TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

PARTICIPANT READINGS PACKET

THE RENAISSANCE PROGRAM
Unitarian Universalist Association

August 2010
Revised

Table of Contents

Sessions with Material from the Readers (in bullets) 4

Session 1: Teaching and Learning—What Shapes Us?

Openings, Closings 7
Quick energy breaks from *Deep Fun*, UUA Youth and Young Adult Ministries 10
Renaissance Program Overview 11
The Religious in Lifespan Faith Development 17
The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life 21
Shared Praxis: Education and Small Group Ministry 23
Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis Model 25
Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis Model Sample 26

Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

Teaching and Learning in Unitarian Universalist Parish Life:
Placing Children at the Center 27
The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act 29
Summary of Seven Principles of Making Teaching a Spiritual Act
– with suggested Tools for Teachers and Packet Readings 32
Universalist Spirituality in Religious Education 34
UU Teacher Development Using a Small Group Ministry Model 40

Session 3: Supporting Children as Learners and Seekers

Disability Etiquette 42
Disability Descriptions 47
Referral form for Student with Special Needs 49
Individual Religious Education Plan form 50
The Maple Syrup Lady and Other Sticky Subjects 51
Safety, Health and Ethics in Congregations 55
Sample Screening Form for Religious Educators and Youth Group Staff and Volunteers 57
Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth who are in leadership roles with Children/youth 60
Church School Health and Safety Guidelines 61
Support Scenario 64

Session 4: Toolkits for Teachers

Recruiting Ideas 68
Discipline in Sunday School: What Would a UU Do? 70
Group Presentation Guidelines 73
Alternative Activities for a Teacher Development Workshop:
Links between Teachers and Learners 74
All Learners Matter – Mobile-Making Project 74
Child & Youth Development: Typical Progressions 75

What to do about Challenging Behavior 75
From Left Field…Unexpected Questions 76
From Left Field…Unexpected Events 76

Table Talk Topic – Nuts & Bolts of Volunteer Management
Levels of Teaching 77
Religious Education Teacher Contract 79
UU Church School Program - Teacher's Weekly Report Form 81
An Alternative Church School Teacher Reflection Form 82

Table Talk Topic – Child and Youth Development
Faith Development Outline 83
Abbreviated Summary: Child Development 86
Abbreviated Summary: Adolescent Development 87
Children Remember 88

Table Talk Topic – Different Ways of Knowing
Ways of Learning, Thinking and Processing the World Around Us 89

Table Talk Topic – Support and Appreciation of Teachers
Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers 90
A Few Thoughts about Recognition and Support of Teachers 93
Teacher Dedication: Homecoming Sunday 94
Care and Feeding of Volunteers 95

Table Talk Topic – Bullying
All About Bullying 96

Appendix One: Small Group Ministry

Small Group Ministry is Changing My Approach to Religious Education 106
Small Group Ministry in the Congregation 107
Small Group Ministry Resources 109
Small Group Ministry in Various Religious Education Settings 110
Guidelines for Facilitators 116
Small Group Ministry: Teachers/Leaders/Facilitators
SMG Session Plan: Vision for Lifespan Faith Development 117
SMG Session Plan: Looking for Teachers 118
SMG Session Plan: Call to Teaching 120
SMG Session Plan: Focus on Learners 121
SMG Session Plan: Curriculum as Process 122

Appendix Two: Spiritual Practices to Use with Children

Meditation with Children: A Guide 124
Writing Prayers 131

Appendix Three: Teaching in Faith – Some Recommended Resources 132

Sessions with Material from the Readers (in bullets)

Material used in session discussion or activity are in **Bold** print

Session 1: Teaching and Learning – What Shapes Us?

