, the stage he calls "Primal Faith" is closely linked to the cognitive abilities and discoveries appropriate to this age.

When we care for our babies, cuddle them, feed them, sing to them, they learn to trust the world as a place of caring and safety. This grounding sense of hope encompasses the lessons of "object permanence", the idea that Daddy and Mommy are only temporarily out of sight. Baby begins to have faith in "things not seen". The implications for Religious Education, of course, are very clear. The lessons are: you are always safe, you are always loved, Mommy and Daddy will return. And if it's a day when you are crying and kicking and hiding in the furthest corner from the nursery care provider, you are always safe, you are always loved, Mommy and Daddy will return.

Fowler's youngest interview subjects were three years old. People from age three to some as old as age eight clustered together in their expressions of spiritual ideas. Fowler calls it the Intuitive-Projective stage. Religious educators call it "Faith is Caught". Like a wildfire.

This preschool and primary crowd explore ideas about Spirit and God quite intuitively. They also establish habits and foundations of faith by imitating the other members of their nuclear family.

And these young people certainly imitate us! Please, Parents and all grown ups in our community, model a healthy and visible spiritual quest. If you meditate, let your children know. And let them imitate you first in play, later beside you on their own little mats. Let them see you prepare the table for the feast including a chalice. Let them help choose a gift for a baby's dedication; let them attend weddings and funerals and worship with you. Pray together. The simplest thanks over meals and prayers at bedtime can be used by even very young children. What if you're uncomfortable talking to Spirit? What if you have to grope for words? Model learning. John Buehrens made this suggestion for children and adults learning to pray: "Today I am thankful for..., Today I am sorry for..., Tomorrow I hope..."

How else can we visibly model our faith? Act for social justice together. Take the children with you when you recycle, when you serve a LISTEN dinner, when you give blood. Please, friends, take them with you to vote.

Worship together. Does this mean attending church? Does this mean singing campfire

songs with close friends and family? Whatever it means, make it meaningful for the whole family.

It's vital to these children that there is a modeled faith path to imitate. I have met parents who say that they will protect their children from all forms of religion, so the child can choose in young adulthood what is right for them. When the child does not know what healthy, genuine religion looks like, they will have no way to judge the cult which approaches them. When the very human, natural need for spirituality is left void, a manipulative, showy, complicated imitation of religion - particularly one with intensive initiation rites - will fill that void.

What about our Sunday School? These young people grasp the symbols of faith like a lifeline; every class that we offer incorporates a chalice lighting and candles of joys and concerns. In our preschool class, passing the unlit candle from hand to hand and speaking is a treasured ritual. It is ...complicated ...to have children join us here in the multipurpose room

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for the beginning of our worship service; it is... extremely complicated ...to have them share our coffee hour space. But these special times are expressions of our faith tradition. Learning to shake hands and say, "Good morning," to sit attentively, to follow the choir, to read music, to listen, to share the cookies, to respect others, to behave kindly and respectfully - these are their religious education. We are all their role models. We are all their coaches.

According to the latest longitudinal research on spiritual development, lifelong religious observance can be predicted quite reliably and robustly by one particular variable in the preschool years: the children's father's participation. Dad's modeling of his own spiritual quest gives his children whatever it takes to pursue their own. So thank you, Dads, for being here with your kids, hiking your own path, but always within earshot. Lives are complicated. Under half of our registered Sunday scholars have a father who is active in our church community, so I want to say a special thank you to the gentlemen whose own children are grown, or are not yet arrived, or are not part of your path who have shared your time and love to be part of our religious education program. Pass the torch.

Dr. Fowler calls the next stage of spiritual development the "Mythic- Literal" stage. Religious educators call it "Faith is Taught". In the research samples, a few people began to walk this path when they were six years old; the majority were between the ages of seven and twelve; the oldest were in their fifties. The cognitive stage of concrete operations kicks in around seven years old: the drive and ability to experiment, form hypotheses, and discover the patterns of the natural world - and of human behavior. They learn explicit rules of behavior almost as quickly as they learn the implicit ones, and they can spot the inconsistencies. In our religious education classes, we learn about and make classroom covenants with one another. We learn how to respectfully help one another abide by the agreements of our covenants. When we perfect this, P11 let you know how we do it, but the important thing is that we're trying.

Our Primary class, ages six and seven, uses an exciting storytelling method called Spirit Play in which the child is invited to respond to sacred stories through a variety of media, and to tell the stories in their own way.

Our eight, nine, and ten year olds use activities, experiments, and biographies of UU ancestors to learn about their faith. This Elementary class keeps teachers really hopping!

People of any age whose path is in this "Faith is Taught" stage develop very clear and concrete ideas about God. God looks like the guy on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. God is frequently perceived as the creator of the natural world, and always as following its laws of physics and cause- and-effect. This anthropomorphized God also follows the rules of human nature. This way of walking with the Spirit of Love and Mystery that some people call God makes many people in other stages quite uncomfortable. This is where these people are, and we honor them.

What happens when the stories begin to contradict one another? Creationism versus evolution? Adam and Eve's son finding a wife in the next valley over? Reason and the measurable results of science versus transcending mystery and wonder? Around Junior High school, our brains develop "formal operations" - the ability to perceive and wrestle with these seeming conflicts from the outside and to search for the deeper meaning behind them.

At this age, then, young people are mentally ready to move to another way of hiking their path. It's our job to provide them with a rich variety of material and a place and the skills to conduct the inner and the interpersonal discussions to prompt this growth. A quarter of all people regardless of age walk their path in a manner that Fowler calls the "Synthetic-Conventional" stage of spiritual development. We say "Faith is

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Bought." We mean that faith is about relationships - with peers, with role models, with the environment, and with Spirit. Fowler writes "the

adolescent's religious hunger is for a God who knows, accepts and confirms the self deeply, and who serves as an infinite guarantor of the self within the forming myth of personal identity and faith." Spirit can be more of a mirror inward, and faith a basis for identity and

outlook.

The symbols and habits of our faith tradition which serve as the trees and rocks outlining the path are now assumed. Learning them new would be rather difficult. What our youth are ready for is relationships. Who else are Unitarian Universalists? And what do Unitarian Universalists do? And how do we get along? If a tradition provides an authority figure to youth, a cornerstone of their faith will be defined in terms of their relationship with that authority figure. It may be trust, admiration, rebellion, or rejection with respect to both the figure and the authority, but it's an essential feature of an individual's faith.

We have a large and active Junior Youth group at the UUCUV. These children are eleven, twelve, and thirteen. Not necessarily hiking yet in this "Faith is Bought" way, but I know these kids and they are certainly in transition. Trained and nurturing Youth advisors provide them with the opportunity for discussion as well as journaling time. We model for them skills necessary to the journey. I am deeply grateful for our advisors' gentle manner and acceptance of them where they are.

What do Unitarian Universalists do together? Well, our Junior Youth do environmental and social service projects. They participate in and lead worship services. They play soccer, they discuss books. They eat pizza. They chair meetings.

Remember that longitudinal study about predicting adult church participation? At this age, the most important variable is connections with peers from the wider faith community; our district provides Junior Youth Conferences each year, and the UUCUV is frequently the host.

We don't provide authority figures. We aim instead to provide role models and guides with whom these young people may make connection. We offer them mentors who can act as sounding boards as the kids define and articulate their own faith path. A select group of mentors who accept young people where they are, who listen to questions and say, "Good question," instead of offering an answer work with our eighth graders as they prepare for a Coming of Age experience through the church.

What else do Unitarian Universalists do together? We build new paths. Paths of the Spirit, inextricable from Nature. Paths to our neighbors in other churches. Paths inward. Very frequently, we build bridges. We walk side by side when we share our Water Ceremony and Flower Ceremony in celebration of our diversity and commonality. At our Day of the Dead celebration, we walk side by side when we honor and celebrate the passing of our loved ones who have gone where we cannot.

Well, there's the first half of James Fowler's theory. If you'd like to hear about the rest, check his book out from the UUCUV library! For the curious, Faith is Fraught, Faith is Sought, and Faith is Universalizing.

Thank you for walking for a little while with me. Thank you for reading about our incredible children and appreciating their journeys, not behind us on our trails, but near us, hiking similar trails of their own making through this beautiful New England landscape.

Reflection:

As a social psychology student, I was on fire when I read Fowler's work. Here was a missing piece of the body of human developmental literature. In fact, I use his theory as the framework when I chat about the RE program with students in the New UU class. Of course, being on the "scientific" end of "social scientist", I am looking forward to some good

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computer modeling and some long-term studies based on this excellent theory. But until I have some nice data in my hands, this theory broadly fits my field observations, so I embrace it!

For some parents, it is frustrating to have less-measurable outcomes of the Sunday School program; as I have said to them, I can't teach them Hebrew and I can't save their souls.

Communicating the developmental perspective to parents. Usually combined with Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning. Can help them see the subtle foundational changes which are possible and desirable! As their children's spirits grow.

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COMPETENCY E: RIGHT RELATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS Part I

Overview

All communities of humans have developed, formally or informally, a code of moral behavior which allows people to live in community. Ethics is the study of when it is appropriate to violate the moral code.

The standard of the “prudent person” underlies the study of ethics in our culture .if the prudent person would agree that a violation of the moral code is justified for everyone under the same circumstances, then the violation is ethical.

Of course, just who gets to read the mind of the mythical prudent person is the stuff of good debates, seminars, and jurisprudence. Our jury system approximates the prudent person, and good luck to us!

In my own professional ministry, I have been able to rely on this standard for tiny, day-today decisions. One congregation member often has care of her grandson on Sunday mornings. She comes to the sermon, which he does not wish to attend, and neither does he wish to attend Sunday school. She gave him leave to quietly read in the library of our Sunday-morning-rented- school-building. The boy was not remotely disruptive, he fed his mind quietly in a corner, and my suggesting that he could participate in Sunday School or stay with his grandmother brought forth strident and hurtful words from her. However. The child was unsupervised. The child provided an example to other children that they could refuse to participate in Sunday School. And if every grandparent in the congregation did the same thing, it would be a disaster. That was how I knew that sticking to my policy was the right and ethical choice and this rubric provided me with the explanation I needed to approach the grandmother again.

“Right Relations” acknowledges that we all are going to make errors. As we say to children in a Spirit Play classroom, “I wonder what happens when someone breaks a promise?” Within our covenantal faith tradition, we agree on ideals of right relations and then agree to keep our inner compasses pointed at those ideas and try just as hard as we can to get there. As with most of Unitarian Universalism, there’s not expectation of perfection or completion, but rather celebration of the journey. In other words, when I approached this grandmother a second time, I went for good reasons, intending to harm none and do good. Right relations means that I spoke to good purpose and listened as carefully as I could to her words and thought before I replied.

Professional ethics means holding yourself and your peers particularly strongly to high standards of ethical behavior in the matters that concern your profession. Scientific researchers must give credit where credit is due, police officers must eschew bribes for turning a blind eye, and we in ministry must exhibit great care in tending people’s spirits. Yes, we must not accept bribes, but since that situation is almost irrelevant to the fulfillment of our duties, it’s not considered by name in LREDA’s Code of Professional Ethics.

Professional ethics for religious educators regard first and foremost the respectful stewarding of the position of authority and power which my position grants me every parent must know that their child is safe with me. Our ethical code speaks also to mutual support of and consultation with others in ministry, educating and encouraging fair polity and practice by our congregations, personal professional development, and modeling our values in the congregation and in the wider community. In other words, when the grandmother I wrote of brought me the Guest at Your Table materials this December a project which she had agreed to be point person for saying, “this should be the DRE’s job,” I hummed a verse of “Come, come whoever you

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are.” That gave me time to frame my reply setting my boundary by saying that I receive instruction from the RE Committee and the Board.

I believe that “right relations” means that she and I are still in relationship. We can continue to approach one another with ideas, needs, and concerns. I trust that she speaks from a place of deep caring, and I hope that my behavior gives her confidence that I do the same.

Part II Learning Experiences

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

Course: Fall Proseminar, 1989, Dartmouth College

Relevance: This graduate course focused for one month on experimental psychology as it

relates to the practice of law. As potential *amici curiae* and researchers in fields of perception and memory, we examined case studies which illustrated many principles of ethics with which we might contend. Our exploration covered statistical honesty, witness reliability, and jury selection.

Course: The Bard and the Tube, 1985, Bowdoin College

Relevance:

While the content of this Shakespeare-in-Movies course is irrelevant, the experience of the course was. My professor manipulated and propositioned me in a manner which I now recognize as harassing. At the time, of course, I floundered as well as a naive 20-year-old could. Now I both recognize the specific behavior, and understand viscerally the sense of betrayal which accompanies violation of power and professional boundaries.

Structured Learning Experiences

Experience: Safe Congregations Workshop: Youth Ministry

Offered by: New Hampshire/Vermont District

Led by: Lynne Oakley and Rick Carkin

Reflection:

This workshop focused on the very basics of ethical youth advising: number of adults per youth; gender balance; physical plant security for overnight events; the absolute transparency of process. Perhaps the clearest image for me is of a case in which a family medical emergency forced a single adult advisor to be the ride home for a single youth. The advisor merely called the minister on his cell phone, explained the situation, and then had the youth talk with the minister all the way to his own front door.

Integration in Work:

The UUCUV has now hosted five junior youth overnights! I have hosted these events with a good understanding of the permissions needed, the adult advisor ratios which were appropriate, and logistical safeguards in line.

I have also been instructed by our RE Committee to join Facebook with the explicit intention of communicating with the UUCUV's youth. Because of my grounding in advisor ethics, I know enough not to send a private message or chat to any of our youth, but to communicate with them completely openly through Wall comments or our Youth Group page.

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Experience: Lethal Force Institute I

Offered by: Lethal Force Institute, Dunbarton, NH

Led by: Massad Ayoob

Reflection:

This 40-hour course in ethical and judicious use of lethal force by civilians was taught by a retired State Trooper. Through classroom time, scenarios, and practical instruction, we explored the distinction between morals and ethics, the "prudent person" standard, and the higher standard of ethics to which certain persons are held in law.

Integration in Work:

Through this course, I learned the legal concept of "innocents under the mantle of my protection" which applies not only to children, for whom I may act *in loco parentis*, but for persons of any age or ability in programs for which I am responsible. It is with this awareness that I approach each event at the UUCUV.

I learned that my number one piece of safety equipment is a thoroughly-charged cell phone and that there is huge value in establishing a friendly relationship with the local police chief long before a critical incident occurs, so that I can be known as a reasonable and responsible person. The chief, by the way, was very happy to come in to Sunday School to chat with the kids about safety.

Independent/Group Study

Experience: Exploration of Congregational Covenant

Date: 2002-2003

Members of study group: Rev. Barbara Child and myself

Relevance:

Through our weekly coaching/staff meetings, Rev. Barbara furthered my understanding of professional ethics in the field of UU religious education. It was her teaching that led me to resign my membership in the UUCUV and approach the position as a professional and caring outsider. We considered congregational covenants, why the UUCUV did not have one in place, and what necessary growth might lead the congregation to choosing to make one. As an interim minister, Rev. Barbara counted such covenant among her duties in making the congregation ready to embrace a new settled minister.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

Experience: Ongoing study topic, Northern Vermont cluster of DREs

Date: since 1999

Relevance:

In studying ethics, professional ethics, and congregational polity with my fellow DREs, I have been blessed. By learning from long-established religious educators like Lisa Rubin and Cindy Spring, by group work, and by passing on the torch to newer religious educators, I have developed a feel for my own “prudent person” standard in the field as well as a full repertoire of

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responses .from relying on our own wisdom and action to sharing burdens with our colleague ministers, our congregational boards, our RE committees and, *in extremis*, the district staff.

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Part III Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Using covenant to clarify and operationalize a working collegial relationship between religious educator and parish minister.

In February of 2002, the Rev. Gail Collins-Ranadive, Accredited Interim Minister and I attended a “Minister and DRE Start-Up” workshop in Woodstock, VT. The course was presented by the District Executive and RE Consultant of the (then) New Hampshire! Vermont District of UU Societies, the Rev. Rosemarie Smurzinsky and Cindy Spring.

Over the course of this day-long workshop, I got to know my colleague-minister more deeply and we worked together to create a covenant which would be our touchstone over the rest of the year which we would share, working together.

The covenant we wrote still hangs, faded and crinkled, on the wall of my office:

Sparrow will On behalf of Gail will

recruit, train, & nurture the children, provide printed copies of her sermons
volunteers, including child care friends, and to Sunday School teachers every
for adult RE members of Sunday morning
the UU

Advise RE Committee and Congregation Attend RE Committee, providing mini-
respond to day-to-day concerns of the Upper worship and non-anxious presence
Valley

Support Adult RE events with PR, Give sermons on the topic of Adult RE;
communication, & logistics create and lead Adult RE Classes
including Aging to Sageing and
Seminarium

Coordinate communication with Bring new ideas such as Children’s
parents, RE Comm, other Chapel, seasonal walks, and topical

committees, and the church coloring books during intergen
calendar homilies
Report to the Board and keep the Educate the Board about Lifespan RE,
RE program running smoothly to including the importance of the work
free them for interim work we are doing right now
Communicate with A11VI in weekly overtly support and honor the DRE by
meetings and present a united doing the opening rituals of every
front to the congregation Sunday Service together
Interim work, as learned from the Interim work, including teaching and
Al Minister supporting DRE in her role during the
interim
Statistical analysis of old Poll data Present old Poll data in the way that
will best support the UUCUV's
mission and transformation during
interim

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Reflection

That covenant is deeply faded by the sunlight which streams in my office window. It is six years out of date. In the eleven short months that Rev. Gail spent with us, I don't know how she had time to sleep, let alone spend an entire day at a workshop with me. Yet she did. "Of course," she said when I asked her. And as we introduced ourselves and why we had come to the workshop, she answered, "To support my DRE."

Her TLC during that interim year still means the world to me. She began her UU life by joining a congregation which explicitly expected parents to teach Sunday School, so she did. And every Sunday morning, she greeted me with printed copies of her sermon for the teachers. Every Sunday morning, we shared lighting the chalice, speaking the opening words, inviting congregants to join us in the opening hymn. She generally told the Children's Story and I often had written it. During the sermon, she often referred to what the children were doing in Sunday School as a relevant part of the adult sermon and she kept in close enough communication with me that she knew, every week, what was up.

