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1. An Understanding of Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes and Sources

PART I

Overview:

The Unitarian Universalist Principles inform my personal life choices, my interactions with others, and the care with which I treat the World I live in. Helping our children both to understand the meaning of our Principles and to find ways to incorporate them into their daily lives is a central goal of our religious education program.

At UUFR the Principles are a foundation for our interactions and behaviors. They have been used to ground us and have been a starting point for group covenants, our behavior policy, safe congregations work, and even in taking steps towards fair compensation.

Our program also places high priority on introducing our children and youth to the Unitarian Universalist Sources. I feel that it is important not only to convey historical and factual information about these sources, but also to present them in a way that allows our students to react to them. While the principles provide parameters for our behavior in relationships with ourselves, others, our world, and the interconnected web, I think the sources carry message, meat, and perspective that we have a responsibility to interact with.

In 2004-2005, I developed a course of study for all children and youth in which our classes explored in age appropriate ways both the principles and the principles in action. Each month focused on a principle program-wide, which was also the focus of a children's chapel and a social action project (see portfolio sample 1A).

This year we are focusing on the Sources, with emphasis on the World's Religions, including Jewish and Christian teachings. Our Youth Religious Education committee participated in curriculum mapping and review with me and selected curricula that we intend to offer bi-annually (See portfolio sample 1B).

PART II

Independent/Group Study:

The World's Religions: Learning Circle

Dates: Fall 2005

Led by: Tryst Chagnon and Bo Chagnon

Participants: Various

Reflection: This seminar style shared learning experience explored many of the world's major religions through the writing of Houston Smith. It afforded me an opportunity to revisit these traditions in depth, and to reflect on their relationship to my own theological perspective.

Integration in Work: This learning circle deepened my own understanding of the religions of the world, and rejuvenated my enthusiasm for the wisdom each has to offer

each of us on our journeys. Leading this study group provided me with an opportunity to support parents of children and youth in our RE programs in their role as religious educators in their families. Following this study group, I led several children's worship services on the basic teachings of major world religions.

Annotated Bibliography:

Dalai Lama: *Essential Teachings*. ISBN: 1-55643192-9 119pp.

Annotation: This translation of talks given by the Dalai Lama in 1974 offers a guide to thirty-seven practices designed to help cultivate the spirit of compassion for life and service to others that is at the heart of Buddhism. In part two, he explains the principle of the middle way.

Essex Conversations Coordinating Committee, *Essex Conversations: Visions for Lifespan Religious Education*; (Skinner House) 2001. 336 pp. ISBN 1-55896-414-2.

Annotation: In this collection of essays, religious educators share their dreams for UU religious education in the new century. The passion of these educators is inspiring. I hope to lead discussion groups with our committee this year on some of these essays, which speak to our own struggles and goals at UUFR.

Pearmain, Elisa Davvy: *Doorways to the Soul*. (Pilgrim Press Cleveland) 1998. 124pp. ISBN 0-8298-1286-5

Annotation: Pearmain offers the reader her telling of fifty two of the world's wisdom tales. Each story is followed with questions and meditation guides that help the reader explore and connect with the story. I have used this as a personal mediation tool and have also used many of the stories in worship settings including the children's worship and time for all ages.

Smith, Huston, *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions*; (Harper San Francisco) 1998. 416 pp. ISBN 0-06250811-3.

Annotation: This book informed my understanding of some of the religions of the world, which was helpful in leading children's worship services about these traditions.

Spinoza, Baruch: *Ethics: Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*: (Hackett) 1992. 293pp. ISBN 0-87220-130-9

Annotation: In this work Spinoza follows the Euclidian method and explores the concepts of God, human nature, and selfless acts. This work gave me a way to understand 'loving your neighbor' through a logical lense. For me, it reconciled selfish motivation and reason with the ultimate religious ethic: the golden rule.

Related Professional Experience/work (non re based):

Employer: St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Dates: 1994 and 1997-1999

Description of Work: Community Service Seminar Leader. Facilitated seminar style discussions based on major philosophical and religious writings in middle and high school class settings

Relevance to competency: My work with seminar leadership afforded me the opportunity not only to explore my own understanding of important writings, but also to practice the art of drawing out from others their own interpretation of and reactions to

major works. This work allowed me to appreciate many perspectives and voices in discussions about the big questions and some of the most important writings of our time. In RE leadership, it has been invaluable to have practiced the art of facilitation and active listening when I work with teacher and learners of all ages.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (RE based):

Children's Worship Leadership:

Dates: 2004-Current

Brief description of Work: For the past two years I have led monthly children's worship services for elementary aged children. With this age group we have begun a bi-annual pillar rotation (one year UU history and Identity, one year World Religions including Jewish and Christian teachings) and I have led services related to the pillar that we are on. Over the course of the first year, I had a service on each of our principles and this year we have had services that include stories, worship elements and/or a discussions about our sources.