Participant Readings Packet

- Openings, Closings (this may be useful throughout the module)
- Quick Energy Breaks from *Deep Fun,* UUA Youth Office (this may be useful throughout the module)
- **Renaissance Program Overview**
- **The Religious in Lifespan Faith Development**
- **The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life – Reflections by Pat Hoertdoerfer (also used in Session 3)**
- Shared Praxis: Education and Small Group Ministry
- Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis Model
- Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis Model Sample

Optional: from Appendix

Small Group Ministry and Lifespan Faith Development
(note: required if SGM Deep Reflection Option is used)

The Courage to Teach Chapters

- **Chapters I, III, IV, VI**

Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

Participant Readings Packet

- Teaching and Learning in Unitarian Universalist Parish Life: Placing Children in the Center
- The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act
- **Summary of Seven Principles of Making Teaching a Spiritual Act – with suggested Tools for Teachers and Packet Readings**
- Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay on the Theology of Teaching
- UU Teacher Development: Using a Small Group Ministry Model

The Courage to Teach Chapters

- **Chapters III, VI**

Session 3: Supporting Children as Learners and Seekers

Participant Readings Packet

- **Disability Etiquette**
- **Disability Descriptions**
- **Individual Religious Education Program: Special Needs Student Referral**
- **Maple Syrup and Other Sticky Situations**
- **Safety, Health and Ethics in Congregations**
- **Sample Screening Form for Religious Educators and Youth Group Staff and Volunteers**
- **Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth Who Are in Leadership Roles with Children/Youth**
- **Church School Health And Safety Guidelines: University Unitarian Church**
- **Support Scenario**
- **The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life – Reflections by Pat Hoertdoerfer (also used in Session 1)**

The Courage to Teach Chapters

- **Chapter III**

Session 4: Toolkits for Teachers

Participant Readings Packet

- **Recruiting Ideas**
- Discipline in Sunday School: What Would a UU Do?
- **Group Presentation Guidelines**
- Alternative Activities for a Teacher Development Workshop
  - Links between Teachers and Learners
  - All Learners Matter – Mobile-Making Project
  - Child & Youth Development: Typical Progressions
  - What to do about Challenging Behavior
  - From Left Field…Unexpected Questions
  - From Left Field…Unexpected Events

The Courage to Teach Chapters

- **Chapter III**

Session 5: Group Toolkit Presentations and Module Closing

- No Readings

Table Talk Topic: Nuts and Bolts of Volunteer Management

- Religious Education Teacher Contract
- UU Church School Program – Teacher's Weekly Report Form
- An Alternative Teacher Reflection Form

- Levels of Teaching

Table Talk Topic: Child and Youth Development

- Faith Development Outline
- Abbreviated Summary: Child Development
- Abbreviated Summary: Adolescent Development
- Children Remember

Table Talk Topic: Different Ways of Knowing

- Ways of Learning, Thinking, and Processing the World around Us

Table Talk Topic: Appreciation and Support of Teachers

- Care and Feeding of Volunteers
- Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers
- A Few Thoughts about Recognition and Support of Teachers
- Teacher Dedication: Homecoming Sunday

Table Talk Topic: Bullying

- All About Bullying

Appendix One: Small Group Ministry and Lifespan Faith Development

- Small Group Ministry Changes My Approach to Religious Education
- Small Group Ministry in the Congregation
- Small Group Ministry Resources
- Small Group Ministry in Various Religious Education Settings
    - Components
    - Session Format
- Guidelines for Facilitators
- Small Group Ministry: Generic Religious Education Setting – Vision for Lifespan Faith Development
- Small Group Ministry: Teachers/Leaders/Facilitators
    - SMG Session Plan: Looking for Teachers
    - SMG Session Plan: Call to Teaching
    - SMG Session Plan: Focus on Learners
    - SMG Session Plan: Curriculum as a Process

Appendix Two: Spiritual Practices to Use with Children

- Meditation with Children
- Writing Prayers

Appendix Three: Teaching in Faith – Some Recommended Resources

Session 1: Teaching and Learning—What Shapes Us?

OPENINGS, CLOSINGS

Participants are encouraged to help with openings and closings and energy breaks as needed. Following are some suggestions that may be used by leaders and participants.