She made it clear to the congregation that she and I were a team, each doing what we were best at, serving the congregation. She taught me my role in her interim ministry, and inspired me to be an anchor to the congregation through the rough waters of first minister 2 interim ministers new settled minister transition. She taught me that religious education is a calling and a profession, and through working with her, I learned that I could resign my UUCUV membership and truly be the DRE staff person, deeply caring outsider, well- educated consultant.

The UUCUV went over some very bumpy patches during that first year of interim ministry. And when the congregation president resigned in a melodramatic series of events, Gail called me first, we worked together to articulate it as necessary growing pains in the development of the UUCUV, and I never found myself used as a game-piece on the chessboard.

Thank you, Rev. Gail, for being the DRE's religious educator.

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Exhibit B: Developing, implementing, and monitoring safe congregation policies and procedures within the whole congregation.

The Draft Safety Policy of the UUCUV is appended hereafter as the product of many years of work.

Reflection:

From the year of my hiring as DRE, I have urged the UUCUV to adopt a Safety Policy that's ten and a half years.

We began with simple procedures which I implemented on my own say-so: two adults per classroom, fire drills, and first aid kits. When an RE teacher refused to have a co-teacher, I made classroom visits twice each Sunday delivering their juice and checking in.

In those days, the RE Committee *was* the Sunday School teachers, and they had little view of anything beyond making Little Johnny behave.

It took five years to establish a committee which were *not* Sunday School teachers and who had a sense that they could have a broad vision of religious education as a mission of the UUCUV.

Then a full year for the Committee to choose a Safety Policy as something important for them to develop. A sub-committee began working, and the full committee began meeting monthly to review the draft policy two years ago.

The congregation named “creating a Safety Policy” as one of the tasks for the RE Committee in our new Strategic Plan. I am proud to say that we handed the draft policy to the Board on July 1, 2008, for their consideration.

I present this rightly as the work of volunteers on the RE Committee. I hope that you can read between the lines the safety workshops I attended in the district, the books I lent, the quiet education I did behind the scenes to support the whole project.

As the wife of a police officer, I had a certain amount of momentum behind me when faced with the nay-saying of some who spoke doubtfully of a policy. “I do this every time we meet so that in ten years I can confidently take the witness stand and say that I *know* there were two adults in that room because there were *always* two adults in that room.” “On the contrary, publicizing that we do background checks will deter those who are deliberate perpetrators, looking for easy access to children.” “No, that’s not an acceptable risk. I know the black market price of a healthy baby boy.” It’s a burden watching my spouse put on Kevlar and go out where people threaten his family because he does his job; it’s a privilege to have the education and cachet to vigorously support the development of the UUCUV’s safety policy.

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Draft Safety Policy UUCUV

List of Abbreviations

CPR: Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

CPS: Child Protective Services

DRE: Director of Religious Education

RE: Religious Education

UU: Unitarian Universalist

UUA: Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

UUCUV: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley

I. Purpose and Underlying Principles

In keeping with our Unitarian Universalist (UU) principles, we are committed to creating a safe environment within our congregation that protects children and adults from harm and promotes their spiritual growth. In adopting this safety policy, we accept the responsibility to educate ourselves about safety issues including predatory behavior and child abuse. We further commit ourselves to taking necessary steps to its successful implementation.

The purpose of this safety policy is to provide guidance for:

- Prevention of injury, and effective response to medical emergencies
- Fire safety and safe emergency evacuation
- Safe and appropriate behavior with the children and youth of our congregation
- Prevention of predatory behavior or allegations, and effective response should an incident occur

II. Building safety

The Building Committee will conduct a yearly assessment of the structural safety and

accessibility of UUCUV-owned (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley) property.

An escape plan and the location of the fire extinguisher will be posted near each classroom door. A review of fire escape plans will be part of teacher training. The Religious Education (RE) Committee will conduct a Sunday morning fire drill annually.

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III. General Safety

All federal, state, and local laws will be apply at congregational events.

No individually identifying information (including photographs and personal information) will be made publicly available without explicit consent from the individual or guardian.

IV. First Aid

- At least one person with first aid and CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training will be present in the building whenever activities are taking place involving children and youth.
- First aid/CPR training from a certified first aid instructor is mandatory for the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and optional for the Minister. The congregation shall pay any fee required for this training and retraining to maintain current certification.
- All teachers and volunteers will learn basic first aid skills including universal precautions, as part of teacher training (See Appendix A-Universal Precautions).
- A first aid kit (See Appendix A- First Aid Kit Contents) will be readily available in each RE classroom or area. Teachers must carry a first aid kit when taking children outside of the building.
- Any incident requiring first aid services should be reported to the DRE and parent as soon as possible, and identify supplies used for future replacement.
- In an emergency, 911 (emergency services) will be notified immediately.

V. Child protection and safety

Child abuse definition: The following definition is based on the revised Statutes Annotated from the state of Vermont. Child abuse is an act or failure to act that results in real or potential harm to a child's physical health, psychological growth and development, or welfare. Child abuse is against the law.

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Criminal Background Checks: Confidential criminal background checks will be conducted as required below, and will be kept confidential in a locked file in the Minister's office.

- Anyone who refuses the criminal history check will not be eligible to work directly with children or youth. They may volunteer at any congregational events or job that does not include children.
- In the event that a criminal history is revealed, that information will be shared with the Response Team (See Section VII) and remain strictly confidential. In the event that a potential threat to child safety is revealed, the individual must enter into Limited Access Status (See Appendix B).

A. Screening Requirements

Volunteers who work with children and youth will:

- Be a congregant, member or friend, and have at least two references from people with knowledge of the applicant's work with children or youth acceptable to the RE Committee and DRE. The DRE will contact the references directly. The prospective teacher will be informed that the references will be asked specific questions of any known allegations of sexual misconduct or harassment, or physical abuse.
- Read and sign the Code of Ethics (Appendix C).
- Undergo a criminal background check

UUCUV employees will:

- Undergo the screening process conducted by the hiring committee including the submission of an application, an interview, and providing three references.
- Read and sign the Code of Ethics.
- Undergo a criminal background check
- Be an active member of the professional society related to the job

Occasional volunteers, parents or church members who substitute in the classroom or program occasionally will:

- Be supervised by the DRE and RE teachers.

Paid Childcare workers will:

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- Have completed the Red Cross Babysitter's or equivalent experience
- Be supervised by the DRE

B. Staffing Guidelines

There must be a minimum of two adults present in the classroom or building at events involving children and youth of the congregation. The DRE may make exceptions to this two- adult rule on a case-by-case basis.

Ratios of Adults to Children:

Nursery 1:3

Preschool 1:5

Elementary 1:6

Middle 1:8

High School 1:10

- During religious programs children must remain in designated areas of congregational use, and be supervised, either in their RE groups, or with guardians.
- Screened, trained staff or volunteers will assist younger children with toileting as appropriate. Individual bathrooms in the classroom should be used when possible so that two adults can be present. Older children may walk to the bathroom with visual supervision of the staff or volunteers.
- If any adult is alone with a group of children, the door to the room will remain open and the DRE or his/her designated representative will maintain a presence and check-in with the group from time to time.
- Exceptions to this guideline (for example, to transport children from one location to another) require written permission from parents.
- One-on-one meetings between a child and an adult other than parent or guardian are strongly discouraged. If such a meeting should occur, the parent and the DRE should be notified as soon as possible.
- The Minister or DRE counseling children or youth must inform the other member of the professional staff or, if unavailable, the President of the Congregation, of the counseling meeting and the name of the counseled. Meetings should be

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scheduled when other adult staff is on-site. Advanced scheduling is strongly encouraged, but notice immediately after counseling is permissible if prior notice is impossible. Standard rules of ministerial confidentiality will be respected. Parents will be informed of the meeting, again respecting rules of confidentiality, unless it is deemed that to do so would endanger the child or youth.

C. Field Trips

- Parents must sign permission slips (see Appendix A) when children are leaving the

meetinghouse premises by vehicle. If the driver is under 21, the permission slip must so specify.

- The leaders must have a list of names, emergency contacts, and medical conditions with them at all times.
- The field trip organizer shall provide the DRE with a copy of the activity information and permission slips at least one week in advance of the activity.
- There must be a minimum of 2 adults with the group. In addition, for preschoolers, the ratio shall be one adult for every three children. For all other children and youth, the ratio shall be 1 to 5.
- A first aid kit shall accompany all field trips.
- There must be enough seat belts for everyone and everyone must wear a seat belt. Children must be in appropriate safety restraints.
- All drivers must be covered by adequate car insurance. Proof of adequate insurance coverage

must be filed with the DRE upon hiring along with a copy of a valid driver's licenses. \

Volunteers and compensated employees are not allowed to pick up or drive children and youth home from the meetinghouse or to be alone in a car with one child or youth except by prior parental arrangement and notification of DRE.

VI. Training and education

All adult congregants will be specifically educated about our safety policy and community resources which address issues of personal safety. The Membership committee's Path to Membership will include verbal orientation to the

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safety policy and New Member packets will include copies of the safety policy. All volunteers and staff who work with vulnerable populations will receive training in recognizing and responding to issues of personal safety. All educational programs for minors will promote self-esteem and personal responsibility. All families will have the opportunity to choose age-appropriate programs on sexuality, sexual health, and prevention of sexual abuse. The DRE will be responsible for designing and implementing these educational goals.

VII. Response and Reporting of Threats to Child Safety

A. Threats to child safety may include suspected child abuse within a congregational program or outside the congregation involving a congregational worker or volunteer. In addition, it may include situations in which children or youth may be suicidal or have a serious drug problem. (whole section, Christine, check the formatting)

B. The Response Team is a small group whose purpose is to deal with threats to child safety, consisting of the Minister, the DRE, and the President of the Board. The Response Team does not have the legal authority or the expertise to determine guilt or innocence. Instead, they are to protect members of the congregational community, and to ensure that involved persons are treated with dignity and respect. In the event that one of the Response Team members is unable to serve on the Response Team or has some connection to the incident, another congregation member may be selected to fill in.

C. A congregation member or friend who becomes aware of a threat to child safety is called the reporting person. The reporting person is discouraged from investigating, but should document what is known including names, dates, and times, and promptly provide this information to a member of the Response Team.

D. The Response Team member will take immediate steps, if necessary, to assure protection of the

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children in the congregation, and will convene a meeting of the Response Team.

E. Interim Suspension. If the reported abuse involves a worker or volunteer at the congregation, the Response Team will direct the supervisor of that person to immediately relieve that person of any duties involving supervision, care or teaching of children and youth at the congregation. Suspension will occur for an incident that occurred whether within or outside the realm of the congregation. Suspension will continue pending the outcome of the investigation.

F. Investigation & Response.

The Response Team will decide in a careful but timely manner whom to consult about the incident. This may include parents, teachers, the board, the congregation, the child in question, and the accused. The decision should be based upon the individual situation, i.e., the severity and credibility of the allegation and whether a threat to the safety of children exists.

- Actions may include investigating the details of the incident in order to inform future actions.

- Actions may include reporting to authorities (see point H below). (this one ought to go at the top)

- Actions may include suspension of duties. This will be mandatory if a CPS or police report is made.

- Actions may include a Limited Access agreement (see Appendix D)

- Alleged ministerial abuse shall be reported to the District Executive, the Director of the UUA Department of Ministry, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA, and to the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association.

G. Confidentiality. The Response Team will keep the matter confidential until the investigation is complete. In this context, confidential means that the identity of the child victim and/or reporting person, the details of the allegation or concern and any identifying information will be kept between the Response Team

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and the accused. If the victim or reporter fears retaliation, they may request strict confidentiality, meaning that identifying information will not be shared with the accused.

H. The Response Team may recommend a report to the authorities (Child Protective Services or police). In this case, the reporting person, with the support of the Response Team, will report the incident.

I. Following the investigation, the Response Team will make its report and recommendation to the board. The board will make the final determination of any additional consequences including, but not limited to, termination of a staff person and, in the case of volunteers, any additional action beyond that recommended by the Response Team.

J. If allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the board, the paid staff member or volunteer may then be reinstated.

K. This policy encourages any congregant who has been convicted of, is under current indictment for or, has been involved in any act of sexual misconduct or abuse of a child or vulnerable person

to make him or herself known to a member of the Response Team.

VIII. Implementation of this Safety Policy

- Announcements of the policy will be made in the order of service for two consecutive Sundays and copies will be made available to the congregation in the sanctuary entry.
- Upon implementation, parents, teachers, and volunteers will receive a copy along with a letter from the board. Subsequently, parent, teachers and volunteers will receive a copy of this policy each year at registration. As new children enroll in the RE program their parents will receive copies of the policy.
- The policy will be included in all new member information packets.

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- A summary of the policy will be distributed to all members and friends, for example, through the newsletter.
- The RE Chair will discuss the policy in her newsletter article in the month following its approval.
- The policy will be provided to and discussed with all workers and volunteers who supervise or care for the children and youth of our congregation.
- The RE committee will include information on this policy and its implementation as part of its annual report to the board.
- The Board and the RE Committee will conduct an annual review of the safety policy and whether it has met the congregation's goals.

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Field Trip Permission Slip

Date: _____

I hereby grant permission for my child,

_____ to travel by vehicle with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley Religious Education program to _____ on

My child has the following medical conditions or allergies:

Because of these conditions, the following precautions or supplies should be taken on the field trip:

Parent or guardian, print name: _____

Signature:

Phone number: _____

Emergency contact name, relationship to child, and phone number:

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Appendix B

JR 4_23_08

UUCUV RE First Aid Kit

Bandages: several sizes

Tape

Steri strips –to hold deeper cut together

Gauze pads –for putting pressure on wound and soaking up blood

Ace bandage

Micro shield- for CPR

Bacitracin –ointment for wounds after they are cleaned

Hydrocortisone cream – anti itch cream, rashes or bites

Benadryl both tablets and children’s chewable: only use for allergic reactions

Advil

Tylenol

Tweezers –for splinters

Gloves

Purell

*******please report any incidents that require use of the first aid kit to the Director of Religious Education. Also report items that were used so we can replace them.**

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Appendix B

Universal Precautions from Bloodborne Pathogens

Scope: This document discusses steps to be taken to minimize the likelihood of spread of bloodborne pathogens, and the handling of potentially infectious materials. Other policies to control the spread of infections other than bloodborne pathogens are found in the RE policy manual.

Definitions:

Bloodborne: spread in blood and other bodily fluids

Pathogens: germs that can cause disease

Bloodborne pathogens: for example HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and hepatitis D

Potentially infectious materials: in the case of bloodborne pathogens, and as relevant to injuries that may occur during RE, these materials include blood, and bodily fluids visibly contaminated with blood. With respect to bloodborne pathogens, these materials do not include urine, feces, vomit, tears, or saliva, unless these materials are visibly contaminated with blood.

Universal precautions: Those steps taken to prevent spread of bloodborne pathogens, based on the premise that any person may carry these germs. Universal precautions are steps taken not only for persons known to be infected, or with persons considered at high risk for infections, but steps taken for every person. People can spread infection to others without even showing any symptoms. In addition, people can spread germs without even becoming sick themselves.

Policies

- Surgical, latex-free gloves will be available and kept in a handy location in each classroom. Gloves contaminated with potentially infectious material should be disposed of in a leak proof plastic bag. Wash hands after removing gloves, even if hands are not visibly contaminated.
- Gloves are not required for diaper changes, unless waste is visibly contaminated with blood.
- **Any** injury that results in bleeding or release of other potentially infectious materials requires the use of gloves while rendering first aid.

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Spills of blood or other potentially infectious materials should be cleaned while wearing gloves. All contaminated materials should be placed in a sealed plastic bag. Be careful not to get any of the infectious material in eyes, nose, mouth, or any open sores. Contaminated surfaces should be

cleaned with a fresh solution of 1 tablespoon of household bleach in 1 quart of cool tap water or other disinfectant solution. Solution must remain in contact with contaminated area for a minimum of 10 minutes. Items such as stuffed animals that are not easily contaminated should be discarded.

Biting incidents will be reported to the parent! guardian of each involved party by the DRE. Both families will be advised to seek medical treatment if the bite involved bleeding. Testing the involved children for HIV and hepatitis B may be considered and should be discussed by both parties with their health care providers. A child known to be positive for HIV or hepatitis B and who bites, even after efforts by the DRE and the child's family to change the behavior, should be taken out of the classroom setting until the biting ceases.

- Open wounds with bloody discharge must be covered while in the meetinghouse or while participating in RE activities.
- Teachers should report to the DRE any incident that they believe may have resulted in exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

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Appendix C

Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth Working with Children and Youth

Adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association 1986

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility.

The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential is to be realized. Among the most important areas of growth are those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates and research shows that children, youth and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care.

Therefore, I will not engage in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth. I will not sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional or physical abuse.

I will not be under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or any other drug that would impair my judgment or ability to function effectively while in a leadership role with children or youth.

I acknowledge receipt of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley Safety Policy. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the spirit and purpose of the Code of Ethics and Safety Plan.

Signed

Date _____

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Appendix D

Confidential Limited Access Agreement

The UUCUV Response Team (Minister, Director of Religious Education and President of the Board) has serious concerns about your continued contact with children or adolescents or other vulnerable people in this congregation. In order to protect the vulnerable individuals in our programs from potential risk, to protect you from further suspicion, and to maintain confidentiality, we ask you to abide by this agreement. Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or a confession of guilt. Instead this restriction is a routine safety

precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals. This document will be considered confidential, will be kept in a locked file in the Minister's office, and will be reviewed only by the Response Team.

These guidelines are designed to reduce the risk, to both you and the children, of an incident or accusation.

Avoid all contact with children on congregation property or at congregation-sponsored events.

The restriction includes the following:

o Any verbal or physical contact with children

o Volunteering or chaperoning children (including participation in RE classes, participation in any other organized children's activities, and transporting children in connection with congregation activities).

- Remain in sight of, and with hearing distance of, an adult at all times when children are present on congregation property or at congregational events.

- The congregation must provide a safe environment for any groups that use congregation property. Avoid being unsupervised on congregation property when any activity that children are participating in or attending is taking place.