Relevance to competency: Preparation for these services has challenged me to find rituals, worship experiences, and stories that explore our Principles and Sources. It has deepened my understanding of the principles and sources to explore the best ways to celebrate them.

PART III

Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits:

1A Program description for the 2004-2005 program year.

Context: This is an overview of our program landscape for a year devoted to understanding the Principles and integrating them into our daily lives. This description was included in our Handbook and posted on our website.

1B Program description for the 2005-2006 program year.

Context: This is an overview of our program landscape for the current year, which is devoted to and understanding of the UU Sources. This description is currently posted on our website.

A letter from the Director of Religious Education

Dear Parents, Teachers, Visitors, and Supporters of Youth Programs at the UUFR:

The 2004-2005 year in Youth Religious Education will focus on Spiritual Practice and Social Action; we will deepen our understanding of UU principles through intentional character building and real practice living our values. Sunday morning classes will use curricula that develop a sense of belonging in our Fellowship, define our personal values, and model respect for self and stranger alike. We will practice age-appropriate worship in all our classes from 2 year olds to teens and will devote a week per month to social action projects.

Tryst Chagnon

The year is organized by monthly program-wide themes, which every class will follow to some degree. I am hopeful that the work of our children will be continued in their homes, and that a passion for social action and self-care through spiritual practice will stay with them throughout the week. Adults in our community, of course, will play a vital role in keeping this knowledge present in their lives and continuing the work we begin in the classroom. The YRE programs, therefore, will work extensively on all-congregation projects. Worship for all ages will be an important tool in learning from each other both how we find worth in this world and how we seek knowledge from each other.

The YRE program is also beginning a positive behavior support program in our classes; it will be important that the adults in our Fellowship model right relationship. We will teach our younger UUs through example that they are important by including them in our celebrations and committing ourselves to their care. We will teach them through example that this world is worth caring for by our own involvement in social action. We will teach them that nourishment of the self is a lifelong discipline by participating in adult religious education and cherishing our own spiritual practice.

I hope for all of us that this will be a year of renewed optimism and soul searching.

In the following pages, you will find detailed information about the YRE landscape for this year. You will also find a list of Adult RE opportunities, including many learning circles. It is my deepest hope that you will take advantage of these exciting gifts, and that the commitment of every family to its lifelong search will be strong.

I welcome your questions, comments, and concerns regarding programs in 2004-2005 . . . and I will anxiously await child and adult registrations!

Warmest Regards,

Tryst Chagnon, Director of Religious Education

Message from Uufr's Director of Religious Education

This year's Youth Religious Education program focus is on the World's Religions, including Jewish and Christian teachings. Uufr has top-notch programs available for people of all ages this year; children, youth, and adults alike will be able to strengthen their understanding of the religious traditions of the world. There's no shortage of stories to explore!

The Youth RE committee and the YRE office have worked hard on long-term curriculum mapping, policy updating, and program development. We are excited to add such special RE programs as the new Montessori based Spiritplay, a "just 2s" class, four sections of Our Whole Lives and significantly increased parent resources. We also have invested in training volunteer teachers and have set up a new system for supporting our more than 100 regular volunteers in RE!

Increased emphasis will be placed this year on understanding youth RE teaching as family ministry and recognizing the parent's critical role as their child's primary religious educator. I look forward to frequent communications between parents and teachers, and to the YRE committee's more visible presence as ambassadors for the program — ready and willing to help you build the program that you want! It's easier than ever to participate in, contribute to, and vision about your RE program.

Through discussion groups, learning circles, and a greatly improved collection of literature and resources available in our lending library for parents, we hope that parents will feel empowered to fulfill their role as spiritual guides—and to challenge themselves along the way to renew their own theological perspective!

Please take a few minutes to look through the many opportunities available to you this year. I am always happy to answer your questions, hear your opinions, and to help you put your great ideas into action!

Blessings,

Tryst Elena Chagnon, *Director of Religious Education*

education@uufr.org

2. Knowledge of Unitarian Universalist History and Polity

PART I

Overview:

I have worked with many curricula that include or focus on UU History. I have enjoyed this work, but often I have found that our stories fade from the memories of our children (and our adults). I believe the way to make these stories 'stick' is two-fold. First, we must tell them in more than one way; then we must tell them to our entire community, inviting a conversation across the generations. I believe it is through the conversation that we find a context for the stories and find meaning in them.

Next year our Religious Education program for children and youth 4 years and up will focus on UU History. In particular, our program hopes to initiate a 'common conversation' throughout the child and adult communities through the exploration of the stories of the historical UU figures that we have named our rooms after. Our year is divided into three-week blocks. On the first Sunday of each block the 'Time for all ages' segment will introduce the story of a famous UU. I am writing Spiritplay lessons for each of these stories, and developing three weeks of workshops on each of these figures for our elementary aged children. Our new minister will also explore the lives and work of these figures in some of his sermons.