Suggestions from *Singing the Living Tradition*

Hymns:

123 “Spirit of Life”

131 “Love Will Guide Us”

188 “Come, Come, Whoever You Are.”

361 “Enter, Rejoice, and Come In,”

362 “Rise Up, O Flame”

389 “Gathered Here”

395 “Sing and Rejoice”

402 “From You I Receive,”

413 “Go Now in Peace”

Suggestions from *Singing the Journey*

1000 “Morning Has Come”

1003 “Where Do We Come From?”

1010 “We Give Thanks”

1011 “Return Again”

1020 “Woyaya”

1023 “Building Bridges”

1053 “How Could Anyone”

1059 “May Your Life Be As a Song”

Other suggestions:
“Sister, Brother:”

Sister, brother, take your time, go slowly;
Listen deep inside yourself, simple things are holy.

Sing, “Listen, Listen, Listen” (can be done in a round.), and check feelings: “In one word, how are you feeling right now?”

“Listen, listen, listen to my heart’s song,
Listen, listen, listen to my heart’s song,
I will never forget you, I will never forsake you,
I will never forget you, I will never forsake you.”

Readings

420. We are here to abet creation, Annie Dillard

649, “Generation to Generation” by Antoine de St. Exupery

Historical Quotes about Religious Education

“And what must we give our children? Our companionship. Our understanding of who they are. Our satisfaction in being their co-workers. You and a child spade a garden together. You have the same goals. Your spade is bigger, as are your muscles. The child asks only that you know a co-worker when you have one…No other environment in our lives outside our own homes can more readily help us learn how to be whole persons partaking of the whole span of age-ness than the church or fellowship: our religious community. We all need each other.” **Jean Starr Williams**

“The great end in religious instruction, whether in the Sunday-school or family, is, not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own; not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth; not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs…” **William Ellery Channing**

“Such values as we are concerned with cannot be communicated except as they are set in operation, given life, in the human relations in which teachers and taught are involved…Love exists only when someone is loved. Freedom exists when relations worthy of that name govern communication and action between persons. Such values are communicated only when “live”…This is why I have so often said that a faith which is so largely a faith of dynamic ethical and intellectual values should make method the heart of its curriculum.” **Angus MacLean**

“At the foundation of our religious education program is respect, appreciation, and love for an individual’s full integrity as a person and concern for the individual in all aspects of his being. A sense of supportive community is even more important to children and young people than to adults when challenging and testing the values of society and in developing values that are truly theirs. This supportive community is not only the local church/fellowship community, but the wider UU community and an “historic” community with strong roots in the past.” **Eleanor Lamb**

“By religious education I mean opportunities for spiritual growth; i.e. the process of increasing our understanding by exploring the questions of life and death and how they relate to our very existence as well as our values and behavior…translating the extrinsic into the intrinsic, of developing our own theology.” **Margaret Gooding**

“I believe that fundamentally religious education is a search for one’s own faith, and that the process of that search is very much the same for children, and for the adults. For what we are helping our children find is a method of answering the questions of religion so that they can find their own faith, and thus be free to change it as their knowledge increases.” **Dorothy Tilden Spoerl**

“Many of the past generation and many of today have found three abiding values in prayer: the quiet meditation on life, the reaching out toward the universal and the infinite, and the courageous facing of one’s profoundest wishes. Let parents sense and share with their children the glory and mystery of everyday things. Let them look with sympathy upon humanity’s age-long dilemmas. Let no questions be taboo. The next generation can ill afford to have the deeper values deleted from the book of life.” **Sophia Lyon Fahs**

Quick energy breaks from *Deep Fun,* UUA Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Tone Singing. Have each person close his or her eyes release sound on a different tone. ("Om" or "Ooooooo"). Hold the tones as long as possible, taking staggered breaths so that the sound is constant. Listen as the voices come into harmony with each other.