- Inform a member of the Response Team of any further developments that may influence our concerns about your possible impact on the well being of the children in this congregation.

- Within the confines of the above guidelines, the congregation continues to welcome your participation in Sunday services, Coffee House, committee

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meetings, adult discussion groups, adult social events, and well-supervised intergenerational events.

You may not enter the RE area on Sundays before all children have been dismissed from RE classes.

To the extent possible, the Response Team will respect your privacy and the right to confidentiality. Our prime responsibility, however, is to ensure the safety of the meetinghouse for children. The Response Team is your point of contact should further developments or questions arise.

If you have been convicted of child abuse, you must be under the supervision of a chaperone via parole, probation or state sexual offender program before being allowed to enter congregational property. In addition, you must be in a certified treatment program. The restrictions listed above will apply.

This agreement will be reviewed and renewed annually

I have read the attached guidelines and I agree to abide by them or I will relinquish my participation and membership in this congregation.

Signature

date

Witness

date

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COMPETENCY F: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY AND POLITY

PART I. Overview

The history of Unitarianism and Universalism describes centuries of free and liberal thought. As a child, one of my favorite books was a set of short biographies, including those of Jane Addams and Dorothea Dix. It wasn't until high school that I learned that these heroes were associated with my faith tradition, and it meant a great deal to me. Unitarians and Universalists are people who *do* things, I learned; that's what UU history means to me.

Living in Vermont, we find generations of Universalist history right in our backyard, and it's been a pleasure to visit Hosea Ballou's settled pulpit, the pulpit across the street from our Sunday School, where he did some itinerant preaching, and the Winchester, NH Universalist Heritage Foundation. The stories of Universalism—the message and the people—are what make the history come alive here in northern New England.

UU Polity is a treasure—and an ongoing tension. With ultimate decision-making power exclusively in the hands of individual congregations, nonetheless, all congregations in association have combined resources to create communications, resources and programs. Our tradition of open debate, our skills of appreciative inquiry, and our cultural guide of assuming best intentions means that the discussions not only continue but go deep. We examine ourselves, even as we constantly examine and redefine our faith, and the form of our polity really encourages us to walk the talk.

PART II Experience

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

Course: Chaucer, Bowdoin College, Spring 1984

Relevance:

This glimpse into the unrest which led to the Reformation provided me with insight of the common person's experience of church and rebellion. Many history courses will give dates of events—but Chaucer's writing, well before the Reformation, spoke of disaffection in Europe with the Church.

Courses:

History of the English Novel, Bowdoin College, Fall, 1985

Renaissance Europe, Bowdoin College, Spring 1985

England in the Sixteenth Through Nineteenth Centuries, Bowdoin College, Fall, 1984

Relevance:

These history courses helped me understand the rise of rationalism, deism, and transcendentalism and exposed me to the writings of Locke. Protestantism had opened the door for new ways of thought, and I read with pleasure the historical events and trends which made fertile ground for Unitarian, Universalist, and Transcendentalist thought.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

Description:

Member of Lifespan Religious Education Department: New Hampshire-Vermont District of Unitarian Universalist Societies. Chair of the department & member of the district Board from 2004-2006.

Dates: 2001-2006

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Relevance:

Serving on this committee (it was called a “department” to attract folks who don't like committees) allowed me to see a well run group work from the vision right through to the objectives and next steps of providing support to religious education programs throughout the district. We planned annual conferences, gave the RE Consultant her priorities and oversaw her time and budget.

As chair, I had chance to use those excellent qualities my predecessor had modeled (agendas a week early, absolute adherence to planned time) and was able to have actual RETreats complete with our families, swimming, grilling, and—for the first time in memory—the participation of the District Youth Council representative!

As Board representative, I sat through a bylaws revision, the first phases of consolidation with Northeast District, and the purchase of the historic Winchester, NH church.

These exercises in polity were an education done right by people who care deeply. I feel very

confident in my understanding thus far, with plenty of room to grow.

Part III

Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Using UU History to engage children in their living faith tradition. I use the living history educational modality to introduce historical UU figures as guests to the children's programs at the UUCUV.

Children's Chapel Special Guests:

2001 .Judith Sargent Murray

2002 .Abigail Adams

2003 .Thomas Jefferson

2004 .Hosea Ballou

2005 .Abigail Alcott

2006 .Dorothea Dix

2007 .Olympia Brown

Reflection:

Once a year, I have found a volunteer from our congregation or local community to come in to our monthly Children's Chapels in the persona of a famous historical Unitarian or Universalist. Judith Sargent Murray was portrayed by our minister, the Rev. Dr. Nancy Jay Crumbine, whose main message was for the girls to get the greatest level of education they could. She explained that the idea of equality for women was an issue in the 1700s, and that she was particularly interested in the equality of educational opportunities. She also recounted her experience as a Universalist in a time when citizens were required to support the local Congregational church. Her father and other church leaders took a case to court for the right to give their money to their own church, and she described her excitement when the court found in favor of the Universalists.

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Abigail Adams spoke about the excitement during the early days of our country, and spoke of her involvement in politics and her belief that women's roles in public life could be equal to men's. She let the children know that abolition and women's rights were public issues in the eighteenth century, and that she as a Unitarian sought justice and equality.

The gentleman who portrayed Thomas Jefferson was a local high school history teacher. He answered questions about the document that Jefferson described in his writings as the most important he had ever authored: the Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom. In Unitarian history, this document not only formalizes a break with the old Standing Order, but defines the clear boundary between church and state which the Unitarian movement has guarded and celebrated ever since. He also addressed everyone wearing pants as "young man", admired his portrait on our nickels, marveled that the children were not sitting in the sermon and had their own special church time. By the time snack was served, Mr. Jefferson was swarmed with children asking for his autograph. Our copy of it hangs on my 'fridge.

A graduate student from Dartmouth played the part of Hosea Ballou, and showed the children photos of his home church .our 200 year old sister congregation in Hartland Four Corners, Vermont. He spoke about the Winchester Proclamation of Faith, created in southern New Hampshire in 1803 when he was first settled in Hartland Four Corners. He described for the children the depressing prevailing belief in predestination and damnation, and then the effects that he saw of the saving message of Universalism. After asking the children about what happens to them when they "do a misdeed", he discussed the early-nineteenth-century debate about the purging of sins after death. The children learned his perspective .that everyone is immediately embraced in the Grace of God.

Cynthia Barton, an Alcott scholar, brought her professional one-woman show as Abigail Alcott to Children's Chapel. She taught the children about the Transcendental movement in which her

husband was a leader in informal sitting room discussions. Then she focused on her radical ideas about education. She asked the children as many questions about their education as she answered. She talked about the Temple School and Fruitlands, and emphasized that free expression by children was not tolerated elsewhere, but that she and her husband believed in the “spark of divinity” within each child. She used the Socratic Method with the Sunday scholars, just as she did in her teaching, and voiced her pleasure that their own public school teachers taught in an atmosphere which respects children naming it a Unitarian idea. She also spoke of her family’s and Unitarianism’s passionate involvement in abolition, and over the span of the nineteenth century the turning of the movement to wider work against poverty and for women’s suffrage. Dorothea Dix came to us in the person of a quiet, slender young adult of our congregation. She told them how she met William Ellery Channing as the governess to his children and became a Unitarian when she was encouraged to join the adults’ conversation in the evenings. She said that these conversations led her to work for what she thought was right as a nurse in the Civil War, and then in her great work. She spoke of seeing injustice in the mental asylums and doing everything she could to right it. The children learned about the continued movement of Unitarianism to stand up for those who could not stand up for themselves. Then she asked the children what injustice they saw in the course of their own lives. They spoke of seeing hungry people and people who didn’t have warm enough clothes. They talked about bullies at school and children who had a wide variety of difficulties. In her gentle voice she told them that if they chose just one thing to do at a time about injustice, and did it with all their hearts, they would make a difference.

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I had the privilege of speaking as the Rev. Olympia Brown. I let the children know about the huge Universalist energy behind the women’s suffrage movement. In Unitarian Universalism today, a majority of clergy are women a woman being a minister is a normal idea for the kids and I had to paint a picture of Rev. Brown’s struggles to be admitted to theological school and the reasons behind her desire to vote. After I told my story, the children decorated white ribbons to represent their secret dreams and encourage them.

I’m still hoping that our Rev. Bruce will visit as James Luther Adams, to help the children learn about twentieth century Unitarian theology. At a religious education conference a couple of years ago, I persuaded Dorothy Spoerl (Helen Zidowecki) and Quillen Shin (Pat Heortdoerfer) to speak, and I hope that their travels will bring them to our Sunday School as well.

Each time a historical character has visited the children, something magical happens. The kids respond with warmth and hospitality. They ask cultural questions more often than theological or ethical ones and have a deeper understanding of their own faith tradition.

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Exhibit B: Using covenant as a way of building community and supporting right relationships within the RE program and the congregation.

As an exercise in polity, the children created a covenant with our newly settled minister as part of his installation ceremony. We used discussion and democratic process to create the covenant, and the children took it very seriously.

May 4, 2004

The Covenant Between the Rev. Bruce Johnson and the children of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley on the occasion of Rev. Bruce’s Installation

The children covenant to:

- listen to Bruce’s stories;
- not disturb others when Bruce is talking;
- not hit anyone.

We will be true to our word.
We will help each other.
We will help out Bruce.
Rev Bruce covenants to:
get to church on time
have a story ready for them when it is his turn to tell a story

Reflection

Our theme in Sunday School was “Community, Communion, and Covenant” during 2003-2004, Bruce Johnson’s first year as our settled minister.

Over the course of age-separated classes, children’s chapels, and one-room school house events, we discussed the ideas of covenants with ourselves, with one another, and with God.

Our history as Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists can be explored through the lens of covenant. In this country, the Cambridge Platform of the 1600s defined gathered congregations and began the tradition of American church-covenants. To identify members, select leadership, administrate prudential matters, and share theology, congregations have struggled to articulate covenants ever since.

For his Installation, Bruce very much wanted to have an explicit covenant with the children, and the kids and I spent three Sundays preparing the covenant and our gift to him.

The words of the covenant are mostly the exact words of the children. They recognized that the occasion was serious, and a time to put their learning into action. You can tell from the text that one of the older children knew that it was time to use her most poetic diction, “We will be true to our word.”

The children asked Bruce to promise to get to church on time, which naturally upset him. “Is there a perception that I’m not on time to church?” he asked me when we reviewed the kids’ wishes. The fact was that they were trying to think of the most important, most difficult thing that they could think of for him to promise to do. In the culture of the UUCUV, about half of the families with children arrive between 10:00 and 10:10 .the service begins at 10.

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Being on time to church was an issue in the experience of most of our Sunday Scholars, so to them it was a weighty matter.

Also, their original request was for him to promise to have a story to tell them every time that they saw him. On Sunday mornings, at pot lucks, at the grocery store. Bruce explicitly studies storytelling, and his manner is wonderfully engaging. He re-worked the language of his covenant with them to the text above.

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COMPETENCY G: VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

PART I Overview:

I enjoy my professional ministry as a religious educator .in fact, I get quite a kick out of serving my passion, acting on my compassion, and doing a damned fine job.

Volunteers come to religious education with the same passions, and I’m grateful for the chance to match them up with their and RE’s best interests. In my childhood, the Mommies who taught Sunday School didn’t have paying work filling up their time and energies, and they did have UUWA events and teas with the minister to fill their spiritual wells.

Times have changed. In our new understandings of families, most adults have to work and their access to spiritual fulfillment is limited as well.

I have learned that my role in serving these volunteers is to make it smooth and simple, an enhancement of their own natural inclinations. Sunday School, Family ministry, and Adult Ed volunteers get reminders, tailored lesson plans, supplies delivered to them. The kettle is on and

the coffee stocked for events in our Meeting House; short letters or occasional copies of the sermons will be found on Sunday mornings in our rented spaces; teacher-group worship experiences are available, and links to internet sites which might be of interest in personal spiritual discovery are in my newsletter articles.

Like any congregation of our size, the UUCUV struggles with biting off more vision than its available volunteers can chew. I hope that matching people with passions and saving people precious time is the best way to serve the volunteers whom I adore so much.

PART II Experience

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

Course: Seminar in Special Topics, Dartmouth College, Fall 1989

Relevance:

This Teaching Psychology course led to an investigation of leadership styles and motivational variables. Leaders with vision inspire confidence; micro-managers engender resentment. Leaders who admit their weaknesses and show confidence in their teammates' complementary skills can get best efforts out of those teammates. People want very much to know that their efforts have been useful, part of a coordinated plan. Thanks are always necessary, and can always be modest.

Course: Independent Research, Dartmouth College, Winter 1991

Relevance:

I performed a laboratory experiment concerning mood's influence on behavior.

Through

memories, I manipulated the moods of test subjects. Moods' effects and global, pervasive, and diffuse, and much more subtle than acute emotions. In the end, shifts in mood affected my subjects for more than three times as long as had been predicted; notably, it was a mood of amusement and neutrality which most positively influenced subjects over time

Relevant to my career, I've learned that a cheerful greeting with a human touch and (sometimes amusing) acknowledgement that we're all working together can set volunteers up for hours of general good will and enjoyment of their service.

Structured Learning Experiences

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Experience: Teacher Development Renaissance Module

Date: summer 2006

Offered by: NH/VT District

Led by: Pat Hoertdoerfer, Helen Zidowecki & Liz Strong

Reflection:

In fifteen hours of classroom, small group, and individual work, fellow religious educators and I learned about successful development of volunteer teachers, how to feed their spirits, and traded ideas on ways to acknowledge and support them. In this module, I experienced my first Small Group Ministry and immediately felt the power of this mode of interpersonal connection.

Integration:

Most fun of all, I brought Small Group Ministry home to the UUCUV, and we now have four groups which meet regularly.

Other lessons from the module led me to develop a general path of volunteer development (whether as teachers or anywhere else in the congregation), and to coordinate it with the Membership Committee's Path to Membership. We find the balance between letting folks visit the congregation without obligation and holding expectations of communal action and service. This course helped uphold my belief that RE Committee members have *done their volunteer time* and are not expected to be in the Sunday School classrooms unless that's what is really in their heart. Opening up the choices of committee members to elders of the congregation or to folks

who don't feel they have time to be a "front line" volunteer has gained us people of experience, practicality, and vision on the committee .a big win for everyone.

Experience: Youth Advisor Training

Date: Fall 2004

Offered by: NH/VT District

Led by: Mark Glovin

Reflection:

Mark provided knowledge and group discussion to teach and affirm the "anchors" of youth ministry: Worship, Action, Fun, Learning and Leadership. He related incidents from his experience with youth ministry to help new youth advisors gain confidence and a sound understanding of safety in this work. This was not an approved Chrysalis training, however, and Mark's lack of experience as a teacher or minister compromised the effectiveness of his efforts.

Integration:

Despite the training's shortcomings, it led me to work from time to time with the district youth council as a con advisor and experience the perspective of a volunteer in this ministry. I also became determined to fully integrate the youth variables into our safety policy for the guidance and safety of volunteers.

I use the five anchors as the basis of training my Junior Youth advisor and co-developing a curriculum with her that fits our situation. I understand that another anchor .youth/adult relations . has been added to YRUU wisdom, and I hope to learn more about this in the future.

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Part III .Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Matching volunteers' gifts and interests to tasks

It takes a whole village to run an RE program. I offer these individual items from my calendar with relevant notes in **Bold**.

9/21/2008 .Maroon class .Junior Choir, "Something Told the Wild Geese" with Bess and Elizabeth, **retired professor of Musicology, came on one Sunday to lead the children in learning a song to offer to the congregation.**

10/12/2008 .Green Class .Accessibility Challenge with Kevin **Kevin is a nice curmudgeon who would rather be hiking the Appalachian Trail than sitting still in the service. Kids are not his thing, but he was ecstatic to take these kids out to the nearby trail head to see if it was accessible (kids took skateboards) and to clear brush to make it more so.**

Children followed up with a letter to the town asking for the site's parking to be improved for wheelchair access.

10/19/2008 .Junior Youth .Right of Conscience and Democratic Process with Marion and Frank. **Marion is a retired gal who served for about sixteen years in the New Hampshire House of Representatives. Frank was at the time of that class running for his first seat on the NH House! This is the one-and-only Sunday School day for each of them in this year, but they both were happy to come for 5th Principle day. Frank actually took out his notebook and started taking notes when he realized that these kids have deep concerns and excellent ideas (tidal power generators, for example. He called it his first focus group!)**

11/9/2008 .Green Class .Sacred Dance with Mary Chris. **Mary Chris is an MFA in dance and choreography, a young adult who first came to us when an undergraduate at Dartmouth. She got married in mid-October and immediately from her honeymoon, her med-student husband flew to California to do a rotation. She said, "Help me not freak out for November." I said, "Advent sacred dance." She was on for the whole month.**

Reflection

I learned this skill way back from Patti, an older gal who identified herself at a UUCUV

workshop as “a Universalist”. Interesting, I thought. Such a strong identity, I thought. I had previously asked her about Sunday School volunteering, and she was definitely not interested.

I had chosen “Up, Up and Away” for the elementary Sunday School class for the following year. As I read through that lovely Universalist history curriculum, an idea began tickling.

I approached Patti with “Up, Up, and Away” in hand. I showed her a few illustrations and asked, “Do you think you might be interested?”

I paired Patti with a UU undergraduate (headed for divinity school), and the stuff of legends was born. They used jazz music to illustrate doctrinal freedom; they visited Hosea Ballou’s congregation (our neighbors in Hartland Four Corners, VT) and the meeting house

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in our town where he had preached (now a UCC congregation with strong congregationalist roots). They reenacted the 1848 Seneca Falls conference, complete with a fifth grade girl reading Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s address! The kids from that class are now graduating from high school, but they’ll never forget that class and I will never forget the fire created when opportunity to volunteer meets passion!

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Exhibit B: Developing and leading workshops, trainings, and materials to develop more effective volunteers

I append for your perusal the 2009 RE Teacher Packet which is part of the annual fall training for Sunday School leader volunteers.

Reflection:

This packet does not exist in a vacuum it’s part of a four hour Saturday volunteer development event.