In the future, I am hoping to increase the learning opportunities about our history for our adults. I would also like to find ways to make the history of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism more accessible and cohesive for our youth. Before our next Coming of Age class (in 2007-2008) would like to develop a new 'UU History and UUFR Governance' unit to our Coming of Age and Mentor meetings, as I find these pieces have been ineffective or absent from our programs in years past.

It is common that our members are not aware of the resources available to them, about the denomination's structure beyond the congregation, or how congregations are distinct and connected. At our next RE committee retreat, I am planning to do a short workshop on the UUA and the Thomas Jefferson District.

I hope to develop ways to incorporate this teaching into our RE program, and to educate our children and youth about our own congregation's history and governance structure.

PART II

Annotated Bibliography:

Bumbaugh, David E., *Unitarian Universalism. A Narrative History*. (Meadville-Lombard) 2000. 226 pp. ISBN 0-9702479-0-7

Annotation: This is a general overview of the history of Unitarians and Universalist and the subsequent Unitarian Universalist.

Finger, Bill, *UUFR 1949-1999: Spirit of Life*. 1999 24pp. No ISBN

Annotation: This in-house publication outlines the first fifty years in the history of our congregation. It provides wonderful information and stories. This is a delightful read for

newcomers to UUFR, and was very helpful for me as I entered my work with this congregation.

Goodwin, Joan W. *Giving Birth to Ourselves: A History of the Liberal Religious Educators Association 1949-1999*; (LREDA) 1999 128 pp. No ISBN

Annotation: This book lays out the history of LREDA. It left me with a profound appreciation for the work Religious Education leaders have done to professionalize their work and it left me with a much deeper respect for the trials of the journey.

Parke, David B. *The Epic of Unitarianism* (Beacon Press) 1957 154 pp. ISBN 57-7797

Annotation: Oral writings from the History of Liberal Religion.

Ross, Warren R., *The Promise and the Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association*; (Skinner House) 2001. 248pp. ISBN 1-55896-418-5.

Annotation: This book is a remarkably fun account of how the UUA came to be (and how it has become!) It left me with a greater appreciation for the development of the UUA.

UUA Commission on Appraisal, *Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity*; (UUA) 1997. ISBN 1-55896-358-8.

Annotation: This book speaks frankly of the tension between the value we place on individualism and the need for connection and governance in order to be effective as a collective movement. I have become sold on the need to talk about these issues, and to strengthen connections between our congregations. As a result, I have initiated a new position on our district RE committee for better facilitating cluster coordination and cluster events, which I now hold.

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (RE based):

Coming of Age Leadership

Dates: Fall 2005-Current

Brief description of work or experience: Co-Led a year-long Coming of Age program with youth from three area congregations with another DRE.

Relevance: We led sessions on UU History, including sessions from Articulating your UU Faith and Building Your Own Theology.

PART III

Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits:

2A The History of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh: Spiritplay Lesson

Context: This is a lesson that I have written for next year's lower elementary Spiritplay class.

2B 'Speak From the Heart'

Context: Recently our congregation voted to call a new minister. I have written here my account of how we included children in the process and taught them about congregational polity.

The History of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh:

A Spiritplay lesson for lower elementary classes.

Remove lesson from the shelves. This lesson is kept in a wooden box with pictures of our building and our founders on each side and 'UUFR' in large letters on the front. Point out the pictures on the box.

● This is the story of our Congregation, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh
Take out 3ft.x6" Black felt underlay and unroll

Take out 3ft. White felt strip and unroll down the length of the underlay.

● I wonder what this is? It is very long. Maybe this will help tell us a very long story.

Take out 3" white circle with 1949 on the top and pictures of Iola and Harriet over a spool and thread.

● Many years ago, there was a group of women who got together to sew with each other and to talk together here in Raleigh. One day the women were talking about religion. One of the women said she was a Unitarian, and another woman asked her to meet her sister, who was also a Unitarian. At that time there was no place in Raleigh that Unitarians met together. These two women were Iola Moore and Harriette Doar, and after they met they decided to start meetings with other Unitarians.

Place piece at the beginning of the white time-line.

● Soon, the women began one of the first Unitarian congregations in the south, with 15 other founders.

Put down laminated picture of founders under the women.

● The congregation was very active working to make Raleigh a better place to live, and to help people in the community. In 1954 the people in our congregation began to give money to buy milk for children in a needy African American family, which they did for years.

Put down pink circle with 1954 and a milk picture on it.

● The members of the congregation borrowed space to meet in. One day they decided they wanted to have a building just for our congregation, and they started to save money. The first contribution was just one penny in 1955!

Put down dark pink circle with 1955 and a picture of a penny on the time-line.

● Two years later, in 1957, a woman named Betsy Cox started the first religious education class for children.

Put down 3" laminated picture of RE kids learning and 1957 on the top. (Red)

● Two years after that we bought our first building on Hawthorne street, and we already had enough children at our congregation for three classes!