Zoom *Form a standing circle, and then have everyone hold hands and squat down. As they slowly come up to standing, have them say "zzzzzzzzzzoooooooooooooom!" (or any other joyful noise or word) and end with a jump in the air***.**

Acorn/Tree *Form a standing circle. Have everyone gradually crouch down, making themselves as small as possible. As they do this, have them say, "Acorn, acorn, acorn..." getting softer and softer. Then, simultaneously jump up into the air and say "TREE!!" with enthusiasm. Do this one several times to energize a tired group.*

Social Justice Stretching *"Reach down to get power from the grassroots (touch your toes)*
Reach up to the sky for inspiration (reach your arms up in the air)
Stomp out injustice (stomp feet on the floor)
Move in the winds of change (with arms out to your side twist your torso from left to right)"
Repeat with a faster pace and repeat until you can't go any faster

Shake by Numbers *Tell the group that once they catch on to copy you. Start by shaking your right arm and counting to ten, kind-of quickly. Then shake your left arm and count to ten. Next shake your right leg and count to ten, then shake your left leg and count to ten. Continue in this order but for each set count only to nine, then eight, etc. (think B-I-N-G-O-style) and hopefully quicken the counting each time. Continue until you run out of numbers.*

Seek Bananas *Sing this song with motions. Order: Do 1, 7, then 1, 2, 7, then 1, 2, 3, 7, then 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, etc. until finishing with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.*

1) Seek Bananas. Seek, Seek Bananas (x2) *Motion*: Hand over eyes, seeking
2) Pick Bananas. Pick, Pick Bananas (x2) *Motion*: Hands out, pulling bananas off tree
3) Peel Bananas. Peel, Peel Bananas (x2) *Motion*: Peeling a banana
4) Eat Bananas. Eat, Eat Bananas (x2) *Motion*: Shove 'em in your mouth!
5) Squash Bananas. Squash, Squash Bananas (x2) *Motion*: Throw banana peel down and stomp on it.
6) Go Bananas!. Go, Go Bananas! (x2) *Motion*: Flailing arms in the air, jumping up and down.
7) Mmmmmmmmmmmm.....*Motion:* Rubbing belly and smiling

RENAISSANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Renaissance Program is a major component of Unitarian Universalist religious education leadership development and the Religious Education Credentialing Program of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Each 15-hour module provides basic education in a specific area for religious educators in local congregations, and resources for continuing development. Modules focus on religious education for all ages, although some may be more geared to a specific age group (example: Ministry With Youth). The modules may be taken in any order:

Administration of Religious Education Programs	*Philosophy of Religious Education*
Curriculum Planning	*Teacher Development*
Multicultural Religious Education	*Worship for All Ages*
Unitarian Universalist History	*Ministry with Youth*
Unitarian Universalist Identity	

Participation. Modules can ideally accommodate between 10 and 20 participants. The target audience includes Directors of Religious Education, Religious Education Committee Chairpersons, ministers who are responsible for overseeing religious education programs, and theological students preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry.

Participation in the *entire module* is required for credit to be received. Each module is an unfolding process. Group dynamics and learning are enhanced when everyone is present for all sessions. Participation benefits the group as well as the individual. Group dynamics and learning are enhanced when everyone is present for all sessions. The head leader does have discretion to allow credit, whether through asking for makeup “homework” to be done, or by other means, but only when a minimal amount of the time has been missed and the part that has been missed is amenable to alternate arrangements.

Recognition. When a participant has completed five modules, or a minimum of 75 hours of Renaissance training, the Renaissance Office will send a Letter of Recognition of the time that has been given in continuing education.

The Renaissance Program Office maintains a record of participant attendance at a module based on the returned module evaluation forms. It is important that each participant complete and return an evaluation.

Scholarships. It is strongly recommended that congregations give financial sponsorship to a Religious Educator who is attending on their behalf. A limited amount of scholarship help is available from the Unitarian Universalist Association through the Beatley and Earle endowment funds. This and other options are available through the UUA Religious Education Credentialing Office in the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group (contact Paula Welling at pwelling@uua.org). Some District Religious Education Committees have funds available for Renaissance Program scholarships. Summer conferences may offer financial assistance,

Scheduling. Modules are usually offered on weekends, 2-3 day session, or as part of weeklong summer conferences. Each setting has different characteristics. Weekend modules are intense with a definite momentum; weeklong modules allow time between sessions, but scheduling must consider other conference activities. Neither is "better or worse" than the other, just different. Modules are announced on the Unitarian Universalist Association Events page as they are scheduled.