The important thing to note, my friends, is that it’s on a Saturday. Right across the street from the Norwich Farmer’s Market. Our event is an opportunity for me to personally thank the volunteers with fresh pies, local bread and cheese, crisp Vermont apples, and gifts of beautifully dyed wool rovings from Muscle in Your Arm Farm just north of town.

The food is to nourish and nurture them as they will do for our children.

The rovings are a teaching tool. I hand out a double-fistful of wool near the beginning of the session without comment. By the time we reach the topic of learning modalities, I ask my volunteer leaders to take a look at the rovings. Not a one of them has carefully left it by, to await later discussion. The wool has been touched, held, stretched, plied, patted, squeezed... and clearly demonstrates the human need to move, explore, and fidget even when engaged in a quiet listening activity.

The Teacher Packet, by the way, is scheduled to move this summer to an electronic format on the UUCUV’s web site for ease of access by our volunteers.

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Teachers’ Orientation

Warm up Yoga .Lighting the Chalice Within

Bonding & Opening .first steps in a successful Youth Group

What? Logistics, p. 7

So What? Emergencies, p. 8

Now What? Curricula: Change the lesson to suit your style!

Wrap Up

Feast

Dear, dear Friends,

Thank you for leading this class. Through this act of love, you will be leading our children to incorporate our Unitarian Universalist values into their own value system. We all hope that the children will grow up to be just, merciful, enlightened, and interesting fellow-travelers. Good thing we have great teachers with much support from the whole congregation!

From week to week, I might be dashing about asking about attendance and whether you have enough juice. I might forget to say, "Thank you. What can I do to help?" Please forgive me. It's my calling to thank you and my privilege to help you. Let's get ready for an adventure together!

Peace, Sparrow

MISSION:

The UUCUV Religious Education Committee strives to create a safe, secure, and comfortable environment where children are encouraged to question religious and moral values and are provided with the background necessary to build their own life beliefs.

GOALS:

To guide children on an exploration of the Seven Principles, with focus in the winter and spring on the many sources of wisdom from the world's religions and our congregation's identity as a partner church with the UU congregation in Mukhap, India.

To encourage children to incorporate the values of each lesson into their own value system and translate these ideas into actions.

OBJECTIVES:

To have fun!

To reach each child in her or his special learning style; to use storytelling, role playing, music, dance, crafts, games, discussion, and whatever else it takes.

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Useful Contact Information

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Web site: www.nhvt.uua.org

Sparrow F. Alden, Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio page 87 of 146 **Religious Education Leadership Application**

Name:

Snail Mail:

Date of Birth:

Phone #1 & best time to call it: _____

Phone #2 & best time to call it: _____

I would like to join the team for:

_____ Friends (3 years - Kindergarten)

_____ Mellow Maroon Mountains (1st - 6th grades, small motor)

Galloping Green Gazelles (1st - 6th grades, large motor)

_____ Junior Youth (7th - 9th grades)

my own child's Sunday School class

(Child: /

Kindergarten and 1st grade OWL

_____ Junior High OWL

I can't join a teaching team at this time, but I would love to help out:

making Spirit Play stories or similar crafty supplies

leading cooperative games during "One Room Schoothouse" days making a fresh snack for Sunday School once in a while

transporting supplies between the Meeting House and the School transporting Dartmouth students in the month of _____

Signature:

Date:

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Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth

who are in leadership roles with children and youth

Adults and older youth who are in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that those in leadership positions be well qualified to provide the special nurture, care and support that will enable children and youth to develop a positive sense of self and a spirit of independence and responsibility.

The relationship between young people and their leaders must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential is to be realized. There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting children and youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that children, youth and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care; therefore, leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.

RE Volunteer's Statement:

I have read and understand the above statements of position, expectations and actions.

Date:

Printed Name:

Signature:

This Code of Ethics was adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1986.

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Ages & Stages!

Nursery: It's all about play, safety, and the idea that Mamma and Daddy exist even when you can't see them like God.

Preschool: At this age, "faith is caught" like a wildfire. Consistent rituals and consistent adults lead the children to just step into their identity as UUs. Parents need much reassurance and many resources about their abilities to be the primary religious educator.

Preschool tends to attract new students, both for the high quality of our program and because parents feel the call to have a congregation assist them with their children's spiritual development.

Younger Elementary: We are still with "faith is caught" and now they are learning to read! Concrete operations are beginning, and ideas about faith extend outside themselves and their families. How and why to pray are important. Even though the adults have trouble with "Spirit" and "pray" and "spirituality", we can't let their fears hold back these wonderful spiritual beings. Most of this class has a huge and positive history of loving Sunday School.

Older Elementary: "Faith is Taught" the folks are ready for history, for heroes, and simple social outreach. We strive to build up their belief in themselves and their inherent worth and dignity and that of the people around them. God may still be anthropomorphized, but many are growing to a deeper understanding of Spirit.

Junior Youth: A balanced Youth program includes Worship, Action (social or environmental), Fun, Learning, and Leadership Opportunities. Their faith identity is all about the peer group; can I figure out who I am by seeing who my friends are? Faith for many is still a matter of social studies (they love world religions) and some are transitioning to "Faith is Bought" the feeling that certain behaviors (social action, church attendance) will admit them to the church community and the presence of the Spirit. We're just as gentle and loving with them as we are with the six week olds they are just as vulnerable and need just as much love.

Youth We offer these kids a safe Youth Group space on the last Sunday evenings of each month (here's hoping it takes off!). We also strongly encourage participation in the NH/VT district YRUU group.

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Logistics!

- Reminders: I'm going to try like heck to send a beginning-of-the-month email to all volunteers and a phone call on Fridays or Saturdays to the teachers 'on deck' for that Sunday.
- Supplies let Sparrow know by Wednesday night if there's anything strange you'll need me to provide. I will always bring things to your classroom that I think you need for the planned lesson.
- Sunday Morning!

Give yourself time .9:30

Your box is in your classroom or the library

Everyone Begins in the Multipurpose Room

Except Jr. Youth on First Sundays, who prepare Chapel

Children's Message

Children's Chapel in Library on First Sundays .

feel free to join us or not

On Regular Sundays

Everyone will meet in Snack Area and the Preschool and Junior Youth leaders will immediately draw their students away from the group

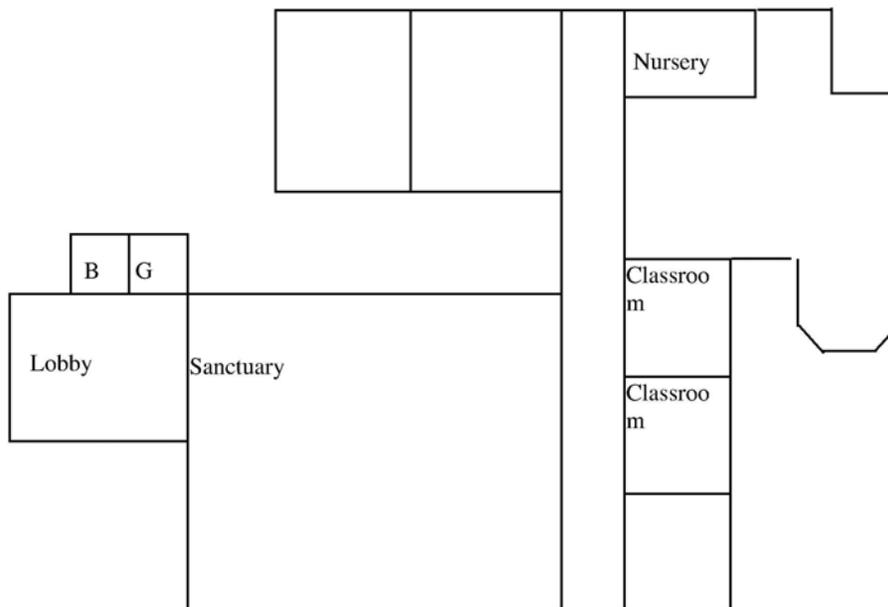
All Elementary kids will Circle Up and do their ritual opening, then kids will choose Mellow or Galloping class for the day.

Always take attendance first and keep it in your pocket!

- Classes will all have **Joys and Concerns**.
- Classes will all end with **Thanks**, and **Feast** in the After-School Room
- Parent Handoff at 11:15
- Clean Up .boxes in the stack by 11:30 .Spirit Play boxes go to the back hallway.
- Attendance and feedback to Sparrow.

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 In emergency, we exit here and
 and go to the White Church

Lobby



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Method	Strengths	Limitations	Preparation & uses
Brainstorming	allows creative thinking for new ideas,	can be unfocused, needs to be limited to	leader selects issue
Ages 6 .adult	encourages full participation because all ideas equally recorded,	5 .7 minutes, people may have difficulty getting away from known reality,	must have some ideas if group needs to be stimulated

	draws on group's knowledge and experience,	if not facilitated well, criticism and evaluation may occur	
	spirit of congeniality is created,		
	one idea can spark off other ideas		
Games	Allows kinesthetic learning	Connection to underlying principles	Leader must structure games to stimulate
Babies age 25		may be lost	consideration of topic
	Out-of-the- school-box experience		
Stories All ages	"The tales our people tell" .connection to wider community	connection to underlying ideas may be lost	Leader must make connection to underlying ideas, themes
	Allows metaphor, allegory	Usually auditory only	Must make connection to our lives
	Allows audience to experience story at their own level		

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Method	Strengths	Limitations	Preparation & uses
Panel of Experts Plan ahead! Ages 6 .adult	allows experts to present different opinions Change of speakers keeps attention	experts may not be good speakers, personalities may overshadow content, subject may not be in logical order	leader coordinates focus of panel, introduces and summarizes, briefs panel Great for variety within the topic, ex BGLTIQ panel in

			OWL
Class Discussion All ages, very careful below age 8	pools ideas and experiences from group, effective after a presentation or experience that needs to be analyzed allows everyone to participate in an active process	Limited to between 4 and 12 people few people can dominate others may not participate is time consuming can get off the track	requires careful planning by leader to guide discussion requires question outline
Small Group Discussion Ages 8 - adult	allows participation of everyone people often more comfortable in small groups can reach group consensus	needs careful thought as to purpose of group groups may get side tracked	prepare specific tasks or questions for group to answer

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Method	Strengths	Limitations	Preparation & uses
Role Playing All ages with proper encouragement	introduces problem situation dramatically provides opportunity for people to assume roles of others and thus appreciate another point of view, allows for exploration of solutions, provides opportunity to practice skills	people may be too self-conscious not appropriate for large groups, people may feel threatened	leader has to define problem situation and roles clearly leader must give very clear instructions
Report-Back Sessions Ages 12 - adult	allows for large group discussion of role plays, case studies, and small group exercise gives people a chance to	can be repetitive if each small group says the same thing	leader has to prepare questions for groups to discuss

	reflect on experience each group takes responsibility for its operation		
Individual Work Ages 6-10 with structure, and to adult with less structure	allows people to think for themselves without being influenced by others individual thoughts can then be shared in large group	can be used only for short period of time	leader has to prepare materials
Guest Speaker All ages with well-prepared guest	personalizes topic, breaks down audience's stereotypes	may not be a good speaker	contact speakers and coordinate introduce & thank speaker appropriately

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(Adapted from the University of Hawaii Faculty Development Committee)

Method	Strengths	Limitations	Preparation & uses
Values Clarification Exercise Ages 10-adult	opportunity to explore values and beliefs allows people to discuss values in a safe environment gives structure to discussion	people may not be honest people may be too self-conscious	leader must carefully prepare exercise must give clear instructions leader must prepare discussion questions
Lecture With Discussion Ages 10-adult Briefer lecture with younger learners	-involves audience at least after the lecture -audience can question, clarify & challenge	quality is limited to quality of questions and discussion	Excellent for presentation of factual material on which to base exploration
Lecture Use only	factual material direct, logical	Learners are passive Engagement is hard to	needs clear introduction and summary

sparingly and with older learners!	manner useful for large groups	gauge communication is one way	should include examples, anecdotes needs time and content limit to be effective
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Emergencies!

First Aid

The big kit is in the Nursery Box. Gloves are in your own box.

If you have *any* questions, send for the parent.

The outdoor first aid kit is kept in the Green box in a belt pouch.

Fire

- In case of fire or fire drill, teachers and students leave their classroom quickly and quietly.
- Teachers retain the attendance record and are last out the door.
- The class walks out the door nearest the grey Episcopal Church and walks there.
- When the entire class is safely in the grey church, the whole class sits down together.
- The “second” adult in each classroom will get the parents to their children
- Children will not be released by the teacher until parents have initialed the attendance sheet.

Earthquake

The word “earthquake” should signal the kids to get in an earthquake-safe position:

under desks

under doorway lintels

under chairs

facing away from glass

Non Accidental **Trauma**

can often be:

symmetrical

of different ages

cigarette bums

“dipping” pattern scald

Report it all to Sparrow as soon as you can without disrupting your class.

Write down exactly what you observed on a dated piece of paper to keep somewhere safe.

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COMPETENCY H: WORSHIP FOR ALL AGES

PART I Overview:

Worship is my comfort zone. I begin and end my days with prayer, I even have a little

Housework Spell, a ritual to change my relationship with my sink full of dishes.

For me, worship is about intentionally experiencing relationship with Spirit. While this relationship can happen immanently and transcendentally at any moment, worship time and place are deliberately set aside.

In fact, I have made Sabbath-keeping a personal spiritual practice, and one which I have preached on to the UUCUV this past summer. Observation of Sabbath is not quite the same as worship, but the underlying principle of setting aside sacred time and place is a powerful one.

Creating worship experiences for others for me will always include multi-sensory input, personal time, community time. While meaningful work often comes out of meaningful worship, I’ve learned to allow “thinking without doing” and “doing without thinking” both as means of

changing consciousness.

In the end, I believe that my approach to and understanding of worship is most guided by the Spirit Play question: “Are you ready to listen for Spirit?”

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PART II Experience

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

Course: Elementary Greek I & II, Bowdoin College, Fall 1982 & Spring 1983

Relevance:

This introduction to Greek alphabet, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary has allowed me to read tiny bits of early Christian writings in the original; more accurately, it has allowed me to keep up marginally when my colleague-minister hauls out his tri-glot Bible. In preparing for worship with the Junior Youth who run Children’s Chapel, I borrow that tri-glot and show them the beautiful scripts of Greek and Hebrew side by side with English. It leads to a discussion of the role of sacred texts and visual and auditory beauty in worship. It also teaches them that the Bible was not written in English, and that Jesus and other teachers spoke languages other than English.

Course: Shakespeare I & II, Bowdoin College, Fall 1983 & Spring 1984

Course: Milton, Bowdoin College, Fall 1984

Relevance:

These three courses gave me glimpses into worship before and during the time of John Locke. Shakespeare’s social commentary about worship and piety show the great upheaval of the Reformation and Counter-reformation. Milton’s works, which I see as a view from within the mind of the worshipper, don’t just show us the Protestant ideal of his time, but publicly- shared internal rage, doubt, and despair.

Course: Hebrew Prophets, Bangor Theological Seminary (audit at the former Hanover, NH branch facility), Winter, 1996

Relevance:

Through this lively seminar with the local Rabbi, I read the books of the prophets with guidance in history and relevant culture. I have much greater access to these works now as resources for my Junior Youth looking for chapel readings.

Structured Learning Experiences

Experience: Meadville-Lombard Winter Institute .The Great Story

Date: 2005

Offered by: Meadville-Lombard

Led by: Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow

Reflection:

Not only did this institute inspire me in my own beloved topic of evolution, ecology, and the future of our beautiful spinning Earth, but I got to see some excellent worship in action. Michael Dowd is a former evangelical preacher who brings those skills of charismatic presentation to his preaching. Their worship ranged from full group to small group, included multimedia materials and kinesthetic components, and appealed to both head and heart. I remember those worship experiences in exquisite detail, with positive emotional response.

Integration:

In worship planning, this example taught me to follow my heart. I’ve gained the courage to include folk singing, prayer, yoga, participatory elements in the Children’s Chapel of the UUCUV: once a month worship for preschool through 8th grade, led by the Junior Youth. I’ve

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encouraged the same Junior Youth to create their own worship materials (typically they offer

poetry and sometimes dance).

I have sometimes to the dismay and sometimes to the delight of adults in the congregation . integrated activities, movement, art, and stories into the Intergenerational worship of the “regular season” of the UUCUV.

Most exciting and most satisfying: during the summer, the UUCUV now offers two worship services on Sunday mornings. The first is open to all (with nursery care provided for parents who need that sacred hour to themselves). It is a Sacred Dance worship service, which I lead with the incredible coaching of a member of our congregation who is a modern dance choreographer.

Experience: Worship Renaissance Module

Date: 2004

Offered by: NH/VT District

Led by: Sylvia Bass-West and Marlene Walker

Reflection:

This renaissance module offered fifteen hours of classroom time examining types of worship, ages and stages of worship experience in human development, and some practical insights into “why humans worship.”

Integration:

These leaders demonstrated how thorough preparation for worship enhances the experience. By their example, I’ve learned to get my orders of service roughed out months in advance. I’ve had the privilege of working with a Music Director who will go to great lengths to find music which will complement the service, and giving her time to choose music has been a boon.

The worship we experienced in the renaissance module had movement components and yet was *always* mobility-accessible. I watched how the leaders accomplished this and have integrated the passing out of acorns, movement of worshippers to groups, and exchange of greetings into the worship events which I have prepared.

Independent/Group Study

Study Topic: Children’s Worship

Date: ongoing periodic topic since 2000

Members: Northern Vermont DRE Cluster

Reflection:

This group of professional DREs has exchanged ideas and enthusiasm for worship events from somber Easter rituals to joyous Day of the Dead celebrations and everything in between.

Integration:

The variety of approaches embodied in Northern Vermont keeps me hopping as I want to try out more and more things. I’ve explored chants and labyrinth work in children’s worship. I have talked through with my fellow DREs the different needs of our groups, and with their help processed my thoughts on private worship and how to encourage it with children.

I am proud of many of the worship traditions I have developed. One of them stands out here:

Memorial Day. Once upon a time, a colleague-minister was fretting over her day-before-Memorial-Day sermon and in working out her thoughts out loud, she proposed that since

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Memorial Day is about heroes, and the legislators who advocate for same-sex-marriage are heroes, she could appropriately honor them in that sermon.