EXPERIENCING A MODULE

The Renaissance Module provides opportunity to:

- obtain information, tools and resources to implement religious education program.
- experience and practice various techniques and methodologies, with a focus on process.
- become aware of and discuss various options for planning and implementing religious education programs, from the module itself, and from networking and interaction with participants.

For more information on Renaissance Program modules, including the Planning Guide and Request Form, see the Renaissance pages at http://www.uua.org/leaders/leadership/religiouseducation/renaissanceprogram/

Covenanting

"Covenant for Our Time Together," by the Rev. Helen Zidowecki

(*A powerful trust-building activity, this also sets a wonderful tone for the conference. Have copies ready so that participants can each read a section aloud, and all can join in the unison ending.*)

The covenant provides guidelines for a safe learning environment. To that end, let us covenant together.

CONFIDENTIALITY: We need safety with the group. We need to know that what we say in the group discussions and with each other will be held in confidence.

RESPECT: We need to feel that we can share our deep concerns, mistakes, and fears as well as our joys and triumphs. It is important to be able to speak without anyone in the group making judgments and/or criticizing what was said or done. We need this acceptance.

PRIVACY: It is important that we be able to "pass" and not speak within the group. When we choose to pass, no explanation is asked for or needs to be given. A simple statement of "I pass" or "I am not ready to speak" is sufficient. There are times that some understanding or truth or feeling is not ready to be spoken aloud.

BOUNDARIES help to create safety and freedom for us to work successfully. Attention to time boundaries includes an agreement among us to start on time and remain present until the agreed upon ending time, and to let one of the leaders know if you have to leave for any reason.

We also acknowledge and honor our differing needs, ways of relating, and ways of learning.

UNISON: To this end we covenant with one another for our time together. Blessed Be.

CONSIDERATIONS IN THE RENAISSANCE PROGRAM

Following is a description of considerations and learning activities in Renaissance Modules, presented in alphabetical order. Many, and possibly all, of these activities will be used in a module.

Baggage is what we bring with us that might cause distractions for others and ourselves during the module. We try, as much as possible, to put these items aside so that we can be fully present to this community and opportunity. For example, please keep cell phones off, and give people who might need to call the projected times of meal breaks and beginning and ending times so that calls can be planned as much as possible outside the session times.

Brainstorming starts a flow of ideas around a specific topic or question. This is a quick way to verbalize ideas as the participants give them, without editing. The guidelines for brainstorming include:

- Record (usually on newsprint) words/phrases as given, without comment and even if the word has been given before.
- Let the brainstorming continue for an agreed-to time or until the flow of ideas has greatly diminished.
- The brainstorming notes can be hung up in the room as a reference. People are invited to add to the listing as new ideas arise.
- If the content is to be used further, the thoughts may be grouped by common topics.

Continuums provide an opportunity to place yourself on an imaginary live between two distinct choices, such as "yes" or "no", in response to specific questions, then to share why you placed yourself where you did. The intent is to show the diversity and yet the 'sameness' among group members. One end of the line might be “yes” and the other “no”, or the line-up may be according to specific criteria, such as size of a religious education program, from smallest to largest.

Diversity of participants is a dynamic feature of the Renaissance Modules that enhances the learning experience and requires intentional consideration of making the experience inclusive.

Inclusivity in language requires a focus on terms that we use. We communicate a great deal about how we feel about a topic, and we communicate with people who are not religious educators and who come from differing backgrounds. Therefore, inclusive language is a way of honoring our values and each other.

- Use "Unitarian Universalist" rather than either one separately (except in historical context). Our faith tradition is rich because of the contributions of both of the historic denominations.
- Use full names for groups rather than the initials or abbreviations, such as "Unitarian Universalist" rather than "UU"; "Liberal Religious Educators Association rather than LREDA, “Director of Religious Education" rather than "DRE".
- Terms reflect the philosophy. For example, we are using "children" or "youth" rather than "kids." “religious education” as focusing on “faith development”; and we are aware that this religious education or faith development is “lifespan”, or for all ages.
- The language of the modules and writings are gender inclusive, except for quotes that may be used, a common example of which is the use of the male gender previously assumed by some to be inclusive.
- Language also needs to be inclusive related to racial and ethnic background, age, and ability, and life situations. For example, when referring to an individual or group, acknowledge the person or group, and add the adjective only if needed to understand the communication. For example, use "child with special needs" rather than "special needs child."
- In referring to our sources, use "Jewish and Christian" heritage or teachings rather than "Judeo-Christian."

- Discuss facts and situation without assuming that "everyone is like me." The life situations of participants will probably include various ages and experiences in religious education, and various configurations of geographic and ethnic backgrounds, and family and economic situations. What might be "obvious" or "logical" to one person may not be to another.
- Develop a way for participants to indicate when there is a term that needs explanation (raise hands, etc.)

Inclusivity in the learning environment requires the attention of all participants to
- Clarity of speech and awareness of hearing ability;
- Sensitivity to environmental odors (perfumes or scented candles, or smoke, for example);
- Mobility requirements and possible modifications needed in some of the activities.

Evaluation of the module must be completed by the end of the module in order for you to receive a certificate of completion. The evaluation forms are reviewed by the leaders and sent to the Renaissance Program. Your suggestions are considered in making the module more effective.

Groupings of various configurations are used throughout the module, from total group activities, to activities in dyads (two people), triads (three people) and other small groups. Sometimes the groups will be selected at random by "counting off" or other creative ways of matching, and sometimes based on specific interests.

Guided meditation/visualization/imagery helps participants visualize a particular event or situation as a way of raising awareness of feelings around the situation. Guidelines include:
- Inviting people to get into a comfortable position in which they can relax, so that the focus is not on how parts of the body feel (unless that is the focus of the meditation/visualization!).
- Inviting people to go only as far into the guided meditation/visualization as is comfortable. People can stop the meditation whenever they like by moving or opening their eyes.
- Letting people know before the meditation starts whether and how they will be invited to share their experience or feelings. Sharing is not always expected. Meditation may be used to sets the stage for discussion of a topic.

Sometimes guided meditations bring up thoughts or feelings that need to be explored further, even immediately. If this happens, please talk with a leader as soon as possible.

Journaling provides a way for participants to capture their thoughts and feelings about specific topics or activities within the module, and to explore the implication of the things that they are learning for themselves and in their own setting. The journaling is for the participant only. It may also be used to help focus before a discussion.

Newsprint pages will be hanging in the meeting room, such as pages for participants to indicate topics that they want to have covered, or questions, or additional resources. Pages will also be generated during the module. It is the option of the group to have the content of these newsprint pages typed up and sent to participants. This is not the responsibility of the leaders.

Participant materials may be a book (ordered by Coordinator or participants), or a collection of materials, or both, that are usually sent to participants prior to the start of the module. Familiarity with these materials prior to the module is encouraged. There may be additional handouts at the module.

Porch Chats are opportunities to conduct small portions of the module content during “off” hours. These are sometimes necessary during week-long modules, when insufficient time may be allocated for the module on the sponsoring site’s schedule.

Resources for the module are available in a set of "10 Core Resources." In addition, leaders and participants share items related to the module theme. There may be a sign-out process if items are taken from the module space.

Shared parts include leading energy breaks, games, singing, openings and closings, and readings. These are at the discretion of the leaders. These may be materials in the module itself or invitations for participants to contribute. These add to the diversity of the group and present opportunity to learn from each other. .

Openings and closings are words, songs or movement at the beginning and ending of sessions. These can be taken from the hymnals, other resources at the module, and from participants.