I think I was rendered speechless.

Because of my work within the cluster group and the confidence I had gained in creating worship experiences for children, I created our yearly Memorial Day ritual. It has evolved over time, responding to the character of the group of children participating. The nugget of it, however, is unchanging. We walk to the cemetery. We share what we know about the graves with the flags.

Children individually (with volunteers spreading themselves out) find grave sites marked as veterans' graves. We learn the name of the soldier, sailor, airperson, or marine who served. We say thank you. We come together to talk about our feelings, and we cry if we need to. That's worship: it holds one of the most emotionally difficult things in life in a context and a safe place for exploration and expression in the presence of Spirit.

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Part III

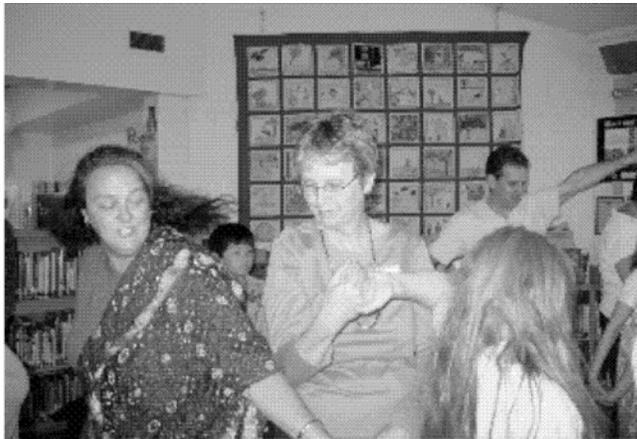
Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Teaching children and youth to create and lead worship services

Reflection: As you can tell from this screenshot of our (electronically delivered) congregational newsletter "The Call", we hold a monthly Children's Chapel, which is the responsibility of the Junior Youth. Given our broad theme of the semester and an order of service, the junior youth select, and often write the components of the chapels and then serve as worship leaders. Their preparation for this responsibility begins with a lesson from the Book of Maccabees, in which Judas Maccabeus and his comrades re-consecrate the temple. We talk about what worship means, how the people in the story made sacred space, and how they want their chapel to be. My work with the Junior Youth is deeply rewarding . worship is a centerpiece of faith tradition to me, and I love watching them discover and explore their potential as the creators of worship.



Sparrow F. Alden, Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio .page 102 of 146 **Exhibit B: Participating on a worship team for a variety of worship experiences.**



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Reflection:

I have mentioned that worship is my comfort zone. From the dedication of the congregation's Meeting House long before I was DRE to the upcoming All Souls Day worship service, I have created multi-sensory worship for all ages. In fact, in this very academic and broadly non-theistic

congregation, my experience as a practicing Wiccan was seen as a qualification for the job, since I could bring a variety of worship resources to the table.

I have experienced congregational reactions from negative to breath-taken positive in my approach to worship, and I continue to try to provide alternatives to the very academically stimulating, Protestant-style worship which is usually found on Sunday mornings at the UUCUV.

These Sacred Dance worship services have been amazing. Not many have participated .about 6 to 12 each time .and I notice something very interesting about the worshippers. These events attract peripheral participants in the UUCUV's life, folks who vanish before the lay-led, seminar-style service just as thoroughly as the folks who come for the lay-led avoid the dance. Our regulars include a transsexual woman who is free to explore her changing body consciousness, a woman recovering from a physically violent past and who rarely speaks, and a teen who does not otherwise participate in the congregation (though his parents are members).

This worship is serving folks who may otherwise be marginalized by the regular "Sunday Services" of the UUCUV (they are not called "worship"). This worship is accomplishing something about Spirit and mind-body wholeness and the boundaries between intensely private work and community.

While I won't over-analyze what may be going on, I'm thrilled to know that I've created a good thing and been a catalyst for Spirit to touch more people in more ways.

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COMPETENCY I: FAMILY MINISTRY & PASTORAL CARE

PART I Overview:

The basic family unit - those people who share a dwelling, resources, and kinship - is the basic religious unit. Values, belief, cosmology, and the practice of tradition begin and end here. Family ministry is the support of families as places of religious education, full of lifelong learners. Family ministry encourages worship, action, bonding, communication, and deeper explorations of what it means to be Unitarian Universalists, and to be spiritual beings.

Pastoral care speaks of any lay or professional person's care of the spirit. A hospital is incomplete without a chaplaincy department. Similarly, my ministry would be incomplete without visiting the families I serve when they're in pain.

Obviously, as religious educators, we are positioned to provide pastoral care to whole families. When my Dad died, my best friend from high school, who lived a thousand miles away, called up the local caterer and had a platter of deli meats and a basket of breads sent over. That's my model for Pastoral care and family ministry. She said, with that gift, "Take care of yourselves. I love you. Nurture yourselves. Let others handle the logistics for a little while."

Sometimes all I can do for a family in need is take my kids and a picnic basket for a play date and lunch; I hope that it speaks volumes.

At other times I can pray with my families.

At other times I can write for them and to them. Or make sure the UUCUV's library shelves are stocked with family books on crisis, health, divorce, incarceration, death, family constellations, struggle, and celebration.

Pastoral care isn't always about crisis management, of course; it's an ongoing relationship to establish the foundations of faith to stand on in times of need. That said, the explicit pastoral care performed by a half-time lay religious educator is often reactive. I hope that my proactive family ministry work creates a good foundation for when pastoral care is called for.

I came to understanding pastoral ministry deeply by walking with a family in the UUCUV when they experienced a tragic loss of a pregnancy. In the local hospital, families who suffer in this way are immediately enveloped by a compassionate, respectful process for grief. I spent many

hours with the family in that hospital room that week. And I received a life-long- lasting lesson. There's an elderly lady in a nearby small town who collects antique lace. Shawls, christening dresses, tablecloths. She has those incredible, tiny, invisible Victorian stitch- work skills. She makes tiny, magnificent, antique lace shrouds, and donates them to the hospital.

When "my" family was ready, two perfect, beautiful shrouds embraced their babies, and this anonymous woman, whom we'll never meet, blessed this family more profoundly than words could ever have done. After all, there are no words for such a tragedy.

Oh.

That's what "ministry" means.

To reach out, heart to heart, to bless beyond words.

And I heard my calling much more clearly.

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PART II Experience

List of Academic Courses

Course: Abnormal Personality, Bowdoin College, Spring 1984

Relevance:

This course gave me the conceptual vocabulary to minister to families which live and grow with mental illness and chronic and acute stressors. The course also provided me with an opportunity to serve as a volunteer intern at the mental health ward of the local hospital and to relate with patients in a "milieu therapy" treatment mode.

Probably the most important learning in this class was the time I asked a patient "What is happening inside?" about her episodes of catatonia. She answered, "When that happens, I am doing everything I possibly can, with every fiber of my being, to stay sane. One more *thing*, like awareness, and I know I'll lose it." Major lesson: the most "crazy-looking" behavior is the individual's attempt to stay sane. I've carried that one with me ever since.

Course: Atypical Child, Bowdoin College, Fall 1984

Relevance:

This course reviewed childhood and adolescent major mental disorders, their presentation, treatments, developmental significance, and outcomes. In my work I have been blessed by being present and able to recommend that parents seek a mental health practitioner. I support my families when young people are struggling, and have some knowledge of the normal course of events with which to provide reassurance.

Course: Clinical Psychology, Bowdoin College, Fall 1985

Relevance:

Our term paper for this senior level course directed us to research the clinical caregivers themselves. I chose to learn and write about clinical pastoral counselors, and enjoyed an interview with my hometown UU minister. The experience for his final paper gave me grounding understanding of clinical pastoral counseling, the Clinical Pastoral Counselor's role on a patient's team, and the place of Clinical Pastoral Education in ministry preparation.

Course: Independent Research, Dartmouth College, Summer 1990

Relevance:

I designed and implemented human experiments on traumatic mood and memory, using volunteers whose mood states had been altered by traumatic events. I learned that recognition of sensory input relevant to the trauma can remain strong while recall of details deteriorated. The important and relevant part of this experience was the preparation and training I underwent in order to interview and test the generous subjects who volunteered. I learned to remove time pressure, to preserve the subject's freedom and control of the experimental situation, and adapt my body language to invite open expression. These skills I use every week in working with my families.

Personal/Life Experience

Experience: Motivational Speaker

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Description: I have been invited by various groups to bring inspiration to young people facing a complex world .guiding high school youth through beginning meditation; addressing leadership and cooperation is sues with the local Girls Scout troop; telling stories of courage, justice, and spirit to children at the local events such as the Earth Day celebration.

Date: 2004 .present

Relevance:

I have a passionate wish to hold up a true mirror to young people struggling in our culture. I believe that they more than any one .and young women in particular .are barraged with messages about their inadequacy, encouraging dependence on media for information about their selves and their values and desires.

It's a kind of pastoral care, being in conversation with youth about themselves. "Trust your instincts," I say, "only you can feel what your true values are. I see you clearly and I see beauty. Claim your power and make your own choices." Perhaps a singular session with a group of young people is only a very light touch of care; and it's a sight better than never having touched them at all.

Experience: Unplug the Christmas Machine

Description: As a volunteer, I presented this workshop as a free lecture sponsored by the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Women's Health Resource Center, based on the work of JO Robinson and Jean Staeheli

Date: November 2003, November 2007

Relevance:

The workshop brought my message to the wider community. I was able to speak on sacred time management, intentional celebration, and granting our spirits priority over cultural expectations in our choices during the holidays.

In making the workshop open to residents of Upper Valley, I participated in fulfilling the UUCUV's mission to exemplify our values in the wider community.

Families who were affected by my work have had, I hope, a richer experience of the holidays and one another.

Related Professional Experience (non-religious education based)

Employer, City & State: Birch Island Books, Plainfield, NH

Dates: 2006 to present

Description:

Alden, Sparrow F. (2007) "Katherine's Gift"

Alden, Sparrow F. (2007) "Junior Brigadoons"

Alden, Sparrow F. (2006) "Abigail and the Sea"

Short stories of liberal values and adventurous children, collected in www.BirchIslandBooks.com

Also, Alden, Sparrow F. (in press) *Nthabi's Star*. Firelight Foundation, Santa Cruz, CA.

Relevance:

I want to touch families through story. I want to create *good* stories, adventure stories, read-again stories, which hold up liberal values to families. I want my heroes and heroines to

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have diverse family constellations, cooperative problem solving skills, and deep trust in their own senses of right and wrong.

By creating these stories, I minister to all the families on the internet! My writing for families and youth is, in fact, the direction I want my ministry to go over the next decade!

Employer, City & State: The Upper Valley Parents' Pages, Hanover, NH

Dates: 2003

Description:

Alden, Sparrow F. (2003) "The Children's Spirit in Summer", part of a series of articles on children's spiritual needs and development.

Relevance:

This article addressed scheduling children during the summer break from school and the realities of two-working-parent families. I encouraged readers to let their kids get muddy, have entire weeks of down time, and know that this is a vital component of spiritual development.

I wrote the article before I read Richard Louv's work, but on reflection I find myself echoing his sentiments about the value of alone-time and family-time spent in nature as experiences which build self-reliance and the development of valid values.

This work allowed me to minister to families outside of the UUCUV, and the following year it was reprinted in a slightly larger newspaper, *Wicked Local Plymouth*.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences

Description:

Alden, Sparrow F. (2004) "Interfaith Families," *Family Matters Task Force Booklet Series Taking it Home: Families and Faith*, Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston, MA.

Date: 2004

Relevance:

As part of the Families and Faith initiative of the UUA, this booklet relates to my work in Family Ministry by carrying my message to the UUA level.

In the booklet, I discuss celebrating families' interfaith identity with acceptance and ongoing communication. I created exercises to engage families in multigenerational dialogue and told stories of families on the journey of interfaith spiritual growth.

As our society becomes increasingly global, couples of differing faith traditions are common, and Unitarian Universalism provides a good spiritual home for families seeking accepting liberal values and doctrinal freedom.

I wrote this booklet to support these families, ministering to them and the complexities of a certain kind of blended-family.

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Part III Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Assessing needs of families and creating the infrastructure and programs to address those needs.

I present these excerpts from the Adult RE brochure from our web site in 2008-2009:

Family RE

Bring brown bag lunch and learn together. Parents and children together will discuss books, fill packages for our partner church, and have fun.

Second Sunday of each month, at noon.

Fun Fridays, all welcome for your favorite games (polyglot Scrabble, anyone?) and good company. Some folks like to bring snacks to share.

First Friday of each month, 5:30 PM

Reflection: These items are short and simple and reflect a huge triumph in the development of the UUCUV. To offer programs, not just events, is amazing. I know that I've been a supporting force in all of this, and you all know as well as I do that it's really the committee with a vision and the people who come together who make it work. Very exciting.

These programs represent the beginning of a change in my work here. All other programs, I am present for. Sunday morning, I'm around to supervise Sunday School, coming of Age, and I'm present during OWL in the background if I'm not teaching. Fun Fridays are the responsibility of two congregational families, and I don't necessarily show up. If I do, it's with my family to play games. How wonderful and odd to see the RE program grow larger than the reach of my hug. How humbling to realize I'm not indispensable.

Exhibit B: Providing resource materials to families in their ongoing religious education:

this page can be found on the UUCUV website.

Hints and Resources for UU Parents

Being your child's primary religious educator is a wonderful, exciting job! There's a huge body of resources to support you, including your Unitarian Universalist community and Director of Religious Education. Here are a few resources to help you promote your children's spiritual journey and UU identity.

Sparrow's First Hints for UU Parents

1. Have a chalice in your home which you light at special times. Light it in silence, or with simple words like, "May our flaming chalice inspire us to see clearly." It's easy to make a chalice from found materials (like an overturned flower pot), or to find beautiful ones for sale.
2. Post the in your home. Choose your family's favorite. Make an effort to articulate when you do or see something which reinforces that principle. For example,

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"Well, we can't fit a crowd of friends into our new hybrid vehicle and take them to the movies with us and I'm feeling proud that we're doing something difficult out of respect for the interconnected web."

3. Attend church or at-home worship every week. Doing it at home can be very simple light the chalice
check in with how everyone is feeling
read a story book that touches the heart
discuss the feelings and values of the story, listening respectfully to everyone sing your family's favorite uplifting song
extinguish your chalice and thank everyone for being present
4. Use religious words.
5. Respond to Big Questions in a way that promotes discussion and wondering instead of giving a definitive answer.
6. Familiarize yourself with the stages of spiritual development, and age-appropriate expectations for your kids.
7. Use worship and reverent behavior any time during the week there's a wonderful, marvelous world of which to be reverent! Reverent behavior varies with age and temperament, of course you might choose to blow kisses to the full moon.
8. Engage in your own Daily Spiritual Practice, modeling for your children that the spiritual journey is a lifelong joy.
9. Encourage your children to choose a tune from our hymn book, Singing the Living Tradition, for their next instrumental piece. Sing your family's favorite hymns in the car.
10. Sit down for meals together as often as you can and say Thanks for the meal. You can hold hands and observe silence, or say "Thanks," or find or create the right words for your family even rotating being the one to speak the blessing.

Sparrow's favorite religious education resources:

Sparrow's Second Hints for UU Parents

UUA's Faithworks

Sacred Time worksheets

UU Kids Fun Pages

Stories full of fun, cooperation, and liberal values

Reflection:

Deciding to go to a web page was a big decision for the UUCUV about 10 years ago. Since then, it has been a window onto our congregation for families who are considering visiting. While we use rented space on Sunday mornings and must therefore keep our stacks of resources to a minimum, the web site feels like a luxurious bit of room in comparison.

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I created the many religious education pages over the course of the summers since that time in response to needs I perceived in the congregation. It's a treat to me to receive requests from fellow DREs to point their parishioners to my pages, particularly the one copied above. And new visitors will often say they like the way I've approached the idea of supporting them as primary religious educators for them as parents.

The frustration which I experience with these pages is that the folks in the congregation I serve are not in the habit of exploring our web site. "What are some guidelines for parents?" "How can I do worship at home?" I direct them to the site. Building up the habit of browsing it is another step which will be enhanced by frequent monthly or more updates to the site. As a half-time DRE, it's all about balance. I'm proud of what I've done, and I look forward to doing more, at a pace that benefits everyone.

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Exhibit C: Providing support and care on an as needed basis to children, youth, and families: A story I wrote in support of families exploring themes of death and the cycles of life, published on BirchIslandBooks.com

The Wild Ride

copyright L. F. S. Alden

October 31, 2004

Not so very long ago, not so very far away, a young ghost named Eilidh drifted about her family's farm.

Eilidh's body had died, and she found she had a great deal to get used to. Eilidh could no longer lift the latch of the wooden kitchen door her fingers slipped right through it! Then she found that she did not actually have to open the door to go outside to play, she slipped right through the door as well! But Eilidh felt cold, too, and could not put on a sweater or feel the warmth from the sunshine or fireplace.

Eilidh generally stayed near her family's farmhouse, walking over the ground she had walked over when she was alive. She accompanied her brother when he filled the woodbox. She walked beside her little sister when Susan fed the goats. "I'm sorry I can't help," she would say, but they couldn't hear.

Although Eilidh could not help her family with chores, still she could enjoy the best thing with them. Eilidh still sat beside her grandmother's rocking chair as evening crept over the farm and listened to Granny tell stories. When Eilidh had first died, Granny had told stories about her, and Eilidh liked to listen to them.

As the weeks passed, and her family worked in the field and swam in the pond, Eilidh noticed that she couldn't quite hear as well as she used to; as if her ears were plugged up from a cold, voices sounded muffled and the noises about the farm were unclear. Eilidh couldn't quite see as clearly as she used to. A thin fog had formed around everything she looked at.

"Let's turn the wheel," her father said very early one summer morning, and the whole family joined him in the field to begin the harvest. That night, when the rest of the family feasted on

fresh corn, Eilidh could not smell or taste it. She sat beside her little sister that evening, though, watching Susan make dollies out of corn husks and red yarn.