Energy breaks are opportunities to be active. These can be done at the beginning of planned breaks or when discussions need a change in pace.

Scheduling will depend on the time of the module and the requirements of the particular site. A specific schedule with start and ending times will be available as participants register, and in more detail at the beginning of the module. There will never be enough time to have all of the discussion that we want to have. There will be times when the Leaders ask you to move on to the next activity. While there is suggested timing for the various parts of a module, and the Leaders can make some alterations as needed. However, it is expected that the content that is in the module will be available to the participants.

Renaissance Modules move from presenting information to opportunity to integrate materials and learnings, culminating in Group Presentations from which we all gain new insights and ideas. Much of the initial information is in the packets and reader, available for future reference.

Small Group Ministry. As the focus of religious education changes to *spiritual and faith development rather than gaining information*, **t**he dialogue focuses on how participants 'relate' rather than on how much they 'learn'. The 'learning' is from the impact of the story and the dialog. There may be several times when the Small Group Ministry format is used throughout the module. The group will be 5-8 participants, with a designated facilitator. The format is:

Opening words
Check-in
Topic/Activity
Closing words
Likes and Wishes

There will be a more discussion of the concept and process as it is used.

Table Talks are a way to use meal times to create an opportunity for discussion and sharing of resources in topics pertinent to the module subject but not included in the module agenda. For particular meal-times, one or more tables used during the meal are designated as space to hold a "Table Talk" on a particular topic. In that way, participants who are interested in addressing a particular topic may do so, while those who are not interested in the topic may use their free time for a different purpose.

Terminology used in modules is specific and yet broad. For example, Religious Education and Faith Development is expected to be Lifespan, or for all ages. Material, discussions and activities need to honor this, unless there is a specific focus of an activity or module (such as Ministry With Youth). Participants in modules may be directly involved in specific age groups in their own settings, which may tend to focus the module, but the overall context of a Religious Education program is Lifespan Faith Development.

THE RELIGIOUS IN LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Compiled by Rev. Helen Zidowecki

Religious Education is a dynamic part of Unitarian Universalism – dynamic in that it is alive and well and that it is constantly changing. The evolving philosophy is directly linked to the involvement and evolvement of teachers. Several new resources are being mentioned here as background for preparing and supporting teachers. *Essex Conversations*, vision for comprehensive curriculum, and relational religious education (small group ministry).

ESSEX CONVERSATIONS

Essex Conversations, which was published by the UUA in 2001, challenges us to approach Religious Education in a new way. About every 20 years or so, Unitarian Universalist seem to recreate their focus of Religious Education. The formation of the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1961 brought together over a century of experience in educating children in both traditions. In 1975, seventeen religious professionals representing a variety of Unitarian Universalist-related organizations met at Stone House, a conference center in Rhode Island to discuss, dialogue, reflect, and envision the needs of Unitarian Universalist religious education for the 1980s. From their work, the Religious Education Futures Committee was born. The *Futures Report* laid out *basic language* similar to the development of the Affirmations and the Living Traditions Sources that comprise the Unitarian Universalist Principles.

As we entered a new millennium, another group of leaders were called together to discuss, dialogue, reflect, and envision the next directions for Unitarian Universalist religious education. Participants were chosen to present papers at gatherings at the Essex Conference Center in Essex, Massachusetts. Three questions posed to the participants were:

- As we enter the 21st Century, what is at the core of our evolving UU faith?
- What is your vision/goals for our lifespan liberal religious education?
- What are the vital components of Unitarian Universalist religious education?

Essex Conversations, published by Skinner House in 2001, is available from the UUA Bookstore. While some of the essays specifically focus on children, youth, young adults or adults, the themes apply to all ages, or lifespan religious education.