The weeks turned to months, and the fog around things grew thicker. Eilidh had to pay very close attention to watch her mother and Susan putting up the jars and jars of ripe tomatoes and fruit preserves. The colors were not nearly as bright as she had remembered, and she had to spend more and more attention on keeping her self above the floor. She had to strain to hear her mother's voice. "This is how we turn the wheel," Mama told Susan, just as she had explained to Eilidh in years past.

Eilidh was becoming afraid. What if the mist grew and grew until she was all alone in a cloud of cold white silence? Eilidh did not want to be alone.

If she were very close to Granny, though, Eilidh could still listen to the stories in the evening.

Granny began again to tell stories about Eilidh herself, and that helped her pay attention. One morning she watched her grandmother in the kitchen mixing, kneading, and baking bread. Granny filled a basket with apples, a small loaf, a piece of cheese wrapped in a napkin, and a few cookies. Susan reached for one of the cookies, and Granny swatted her hand away. "No you don't, Susie, that's for Eilidh!"

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Eilidh didn't know what to make of that. She hadn't been able to eat or even touch anything in a very long time, it seemed. Then she saw her brother carving pumpkins to put on the porch .today was Samhain! Summer's end, that meant, and parading with masks to the neighbors' houses for treats, flickering lights on everyone's front steps, leaving food for the wild riders in the night, and windows shuttered tight well before midnight.

Granny placed that basket on the front porch as Susan and the others came giggling back from their parade. She shooed them all inside, scolding like a mother hen. Then she stood a moment, her knitted shawl pulled about her round shoulders. She spoke softly, so softly that Eilidh could only tell she had spoken by watching her mouth. "Fair travels, Eilidh." Granny turned and stepped into the thick white mist of the house, pulling the heavy wooden door shut behind her. Fair travels. Eilidh had peeked outside the window in years before on Samhain, seeing darkness and hearing rain, but she had never stepped out after Granny or her parents had shut the doors and windows. Fair travels, Granny had said. Eilidh decided to stay on the porch, at least for a while, and see what there was to see.

She was very curious about the basket of food. She knew she could not pick up an apple, but she reached out her hand and tried anyway. As she had guessed, her fingers slipped through the apple .but she *could* grasp the spirit of the apple! Hungrily she bit, and tasted, and ate the good things her Granny had placed in the basket for her.

Suddenly, Eilidh turned. After weeks of hearing things muffled and distant, she heard one clear sound from the forest, growing louder and louder every second. The sound of baying hounds filled her ears, and soon the thunder of hundreds of hoof beats followed behind.

The Wild Ride!

Eilidh felt afraid and excited at the same time! Always before, she and her sister and brothers had hidden under covers, safely behind the shutters on Samhain, sound asleep by midnight .or if they did hear some soft noise in the night, Granny or one of her parents sat nearby to quiet them and keep the windows shut. But now! Now, Eilidh was outdoors, out where she would see the Ride! The hounds raced into view, red-eared dogs running and baying and chasing over hill and farm and countryside. Eilidh saw them as clearly as anything she had ever seen when she was alive .each hound's white fur shining in the moonlight. Then, like some great storm breaking, the riders streamed over the crest of the hill. Horses whose hooves struck sparks, helmeted warriors and long-robed visions and at their head .Eilidh gasped when she saw .the Lord of the Wild.

His wind-paced horse, his long velvet cloak seemed made from the darkness of night itself. In the

moonlight, Eilidh could see, clear as day, a great rack of antlers sprouting from his head like a crown. He stood in the stirrups, encouraging his mount to breakneck speed. His eyes grazed the whole country around, and lit on Eilidh. He looked her straight in the eye, as no one had done since she died, and Eilidh heard his deep voice in her heart. "Come, child."

The riders filled the farmyard now with raucous sound and flashing of silver at their stirrups and belts, riding past her like a flood, past the barn, down toward the village. They were passing her by, and Eilidh felt a strange wrench inside her heart; she wanted very much to ride with them, to feel and see and hear again and to feel strong and well and she wanted to stay with her family.

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Fair travels, Granny had said. And Eilidh stepped out, off her porch, toward the Ride. A woman spotted her, rode close to the house, shifted her weight, and extended a strong arm toward Eilidh. Without even time to say "Goodbye," Eilidh reached up and grasped the hand, solid and strong, and felt herself swung up onto the back of the horse. The horse's body heaved beneath her and the woman before her felt warm as Eilidh held tightly to her middle. She clung desperately and rode like the wind through her village and down the valley. She saw the spirits in the graveyard join the Ride, the spirits of the trees that had fallen, the thousands of animals of field and forest and farm. The Wild Ride raged all night westward over the world.

Hours and hours she rode in thunder and motion, finally seeing a light up ahead toward which the hounds and riders raced. Eilidh turned her face backward, to look her last at the green Earth now white with thick mist. Finally, finally, the horse flashed through a gate, wheeled, and stopped. Eilidh felt herself lifted and set down shakily on the ground by the gate. The horses blew and stamped all around her and she felt the eyes of the riders upon her. Still she stared backward at Earth, and felt cold tears stream down her cheeks.

Silence finally fell. A warm hand touched her shoulder. A deep voice sounded near her ear. "Child," he said, "turn the wheel."

She reached out and touched the mist. She drew it like a curtain across the gateway. And she felt sunshine on her shoulders.

Reflection:

I wrote the Wild Ride as part of my repertoire for supporting families in grief. To document my personal style but not an actual work product, I add this, from my colleague- minister, Rev.

Bruce Johnson:

Sparrow Alden, the director of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley in Norwich, Vermont, has asked me to provide a statement for her files attesting to her experience providing pastoral care in the context of her professional practice. I can say that Sparrow has demonstrated strong capability and interest in this area. I know second-hand of a number of instances where she has provided counsel, support, and a listening ear to members of the

congregation, particularly young families. I have also had first-hand experience of her skills in this area, and will let one incident stand as an example. A young couple in the congregation suffered a late-term

miscarriage -essentially a stillbirth of twins -and Sparrow was already there at the hospital when I arrived, providing tender care under the most difficult of circumstances. She is particularly good at framing pastoral situations in a ritual framework, and using whatever ritual resources are at hand to provide meaning and sustenance at times when words are not enough. As one might expect of a DRE, she particularly excels at listening to children, including teenagers, and recognizes that they, too, are part of the congregational ministry of pastoral care.

Sincerely,

Rev. Bruce Johnson

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It has been my privilege to provide pastoral support to families in crisis .death, divorce .in the course of my ministry with the UUCUV. Active listening is my key tool, of course. I also find myself drawn to ask families or individuals if they would like me to pray for them or with them right in the moment. UUs don't have a lot of certainty about prayer, and more often than not folks ask me to pray with them. I think that I'm modeling something for them, something which seemed mysterious, but in the moment of crisis something which is needed.

There are ways and ways of doing Family Ministry .I love the group events .All Souls' Day celebration, community building... and it's the lay pastoral care to individuals and families which helped me to understand the deep aspects of this work. Lay pastoral care is an explicit part of my contract, and the RE Committee understands that units from my work schedule will be given to families who call.

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COMPETENCY .1: GROUP LEADERSHIP AND SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

PART I Overview:

Every September in Sunday School, I include a discussion of leadership in the various classes as they make their covenant. The children learn about consensus and discuss when it's how we will make decisions. They learn about democracy and majority rule, talk about how that differs from consensus, and when it will be used. They also learn about benevolent dictatorship, that their classroom leader is sometimes in that role, and when .such as during fire drills.

Group Leadership is a fluid and dynamic thing when our Unitarian Universalist principles are in action. Developing leaders at every age is that part of congregational life which ensures our longevity as a movement.

I had the privilege for four years of participating in a covenant group of the CLF. The structure and freedom of the small group ministry model provides a place of intimacy within our congregations. The introduction to one another .and to trusting one another .is made possible by the structure. As the group matures, the structure provides the framework for deep listening, caring responsiveness, and the very best of community.

PART II Experience

Academic Courses

Course: Independent Research, Dartmouth College, Fall 1989

Relevance:

Using a small group of undergraduates in a discussion group as my laboratory, I made qualitative and quantitative observations of the patterns of leadership, followership, conflict and conciliation in the group. Learning to observe and identify these behaviors gave me skills for ministering to small groups, including classes, committees, chalice circles, and families.

Independent/Group Study

Study Topic: Warrior ethos

Date: ongoing since 1995

Reflection:

As a police spouse, this topic caught my interest many years ago. As a religious educator with two military families in my congregation and a generation of potential future combatants in my Sunday School, my study has only intensified. My study of the special needs of military and police spiritual development includes the work of Richard Heckler, *In Search of the Warrior Spirit* (Blue Snake Books, 2007).

Heckler Sensei writes about his teaching experience with military personnel. He has brought the loving philosophy of aikido to the training of Special Forces teams in an integrated program to help the soldiers know themselves as warriors, upheld by a code of honor even in the madness of war. A mindful approach as taught by Heckler for the past fifteen years has helped soldiers in the

line of fire keep their humanity while intensifying their martial skills. **Integration in Work:** In working with young people, I have striven to integrate the basic idea of a code of honor. From talking with veterans, reading research in the field of PTSD, and Heckler Sensei's work, I know that a personal code is very important to the health of a warrior's spirit. When Coming of Age candidates work on their credos with mentors, I suggest a parallel exercise: can you develop a personal code of honor .guidelines for behavior .which integrates

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with your credo and your family's values. It can be very satisfying work for young people and the beginning of developing their own anchor in potential future storms.

Related Professional Experience/Work (non-religious education based)

Experience: Granite State College, Lebanon, NH

Dates: 1992 .1997

Description:

As an instructor for a course called Society and the Individual, I opened my students experience to patterns of leadership and participation in groups, relationship patterns, and group behavior. The course particularly focused on the tension between group membership and individual expression.

Reflection:

Of course, teaching content always strengthens one's personal knowledge. Since becoming a religious educator, I have had a close view of the leadership of the congregation I serve and the effects of that leadership on the welfare of the group. In 2002, we had a situation in which the Board president resigned; not only was I able to see where the congregation would benefit most from my support, I could keep myself from being triangulated by the players in the drama. My work on group membership versus individual expression has been invaluable to my work with youth, supporting their development toward being vital members of the UU world with personal integrity.

Part III Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

Exhibit A: Developing leadership within the RE Committee

This screenshot from the UUCUV's web site demonstrates an important paradigm shift in how the Religious Education committee's leadership works:

Sparrow F. Alden, Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio .page 117 of 146 And this copied from the RE Committee Handbook:

Religious Education Committee Chair:

- builds a team by inviting appropriate UUCUV community members to join the committee
- calls monthly meetings
- sets agenda in consultation with the DRE
- chairs monthly meetings
- represents RE in bi-monthly Committee Council meetings, or appoints a representative
- is available to the DRE to consult in challenging situations

Reflection

While the text of this web page is a matter for a different competency, the interesting note is that it is signed by two RE Chairs. For a congregation of 150 members, two chairs are not needed to handle the job. Rather, this represent a large step in RE Committee

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Evolution. Our chairs serve *overlapping* three year terms: one year learning the job from the other chair, one year solo, and one year explicitly training the new chair.

When I began as DRE in 1999, there was no committee description or charge, simply a line in the by-laws that the committee would exist. They had developed a statement of mission in the previous decade. Committee chairs did not even have a calendar of annual responsibilities, let alone a job description, and the Nominating Committee asked people who were unprepared to fill the chair without any information as to what the job entailed.

Over the following 10 years, I have worked to get job descriptions which are reviewed annually and provided to the (re-named and revised) Leadership Development Committee. This work has been one of my most significant contributions to leadership development within the UUCUV. All I can say is that with more-deeply-invested leadership - more deeply prepared - my job is much easier than it used to be. I no longer have to remind the chair to call the meetings, supply the agenda, or write my evaluations. I develop a relationship as a consultant with an informed and prepared employer, and it is *sweet*.

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Exhibit B: Undertaking training as a Small Group Ministry Facilitator through the CLF included my developing the SGM session for use in my covenant group:

What's in a Name?

Opening Reading:

The Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,
It isn't just one of your holiday games;
You may think at first I'm as mad as a hatter
When I tell you, a cat must have THREE DIFFERENT NAMES.
First of all, there's the name that the family use daily,
Such as Peter, Augustus, Alonzo or James,
Such as Victor or Jonathan, George or Bill Bailey .
All of them sensible everyday names.
There are fancier names if you think they sound sweeter,
Some for the gentlemen, some for the dames:
Such as Plato, Admetus, Electra, Demeter .
But all of them sensible everyday names.
But I tell you, a cat needs a name that's particular,
A name that's peculiar, and more dignified,
Else how can he keep his tail perpendicular,
Or spread out his whiskers, or cherish his pride?
Of names of this kind, I can give you a quorum,
Such as Munkustrap, Quaxo, or Coricopat,
Such as Bombalurina, or else Jellylorum .
Names that never belong to more than one cat.
But above and beyond there's still one name left over,
And that is the name that you never will guess;
The name that no human research can discover .
But THE CAT HIMSELF KNOWS, and will never confess.
When you notice a cat in profound meditation,
The reason, I tell you, is always the same:
His mind is engaged in a rapt contemplation
Of the thought, of the thought, of the thought of his name:
His ineffable effable

Effanineffable

Deep and inscrutable singular Name.

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T.S. Eliot (from "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats")

Intro: After our check-in, we will consider our names .past, present, and future

Check-In: Please share yourself with us!

How have you been?

And what have you been doing?

What book, person, event, weather, sight, and experience has moved you since our last session?

Reflect: What is your name .your full name, with all attendant nicknames, maiden names, ex-married names, saints' names, or changed names that you'd care to reveal?

What meaning do any of the elements of your name carry for you .from association, from family, or from traditional meaning and translation? How did you come by your name?

Discussion: Have you ever changed your name or considered it? Did that change accompany a change in your life situation?

If you were lost in a crowd of strangers, what name would, upon hearing it, snap your head around knowing that it was directed at you?

What name do you call out in extremis, and what Spirit or person does that name signify for you?

Likes and Wishes: Please share yourselves again. Express what you like about yourself and one another and this session; express your wishes for yourself, each other, this group .and please include ways I can improve this session's materials so I may use it to even better effect elsewhere!

Closing words: Call me by my name

Call me in my wholeness

Seek all of me, complex, easygoing, difficult

Dance with me if you can

Walk with me if you can

Or if you cannot, fly with me a little way

Call me by my name, in my wholeness

And I will call you.

LFSAlden

Reflection:

As a member of the MFuller Covenant Group of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, I enjoyed four years of rich sharing and meaningful community. When our facilitator took a month off for respite every now and then, I served as one of her substitutes.

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Being facilitator has given me the chance to listen in a different way .in a way that speaks less. I had the opportunity .and took it .to create a new covenant session. I addressed the question of Names, and learned deeply from the covenant group members.

As a Small Group Ministry leader .and as the DRE supporting the Chalice Circle program of the UUCUV .I hold in tension the old dilemma: how to minister to the group from within its membership? How to do so from without it? Small group ministry allows deep work on consensus building, shared leadership, and collective responsibility. Individual personality will always show up in who speaks more, who less, who tries to rescue the group, who speaks as Devil's Advocate; the covenant of Small Group Ministry assures, however, that these roles are flexible .people have the opportunity to try on a new role, a new paradigm for personal interaction, and expand their repertoire.

Small Group work can be taken as a microcosm of the congregation in many ways. I consider it a training ground for responsible interaction, and a way to help established leaders take a back seat and new leaders emerge.

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COMPETENCY K: LEARNING THEORIES

PART I Overview:

Well, bless the learning theorists. They have a job not unlike the theologians .to capture an enormously complex, dynamic, developing concept in words.

My understanding of learning theory is founded on the function and structure of neuroscience and Behaviorism and the whole-learner, experience-based learning theories of Connectivity and the work of Maria Montessori.

Perhaps the biggest recent influence on my understanding of learning is my growing understanding of multiple intelligences, multiple learning modalities, and multiple personality paradigms (example, the Myers-Briggs personality paradigms).

We are brought, perhaps, to Sparrow's Learning Theory.

I believe that human learners are the best agents of their own education.

I believe that we learn when we are physically and emotionally stable.

I believe that our brains and neurons and neurotransmitters perform an infinitely complex dance which creates a multi-dimensional network of connections between perception, memory, cognition, skill, and relationship.

I believe that our genetic inheritance of learning skills is as important as our nutrition, our parents, and our learning environment.

I believe that a rich, Montessori-like environment which appeals to many senses permits rich learning .allowing many different learners multiple pathways to understanding, and deeper understanding as a result.

I believe that a good walk and a good sleep are integral to high-quality learning and problem solving. The mind/brain/body wholeness which I observe in the field demands this belief .the beautiful complexity of learning defies theorizing and demands experience.

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PART II Experience

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

Course: Cognition (Fall 1984, Bowdoin College)

Relevance:

I studied theories of learning as well as recent research in brain mapping and problem solving. This course had a strong reading list of experimental research. I learned the difference between research in the fields of education and cognitive psychology, the struggle for balance between qualitative and quantitative data.

This course introduced the idea of the neural net (this was in the pre-internet days!), and the strength of learning which is connected cognitively to several different experiences. This concept of multi-sensory and interdisciplinary learning is a strong part of the curriculum development which I do now in my religious education program.

Course: Introduction to Psychobiology (Fall 1984, Bowdoin College)

Relevance:

This course introduced me to the interplay of neurological function, neurotransmitters and their imbalances, and hormones' effects on neurochemistry in perception and behavior. The principles of learning are founded on the function and structure of neurobiology; the opportunity to test neurons' electrical conductivity and dissect brain matter (*rattus norvegicus*) in the lab were invaluable in my understanding of learning

Course: Psychology Independent Study I & II, Bowdoin College, Fall 1985 & Spring 1986

Relevance:

I designed and implemented a study of the role of assumptions in cognitive error. For example, in our culture, many folks make an assumption when they hear and cannot solve this problem:

A boy and his father were in an automobile accident. The father died. The son was rushed to the emergency operating room where the surgeon said, "I cannot operate, this is my son." How can this be?

My research tested the theory that people can learn to think outside the box not only on a case by case basis, but as an overall strategy of problem solving. Modeling and practice were the learning modalities which proved the best at overcoming cultural assumptions.

Modeling and practice. And so in any relevant Sunday School lesson on *ARIAOIMC*, or on any topic which includes a story I add in assumption-busting strategies "What can you tell about this character? Do you *know* that from the story? Do you guess that from clues? Did that idea come from your own head or your experience?"

Course: Proseminar, Dartmouth College, Fall 1989

Relevance:

This graduate course on the mechanics of learning took a macro view of human learning theories, including Cognitivism, Constructivism and the Sudbury model of learning. We touched on multiple intelligences and the corresponding multiple learning modalities, a topic into which I delved more deeply in independent study.

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While the course did not address instruction, it helped me to found the lessons and learning experiences which I create with a philosophy of learners as agents of their own education, with broad background, a carefully created pattern of interconnected experiences, and opportunity for deep work.

Course: Proseminar, Dartmouth College, Winter, 1990

Relevance:

This graduate course on cognition discussed cognitive neuroscience and the emerging field on Connectivity learning, as modeled by computer networks. We studied memory and its fluidity. The course also addressed and allowed research into multiple intelligence and multiple learning modalities.

Most education experiences at the UUCUV have been created by me, cobbled together from my understanding of learning theory and the vast number of RE resources available. This course is an integral part of my body of knowledge contributing to these efforts.

Course: Independent Research, Dartmouth College, Winter 1990 & Spring 1990

Relevance:

This project explored the development of mood and memory While emotions are brief, focused, and measurable by biometric means, moods are long-lasting affect with global, pervasive and diffuse effects.

One fascinating result from my research is the understanding that mood is elevated for the longest time by recollection not of happy memories, but of affectively neutral memories. Good mood is the result of neutral, safe, all-systems-go stability. In my work, I remember to provide a safe, predictable environment for learning. The stably elevated moods of subjects allowed them to make more detailed recollections.

Course: Independent Research, Dartmouth College, Fall 1990

Relevance:

In this research project I explored how human subjects different moods cycle. I examined the change over the course of each day of the moods of my subjects on two continua and their accuracy with Fermi-like math problems.

I observed a natural dip in the intensity levels of moods for most subjects about eight hours after they woke a “Siesta Effect” which corresponded with a decrease in their accuracy with the math problems. I’ve learned that intense learning events should never be scheduled for the lunch and after-lunch hours, and I keep early afternoon children’s programming to constructive play or story-time experiences.

Also, a strong “Larks and Owls Effect” could be found for each subject positively valenced mood was strongest in either the first six or last six hours of wakefulness, almost never during both. The positive affect correlated strongly with accuracy with the problems.

By taking into account the strong reasoning powers of Larks in the morning, when most children’s programs run at UUCUV, I design programs and experiences to exercise and strengthen our kids reasoning skills. I would really be delighted to have the opportunity some time to examine what proportion of children have their best times during morning or evening.

Course: Tutorial Reading, Dartmouth College, Fall 1990

Relevance:

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My tutorial reading in human Biological Cycles brought me to understanding the infradian, circadian, and ultradian biological functions which effect learning.

The Basic Rest-Activity Cycle .90 minutes in adults, but 45 minutes in small children, increasing with the mass of the child is the basic unit of time in learning. In each of these cycles, children go through a rest phase and a physically active phase. The trick is to capture this energetic cycle and use it to advantage.

Since at IOAM on Sundays the children have an enforced time of sitting quietly in the adult church, I make sure that by 25 past, they are moving, stretching, doing yoga, or physically exploring, in order to take advantage of their energy.

Course: Seminar, Dartmouth College, Spring 1991

Relevance:

This graduate course on Memory examined the fluidity of memory over time and different types of memory. We discussed witness memory, which relates to my work with Elementary through adult learners and the spiritual practices of Witness and Nonviolent Resistance; retention of skills, which relates to my work with learners and their “spiritual toolbox” (they’re called “practices” for a reason); and factual memory which relates in part to developing learning experiences about UU History and Identity.

Personal/Life Experience

Description: I have lived these 45 years as a kinesthetic learner in a culture designed for verbal learning. I have successfully navigated the education system to a certain point by constantly translating verbal instruction .lectures, readings, writing into visceral learning.

Date: 1964 .present

Relevance:

A minority learning style is not a learning disability, but it surely gives me insight into the special needs of some of the learners in my congregation. I have learned to present material in at least two modalities at any one time. In particular, I know that a worthwhile learning experience is a process which the learner undertakes. The best I can do is to lay out the clues .this experiment, this story, this thought problem, this craft project .to allow learners to find their own goals and their own way to them.

Related Professional Experience/Work (non-religious education based)

Employer, City & State: Dresden School District, Hanover, NH

Date: 1997

Employer, City & State: Orford School District, Oxford, NH

Date:1995 .1997

Employer, City & State: The Orme School, Mayer, AZ

Date:1986- 1988

Description: Secondary Classroom Teacher

Relevance:

I have been a secondary classroom teacher of math, science, and English in these three different venues. I have taken these opportunities to experiment with different teaching methods

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and have come to the conclusion that the Behaviorist ideas about operant and classical conditioning are foundational as far as the function of human learning .and they don't go far enough. I see Connectivity as the most relevant theory to my work in the secondary classroom and in the religious education program .learning may take more time and effort, but always goes deeper and broader when it encompasses a range of experiences and makes a number of personal connections with the learners' lives. The learning and development of relationships may be the most crucial work we do in religious education.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

Description: Development of the Active/Quiet Elementary choice model of Sunday School

Date: 2006 .2009

Relevance:

This professional work is the pinnacle of my achievement in Sunday School program development. In part III, I include as exhibit A an example of the program's implementation. All people learn differently. The theory of multiple intelligences of Howard Gardner and advanced by Thomas Armstrong, includes types of learning which are addressed in most public schools: linguistic and logical-mathematical. But Sunday School is not public academic school. I believe it is the place where the whole child can shine, and I have developed a simple system in our Sunday School for allowing kids to be where they are and shine with their own light. About half the time on Sunday mornings, Elementary aged children at the UUCUV have a choice of classes to join .the Galloping Green Gazelles and the Mellow Maroon Mountains. As you can tell, the Green Gazelles are all about bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences; the Maroon Mountains' classes feed into spatial and musical and intrapersonal intelligences. I have written articles about this program (which have yet to be included in any UUA or district publications), and I believe that this model is a powerful tool for religious education learning.

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Part III .Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

**Exhibit A: Using learning theory to evaluate curriculum and adapt the RE program
Galloping Green Gazelles and Mellow Maroon Mountains**

First Principle Sunday

Circle Up

Chalice Lighting .have one child bring forward the chalice and set the cloth flame inside it

Chalice Lighting words .have one child choose one of these prayers

*We light the light of truth, the warmth of friendship and the flame of commitment.

*We light this chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism

This is the church of the open mind.

This is the church of the loving heart.

This is the church of the helping hands.

*We are the fire,

We are the light,

We are the warmth,
We are the hope of the world
Yoga Chalice Lighting
Mountain Pose
Tree Pose

return to Mountain Pose and add Bear Breathing

One leader passes the small Earth ball and invites children to go around counter clockwise and share any joys and concerns.

Leader please take attendance

Leader please coach the kids to tell the Children's Story back to you.

Review the covenant, made by their work last week. Offer folks chance to sign if they haven't.

Green Leader says: Sometimes we learn by looking outward, experiencing the world with all our senses and using our bodies to do what we learn. If this is how you're feeling today, please join the Green class.

Maroon Leader says: Sometimes we learn by looking inward, listening to the quiet voice inside ourselves, and being peaceful. If this is how you're feeling today, please join the Maroon class.

When all children have chosen, wave to the other class, and away you go!

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Green class assignment: Each of us is different, Interesting, and worthy of respect! Let's learn about the different places we live as a way to get to know each other.

One quick go-around with what town they live in perhaps Teacher can put down the major landmarks (OK, this line in the carpet is the Connecticut River, here are Hanover and Lebanon, here are Norwich and White River Junction!) That might just be enough to give kids enough who want to just be in the right town a grounding, while very detail oriented folks may well give you an imitation of going over the hills and windy roads to her house...

I am sure that if they are about to get bogged down, you'll be able to let them know that they've done enough to show us where it is.

Using their bodies or anything else they can find, make a map of the Upper Valley, including where they live. Each kid needs to describe the unique neighborhood in which they live. (Kids may need others' help to mime parts of their own house or members of their family when it's their turn).

As each home/location is shown, Teacher reminds what the principle says and asks something like We want to really respect your home and know a little about it what's special and unique about your home? it can be the house itself or the people or something they do and Teacher could teach the class to applaud in sign language to show their support of their friend's cool home!

Then, Upper Valley Twister. Leader uses any verb she or he wishes and the kids need to get to each other's neighborhoods on the map (remembering where things were as they move around). For example: Hop on one foot to Peter's house.

Verbs:

Hop on one foot. Run Crab walk Walk backward

Frog hop Cartwheel Somersault Spin

Skip Fly Swim Hop on the other foot

Race walk Jog Pretzel walk Jog backward

Crawl Slither.

Extension Activity if needed: use materials to make a model of a special place your home, your favorite canoeing spot, a place you will live in the future.

Extension Activity if needed:

Ask what makes a home feel good to you? How do you make a home welcoming? What can you

know about a person from seeing their home? How do you treat someone else's home respectfully?

Do the kids know about Faerie Houses? Built out in hidden places with only found natural materials, these child-built homes invite faeries to live. Pick nothing that is still living, use nothing that is made by humans. Keep the result hidden away.

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Extension Activity if needed:

The Big Orange Splot by Daniel Pinkwater, other books on different houses around the world. Assemble and go down to Snack Area for snack

Maroon class assignment: Spirit Play, Belinda's Bouquet the Red Promise

Reflection:

I have Dads volunteering.

I have curmudgeons volunteering (clearing the hiking trails for wheelchair accessibility was a *huge* hit).

I have a very gentle, worried young learner who is more confident coming to Sunday School knowing that she will have a choice of activities.

I have more bouncy boys attending than ever before, and at older ages than ever before!

I have classes running way over time because the kids are engaged in the way that is best for them.

I and the RE Committee worried that this experiment would result in boys sorting themselves into Green and girls into Maroon. We worried that sometimes one class would be empty. We worried about many things. We decided to trust the kids. Each of the strange things that could have happened has happened, maybe once or twice, and it has been an overall out-of-the-park hit. Last year? All boys in the chorus one month!

As one Dad said, "You've made it so my kid can be a good kid!"

This one is my crowning achievement. More kids get more good RE.

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Exhibit B: Addressing learning theories in teacher training and parent workshops

The Spirit Play materials developed by Nita Penfold, Bev Leute Bruce, and Ralph Roberts include a wonderful teaching on the Montessori method based on a constructivist perspective on learning theory. While I can't copy and paste their words here, they are part of our Spirit Play Teacher packet. I invite you to reflect on the holistic philosophy of teacher as the guide to the environment of carefully prepared and beautiful learning materials. The Spirit Play picture included here was developed by our congregation for our children a story of how we came to build the Spirit in Nature Path behind our farmhouse. The people you see made of chenille stems are the Green Sanctuary Committee embraced by the Board (red) and them embraced by the congregation (tan).

Reflection: While operant conditioning worked very well when training my dog (I trained her to ring a bell to go out and she trained me to open the door when she rang a bell), I embrace a rich, more constructivist perspective to human learning theory. The dance between prior knowledge, skills and the environment including teacher guidance creates the complex and idiosyncratic process which is learning. This is why I recommend Spirit Play to the RE Committee; it addresses the whole learning process.



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And while theories are lovely things, I'm a roll-up-my-sleeves kind of gal. I need to illustrate by the example of a case. This doesn't speak to Spirit Play directly, but to the larger issue of learning as a construction of past experience, acquired skills and knowledge, and environment-as-curriculum.

Little C was a slightly immature preschooler; we made sure he had a safe place and one or the other of his parents chose to be always nearby. As time went on, his behavior became more and more physically aggressive (usually toward his mother) and remained unsocial. He was not diagnosed to my knowledge and was at age-grade-level in public school. I learned that his parents encouraged him to engage in video games of the highest violence ratings "To get it out of his system." This cartoon violence was a large part of this child's environment, hours every day, and I harbor suspicion that he witnessed verbally abusive behavior in person.

In the next few months, I passed on what I had learned to his public school nurse to use as she saw fit, and I gave articles about violence, videos, exercise, and healthy competition to all the parents in that class. The class curriculum turned to the second principle of justice, equity, and compassion... and mysteriously stayed there for the rest of the year. The teacher of his Sunday School class used the In Our Hands curriculum, dressed in the guise of Hogwarts, the school from J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books, and that hook began to draw C into participating.

All we could do is change a tiny portion of his environment and pray for him. The next fall, for whatever reason, at age 10, he spoke the first complete sentence I had ever heard out of him. He engaged, albeit awkwardly, in class activities and some peer conversations.

C had to construct his mode of healthy social behavior later than most children do, and therefore I could *see* the process as it unfolded. He had experience of teacher correction, the role modeling of other kids, the (I hope) changing behavior of his parents, the observed consequences of his behavior, all as tools to counteract the video games and all his previously learned behavior. C is

in 8th grade now. We don't see him in church any more, but do see his parents once in a while, one at a time. I'm still praying for him.

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COMPETENCY L: STEWARDSHIP

PART I Overview:

Stewardship .the responsible husbanding of resources .is how I live my life. I am a volunteer environmental educator in my children's school, I am co-owner/builder of a passive solar straw-bale cabin, my family is the steward of 56 acres of wildlife corridor near the Connecticut River. In the narrow sense, Stewardship is about the monetary resources which keep the church thriving as a business and as an agent of philanthropy. In the broader sense, it is about helping volunteer teachers to be Stewards of their class, helping committee members to be Stewards of the teachers, helping the Board to be Stewards of the committees and the church-whole that has been entrusted to their care.

When I first became DRE, someone asked me to participate as a canvasser in the annual pledge drive of the UUCUV. The minister spoke up. "No," she said, "The DRE never canvasses."

It took me a little while to understand why. So much of what I do, of how most members of the congregation interact with me, involves offering opportunities for them to become Stewards of the RE program .asking for monetary support as well would complicate my relationships with them and could certainly be done badly, especially by a brand-new DRE!

In my position, it has been my pleasure to steward our resources of volunteer time and love. And in nine years, it has also been my pleasure to creatively keep the RE expenses under our budget every year, which has grown (outside my salary) from less than \$1000 in 2000 to approximately \$3,000 in 2008.

On one hand, this is simple bookkeeping. On the other, it's an expression of gratitude for the resources with which the members and friends of the UUCUV have been able to bless their mission.

PART II Experience

Structured Learning Experiences

Learning Experience: Safe Congregations Workshop: Fiduciary Responsibility

Date completed: February 11, 2006

Offered by: NH/VT District

Led by: District Treasurer Quentin Blame, Esq. (keynote speaker)

Reflection:

The District Treasurer Quentin Blame spoke eloquently on and answered questions about Board members' fiduciary responsibility to perform those duties one must to uphold the trust placed in them, stepping outside the role of individual congregation member.

For me, he lifted the safety of the physical plant and the safety of the money entrusted to the congregation to a level of importance with the physical and emotional safety of children and the importance of a right relations policy and couched them all in terms of ministry and stewardship. I gained a perspective and a new enthusiasm for this work taken as a whole.

Integration:

Congregations were encouraged to bring teams to this workshop, and did that ever pay off! Newly understood in terms of responsible stewardship, the task of creating a safety policy

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was somehow no longer daunting and mysterious to the congregation, and became part of the Strategic Plan.

Our speaker's perspective has allowed me to approach all potential volunteers with a vocabulary

of stewardship a vocabulary which this Green Sanctuary embraces.

I think most important, I have had chance to remember what the volunteers in my programs do to fulfill their roles .they give up some part of their position *within* the congregational community in order to be part of the structure which *holds* the community. I've added twice-yearly volunteer lunches to our calendar as well as increasing the number of worship experiences outside of Sunday School to keep the precious well of their spirits filled.

Independent/Group Study

Study Topic: Sustainable Architecture, Sustainable Household Lifestyle

Dates: ongoing since 1997

Members: Joshua M. Alden and myself

Reflection:

From the beginning of our marriage, my spouse and I have had an evolving mission statement for our household. We've intentionally studied green architecture, mindful parenting, and prudent fiscal practice.

We've read together. Books like Dominguez and Robin's *Your Money or Your Life*, Joseph Jenkins' *The Humanure Handbook: A Guide to Composting Human Manure*, and Lacinski and Bergeron's *Serious Straw Bale: A Home Construction Guide for All Climates* fill the shelves in our bathroom.

Integration:

I've learned individual tactics for living lightly on the Earth, and more importantly, I have learned broad strategies and philosophies which I have shared with the children in the UUCUV Sunday School when I write their Green Sanctuary lessons:

Being happy with what one has;

Knowing that oneself is inherently worthy and dignified .beautiful, smart, strong .as resistance education against the media message that one is worthless until one surrenders power and resources to the advertisers;

We privileged humans have an obligation to speak for those who have no voice, whether human or nonhuman, and to see that all have a fair share of Earth's resources;

Snow is a way better toy than any money can buy.

Personal/Life Experience

Experience: Sustainable Architecture Owner/Builder/Homemaker: Taigh Connlaich, a straw-bale, passive-solar cabin on a rural conservation wildlife corridor.

Dates: 1997 to present

Relevance:

As someone who lives in a 600 square foot home built of straw bales and without a flush toilet, I can speak with authority to the complexity of "the simple life". I imbue my Green Sanctuary teachings at every level with the voice of one who has worked hard to live out the value of responsible stewardship and who has found it deeply satisfying.

Please enjoy a view of Taigh Connlaich under the winter snows:

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Experience: Board of Directors, Birch Island Camp Company, Inc. As a director of this board, I helped oversee the prudential affairs of this company of summer-camp owners. One annual meeting, one executive meeting, rare emergency meetings, and informal email communication made up the sum of my responsibilities.

Date(s): 1997 .2007

Relevance: As the sister of the treasurer and the first cousin of the president, I had a first hand look at what Quentin Blame meant about being *in* the community or *holding* it. This small 100

year old community of families was as full of stubbornness, politics, and reliance-on-personal memories as one could imagine. As the youngest camp-owner on the Board and in my extended family I had to sit back and witness carefully the discussions, motivations, and actions of the whole Board and Camp Company.

I finally figured out that a 75-year old grudge was behind one ongoing struggle, and went out of my way to befriend two sisters of my generation from a family with which mine had never been friendly. I was able to explain to the Treasurer over pancakes that those women, who had newly inherited their camp, had a plan to get their family out of debt to the company; my brother held off on the punitive measures he was considering. My kids play with their kids, and their camp is now in good standing with the company.

I think that's Stewardship, and I think that's Ministry. I'm a better steward and (lay) minister for having had the experience.



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Professional Work/Leadership Experience

Experience: *Spirit Play on a Shoestring.*

Dates: May, 2009

Relevance:

A practical and inspirational workshop on presenting this religious-education method using extreme resource stewardship. Spirit Play is particularly well suited to very small RE programs, yet the wealthy congregations which piloted the program spent thousands of dollars creating the rich environments of the Montessori philosophy. The small congregations which could benefit from Spirit Play could be put off! At the invitation of Nita Penfold, I presented the workshop of extreme resource stewardship, passing on some strategies by which I developed a full Spirit Play program at the UUCUV for \$250 per year over 3 years.

Experience: Green Kids

Dates: 2007

Relevance:

With Rev. Carole Martignacco, I presented a workshop on the currently available religious education curricula for Environmental Stewardship and adapting secular environmental programs for religious educational uses. Presented at the New Hampshire/Vermont District and Northeast District's joint Green-Sanctuary-focused Spring RE Conference.

Experience: Sacred Time Workshop, Religious Education Conference, New Hampshire/Vermont District.

Dates: April, 2005

Relevance:

The families in the congregation I serve are exhausted. They are busy, fragmented, and stressed. I created this workshop as a time to discuss and process how we steward our time and how we can reclaim the sacred nature of time and our connection to the cycles and seasons of nature which we as Unitarian Universalists lift up as one source of wisdom.

Time is a resource. Health, peace, joy are all resources. By offering an opportunity to examine how we steward our time and to make intentional decisions, I give adults the chance to make time management a spiritual practice.

Experience: Alden, Sparrow F. (2005) *The Friendly Creatures Game: An Interdependence Game for Unitarian Universalist Primary Grade Students*, Birch Books, Plainfield, NH.

Dates: 2005

Relevance:

I developed this primary grade game for the UUCUV's Sunday School and to offer to other UU children's programs.

Experience: Alden, Sparrow F. (2004) "Nurturing the Spirit - Nature Interconnection: A Seventh Principle Project Unitarian Universalist Religious Education Resource", Seventh Principle Project (now UU Ministry for Earth, find my materials under "Join and Order") Washington, D.C.

Dates: 2004

Relevance: I developed this Green Sanctuary resource to help sister congregations fulfill their goals of providing high-quality environmental ministry education in their children's

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programming. It is a guide to whole curricula, individual lessons in religious education curricula, resources, songs, and stories on the topics of the interdependent web, cycles of nature, creation and creativity, Earth spirit, elements, fauna, flora, trees, and sustainability; the work includes a 10 page annotated bibliography of written resources.

Experience: Nurturing Our Children's Spirit-Nature Connections

Dates: June, 2004

Relevance: I joined Pat Hoertdoerfer and Charlene Brotman in presenting the workshop on environmental stewardship in religious education at the General Assembly of the UUA.

Experience: Alden, Sparrow F. (2004) *Supplement to Hands-On Nature*, Seventh Principle Project, Washington, D.C.

Dates: 2004

Relevance: I developed this elementary and primary grade resource as a sacred supplement to the excellent environmental education program *Hands-On Nature* published by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. I have supplemented two of the five units of *Hands-On Nature* and more important, I have modeled how any secular lesson can be turned into a sacred experience with the addition of simple ritual, reverent attitude, and explicit exploration of the underlying values and UU principles of each lesson.

Experience: Alden, Sparrow F. (2004) *Animal Helpers : An Environmental Stewardship and Earth Spirit Curriculum for Unitarian Universalist Preschoolers*, Birch Books, Plainfield, NH.

Dates: 2004

Relevance: This preschool program invites children to explore one of Thoreau's suggested sacred practices - identification with nature. Through imagining an Animal who helps the child and identifying oneself as a helper of animals, children are encouraged to learn and practice stewardship as a member of the interdependent web.

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Part III . Work Exhibits/Portfolio

Exhibit A: Choosing and supplementing appropriate curricula for stewardship:

W

Children's Message, Stewardship Sunday, 2007 Materials

Moonjars (get D to fold them)

Pennies

Plastic bags (get V to put 10 pennies in each)

Baskets to carry supplies

Greet kids .have the smalls bring their parents with them

Pass out one moonjar and one bag per person.

Good Morning!

What are some things that your family does with money?

Do any of you have your own money to use?

What do you do with it?





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Do you know if your family ever shares its money or its time with others?

How about working at the church Soup-a-Thon? Or the LISTEN dinners?

It's easy to tell when your family shares its time with others, because you go and do it. Would it be easy to tell if your parents share their money with others?

Today in the sermon, the grown ups are going to talk about sharing some portion of their money, so that's our lesson, too. What's in the bags?

How many pennies?

Of all those pennies would you please put one into the orange slot on that cardboard gizmo?

That's called a Moonjar, and it's a way to save your money.

Great! You just put one out of ten pennies into the orange section who can read the label out to me? Share! About one penny in ten goes in Share. For some folks it might be more, for some it might be less, but one in ten is a pretty classic number for Share.

What are some places or people or ways of sharing money?

Did you know that you can share money with the UUCUV? The UUCUV pays rent on this building on Sunday mornings and we pay Bruce's salary and all the Sunday School craft supplies. One of the places your family can choose to share its money is with the UUCUV. What are some other ways of sharing money?

What does the blue section say? Save! Please put three pennies in the blue Save section. What are some things you can Save up for?

Some of those suggestions are fun things like treats or toys, some of those are things you need. can you tell me some things that you will need some day?

The blue Save section is for things you need and saving about three pennies out of ten is great! In fact it will put you way ahead of many folks who didn't start out with a Moonjar.

What does the green section say? Spend! That's where you put the money you can spend any time, and you can let the money pile up in there and spend it on your treats. How many pennies are left to go in there?

Six, good.

About six pennies in ten for Spend, three pennies for Save, and one penny for Share. It's going to take the grown ups another 45 minutes to catch up with us, so we can go out to our classrooms now...

Reflection:

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Like the old Depression era coin banks, there's a different section of the jar for the different

sections of one's budget. In the case of Moonjar, they're Spend, Save, and Share. Moonjar.com has booklets of family games for talking honestly about money and for connecting one's dreams to one's actual choices.

I use the Moonjar booklets during the Stewardship phase of each congregational year and in 2007 we were able to give each of our Sunday Scholars her or his own Moonjar at the bulk rate discount, of course.

I was first attracted to exploring Moonjars because of my very kinesthetic way of interacting with the world. I chose this curricular experience for the children of the UUCUV because in my professional understanding of development, kinesthetic learning fits the style of most elementary and preschool children. I can't say enough about the value of physically moving, sorting, counting your coins and dividing between the sections. The Elementary classes talk about percents in their class on Stewardship Sunday and the Junior Youth class actually takes a look at the current fiscal year's budget.

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Exhibit B: Facilitating a children's chapel collection

I submit this letter from Lucy Farnsworth Taylor:

During my 13 years as the congregation's bookkeeper (1994-2006), the children routinely took a collection during their monthly Children's Chapel gathering under Sparrow's leadership. Quarters were provided for children who did not bring an offering from home, so that everyone could participate. My own daughter particularly delighted in jingling the collection basket while singing the verse, "Don't be afraid of some change" from "Welcome, Rejoice and Come In" ("get it Mom, CHANGE?"). Passing around the collection basket has been a nice way to engage children who might otherwise be shy about participating in Children's Chapel.

Reflection:

We began the tradition of Children's Chapel in the first year of interim ministry the first year that the UUCUV had a full time minister.

We began taking a collection the following year, and at first added our \$3.87 cents to the collection plate.

A few years ago, however, we began using Children's Chapel as a place from which to do social justice on an age-appropriate scale. The children nominated ways to use their collection money, voted democratically, and chose to save up to buy a bicycle to donate to the town for its Public Bikes program. Now, the kids didn't save enough for a whole new bike, but they did collect enough to acquire an older bike and get it repaired!

My role has been to create an atmosphere of sharing, an expectation of stewardship and the logistics for doing it. I was so proud of the project they came up with!

It had been a good stretch of my own comfort zone to allow them to choose their project. I took the risk and really engaged myself in the kids coming up with something that would be worthwhile.

In the end, I hope they learned as much about stewardship and generosity as I learned about stewarding and nurturing our children's spirits with trust.

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Exhibit C A Sermon to the adult congregation on the stewardship of spiritual resources, August, 2009

(the sacred reading on this Sunday was Laura Ingalls Wilder's telling of the story "Grandpa and the Pig")

Thank you, Rich Greenlee, for opening the conversation about Yes! I hope that I can continue the discussion in a meaningful way.

I love it when the power goes out at The Little Straw House. The refrigerator compressor clatters

to a halt, the freezer sighs and stops. The internet goes down. It's still. And even though our laptops have batteries, by unspoken agreement, Joshua and I close our computers and we all turn to one another. We sing, knit, play Scrabble. We light oil lamps at twilight and stay together. We eat in a way that conserves opening the fridge. We wash up in a way that conserves water. We go to bed earlier than usual if it is winter, because we can see that the sun has gone to bed and we can honor our instincts to get just one precious day out of the day and not strain to get more than that.

I don't want to live without the convenience of power, but I want very much to have that stillness. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Well and good, I don't believe that there was a single-entity-creator which is finished, let alone in seven days, so Sabbath doesn't apply to me.

I grew up with the Puritan idea of Sabbath like Laura Ingalls Wilder, proscriptive, wearing uncomfortable clothing and being good and quiet all day.

In my case we never called it Sabbath, of course, it was just Sunday, but it was different from other days of the week. I wore less-comfortable clothes and went to the Universalist

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church and later visited old relatives who smelled funny and always asked what I was doing in school.

Going to church was a treat -soaring Gothic arches and red velveteen -but Sunday School was a bit of a chore. We had to sit still **more** and listen to a baby story and then get asked condescending questions about what choices we can make by people who didn't know that we kids were people who already made choices about whether to be kind or mean or cooperative or daring...

But it was Sunday, and there was a rhythm to it.

The wonderful thing about Sundays, if all the weird old relatives were covered by other cousins, was that we *might* go to the museum. The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. For some reason, it was quiet on Sundays after church, and I could begin with the Egyptian rooms, and within two minutes I would have lost my mother, and then I could walk through time itself.

Heavy stone tablets, gold, exotic gods and snakes and the shining faces of the dead.

Then classical Greece and smooth marble, and Rome. And I could hear myself think. And I could talk to the images of Diana, whom I had adopted when Daddy read me her myths because I figured she must be lonely with no one to worship her. I could imagine her answers. The stillness and the blessed aloneness and the time to talk with my friend, the goddess Diana...

One of my books -a few years after reading Wilder's wonderful biographies -was called "All of a Kind Family Uptown", the story of a faithful Jewish family at the turn of the 20th century.

I'll never forget the image the author created of Sabbath. The daughters were annoyed by the chores beforehand, but looked forward to the beginning of actual Sabbath. Their mother looked to them like a queen, in her finest clothing. The dishes sparkled on the table, the food would be perfectly done -Sabbath required preparation, but then everything was its very best, its very loveliest, and they could absolutely count on that evening of family time together with no quarrelling, right down to the menu items.

Their father put the money for the paperboy in an envelope on the corner of the kitchen table for the boy to pick up so that he would not touch money on the Sabbath.

So that he would not touch money on the Sabbath.

At a wedding .if the assembled friends and family are steeped enough in old tradition, what happens when the bride enters the sanctuary? Her mother stands and turns to look, and the

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whole congregation follows suit. What is it about brides? They are the hope of the whole village on that day, the future, the magic, and (if you will indulge me) the avatar of the goddess of the land. We stand and turn to her with respect and love and blessing.

My dear friend Elyse took me to Friday night service at her synagogue when I was a teen. And what happened when the rabbi declared that the Sabbath was arriving? The entire congregation stood, turned to the doors and threw them open for Sabbath, the bride, to enter. A Jewish family in mourning will cast aside their black to attend a wedding, because joy trumps sadness; and a wedding will never be scheduled for Friday night or Saturday, because Sabbath trumps even that. When Rev. Gail Collins-Ranadive came to be the Interim Minister at the UUCUV, she was available for all kinds of meetings, extra classes, lots of pastoral care .but don't expect her to answer email or return calls on Monday, she said, "That's my Sabbath." She hiked and walked and napped and recovered from Sunday. Sunday was work, obviously. And being with so many was her ministry, but also exhausting! She planned ahead, set aside time, and every week took Monday to herself as Sabbath. She could keep going all week, knowing that Sabbath was coming. As a practicing pagan, I observe special time to mark the movement of the year through its circle, so I appreciated that there would be great power and comfort in a weekly observance.

But each new spiritual practice takes time, effort, all those things I rarely choose to squeeze onto my to do list. And just when I was getting to that "maybe someday..." feeling, I ran across a line from the teachings of Morihei Ueshiba: Heaven is right where you are standing, and that is the place to train.

So, I began keeping Sabbath.

In this culture, that's a lot easier said than done, and I took very baby steps. It's been years of effort, and Sabbath is not yet an entire day for me. But I've found a few things that work for me, and as I hope you are curious about keeping Sabbath, possibly even as your own spiritual practice, I thought I'd share what I have learned so far.

It doesn't have to be all on one day. Our culture fights hard against "being unproductive" for so long a stretch. Also, we haven't the support of tradition to figure out the logistics of planning so far ahead .unless you can remember your Dad, like mine, opining for "baked beans and brown bread on Sunday night".

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Sabbath can be just an hour .as long as you plan ahead for that hour. Let your mind and body anticipate and even draw the benefits ahead of time. Keep absolutely your promise to yourself to observe that precious hour, and allow yourself to get used to those promises .that Sabbath will come first before the phone call, the idea for work. Don't worry, it's not selfish, the time isn't for yourself, it's for Sabbath.

Sabbath can be broken into pieces. I have a weekly "No Drive Day". I can't even keep it on the same day of the week, being rather caught up in the expectations of a busy world, but each week I can look at the calendar on the computer and rearrange things so that once a week I can refrain from driving. No Drive Day doesn't necessarily coincide with any other Sabbath that I keep, but it is precious! It does often coincide with No Spend Day for obvious reasons...

That he might not touch money on the Sabbath...

I have a weekly "Eat Fabulously Healthy Food Day". I can only manage one day a week of that, but I'm sure there are those among you who have chosen that Sabbath as your daily spiritual practice .and this ties in with the Slow Food Movement and our UU Study Action issue of Ethical

Eating and slow-cooked baked beans and brown bread...

I have a goal. Someday, my Sabbaths will come on the same day each week. Fridays are almost always No Drive Days. Further, in the far distant possible future, my Sabbaths will all come on one day, together, twenty four sacred hours of living in Spirit. Possible? Yes, and I think it will take work and I think that's the point.

So, what is Sabbath?

Sabbath is Saying Yes! As Rich said, it can be taking a risk..., but it's a good risk. Sabbath is saying Yes to those forces .activities, thoughts, feelings .that feed your spirit.

Sabbath is also Saying No! .say no to the forces, activities, thoughts, & feelings which diminish your spirit. Or even..., what is losing its value? What is overused in your life? Words?

Competition? Could those things be set aside for one day so that perhaps they will return to us later, refreshed.

I invite you to take two different cards and a pen. Make your Yes list .and I hope it overlaps in part with the Yes list from last week .Yes to those things which could be Sabbath for you. On the other color card make your No list .What is it you will not touch on the Sabbath?

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Many of us like to process inside our own heads and hearts, in our stillness, and I invite you to add to your lists, consider them, find patterns, wonder about them .and many of us like the energy and openness of working with ideas together. If you would like to find one or two others to speak with and mutually help with considering the possibilities in your lists, just raise up your hand and find like-minded folks. We'll only take five minutes, and then Pat will open up the floor for observations and shared conversation.

PAT directs lovely conversation!

SPARROW:

I have expanded my study of Sacred Time in various ways. On the back table, you can find extra copies of the handouts from a Sacred Timekeeping workshop I led for a district audience.

Fascinating thing .there was a simultaneous workshop (we ran each one twice) on Sacred Money Management, and the people who attended both enthused about them and said, "You and Jackie were saying the same things, just with different *stuff*"

I do not believe that God is some Other, nor that the world was created in six days, and so I do not keep Sabbath in honor of that idea.

I believe that God is the laws of physics which bind the particles which juggle the molecules which tip the evolutionary scales which train the nervous systems which exercise free will. I keep Sabbath because we are God, and as we continually create ourself, wouldn't it be a wonderful thing to do it in a holy way?

Reflection:

I struggle with my adult religious educational offerings. I love to facilitate adult learning .during my time at the College for Lifelong Learning (now Granite State College), I developed a deep appreciation for the depth possible for mature learners. They have passion, focus, and goals. They have power and experience which make for rich and idiosyncratic learning, custom fit by its very nature to the individual learner.

At the UUCUV, educational opportunities which I facilitate are very, *very*, sparsely attended. I have often played to an empty house. Perhaps the congregation has a perception that I work with children; perhaps the over-worked individuals must pick and choose their extra activities and they go with known quantities such as the minister's adult ed groups rather than risking an experience of unknown quality.

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So! I go where the learners are! Instead of a "class" setting for an exploration of Sabbath, I

offered to speak as lay-leader one Sunday of the summer series and used the sermon as my medium. I hope that I will grow in my adult RE portfolio at the UUCUV.

Meanwhile, stewardship.

Go lightly with the Earth.

Go wisely with your resources.

Go lovingly with yourself.

These are the essence of Stewardship, and I will keep dancing this message wherever I can find my feet.