The themes that we can highlight from *Essex Conversations* are:

- Faith development/spiritual journey, with the Sources of Our Living Traditions as a basis
- Intergenerational focus
- Social transformation
- Taking religious education ‘out of the box’
- Relational religious education

Faith development/spiritual journey The focus of the educational ministry is changing from “teaching religion”, with a focus on information, to supporting the concept of faith development. Unitarian Universalist faith development would progressively nurture spirituality and character formation and Unitarian Universalist values. The focus is on helping individuals of all ages to more fully integrate their spiritual life with their sense of identity as Unitarian Universalists.

The goal is to help children, youth and adults develop life-enhancing relationships with others, our faith, the world, our earth, and the universe.

> Religious Education is more than 'Sunday School', more than a 'curriculum' or 'session plan'. Religious education is the variety of ways that we learn religiously, the ways we gain knowledge and experience for our individual life-long spiritual journeys. Our spiritual journeys will differ, but there are various "tools" that

we can share. These are "tools" that we can use all of our lives. (*Religious Education Connections* (Church of the Larger Fellowship, http://clf.uua.org/connections/) *Dec. 2003)*

Intergenerational focus Lifespan religious growth and learning literally means that we are learning throughout our entire lives – religious education is a continuum. We can approach this by 'compartmentalizing' people into age groups. This does address the characteristics of specific age groups. However, not everyone fits exactly into the expectations for the age groups, and we can all learn and share our learning with others of differing ages. (The "Time for Children" in a service may engage adults as much as children!)

There needs to be a conscious effort for the respective age groups to have time with each other. A facilitator for a younger age group still needs an opportunity for religious exploration with people his or her own age. The challenge is to balance age-specific religious educational opportunities with cross-ages opportunities. We need to be intentional in planning to engage all ages. This is another way of considering 'lifespan' religious education or faith development.

For every activity undertaken by an adult in a religious community, we can ask "Where are the children and how do/can they participate?" For every activity with children, we can ask, "What can the children teach the community, and how can we learn as we interact with the children?"

Social transformation A number of essays focus on or mention social justice issues. Some thoughts emerge:

> How do we address whatever keeps us from greater alignment between what we say we value and our effectiveness in the process of social transformation.
>
> Social transformation must be coupled with a holistic religious education program for critical consciousness and the practice of freedom, rooted in the doctrine of love.
>
> Education for social action must not only inspire but also equip us to change the world, from where we are presently to beyond just ourselves, insuring that social justice is inseparable from meaning-making in our faith.

The focus is 'acting out our faith.' In a religious education session, we all bring our understanding of a topic or theme, have an opportunity to explore in discussion and activity within a community of people with similar religious values, be it in a family or a small group, and formulate new ways of approaching the theme. And our new understanding will have an impact on how we live as we leave the religious education session. Maybe we should be explicit or open in stating that social justice is an underlying consideration of our spiritual or faith development, all of our lives.

Out of the box The term 'out-of-the-box' brings me the image of a jack-in-the- box. Think of religious education as the character in the box that is just waiting to spring out when the handle is turned just right or a button is pushed! And then it is really hard to push the figure back into the box, so that handle can be turned or the button pushed again – and again – and again.

Taking – or allowing religious education out of the Sunday school "box" is to explore ways in which the whole religious community is both teacher and learner. Instead of a designated time and place, like Sunday morning and in a church, being where religious education occurs, view all of life and all of the time a family or group is together as a time for educating religiously. There is a danger, though. Once religious education gets 'out of the box', it really cannot be neatly put back into the box.

This is just a quick introduction to some of the themes in *Essex Conversations.* This book can give religious educators, including teachers at all levels, tools and suggestions for enhancing their involvement in Unitarian Universalist lifespan religious education.

VISION FOR COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM: TAPESTRY OF FAITH

The vision of a comprehensive curriculum is an implementation of the *Essex Conversations* themes. This is what is now known as Tapestry of Faith:
Tapestry of Faith is a series of programs and resources for all ages that nurture Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual growth, a transforming faith, and vital communities of justice and love. These resources are being developed out of a broad series of conversations that articulated a future direction for Unitarian Universalist religious growth and learning and denomination-wide focus groups which helped shape a program that would offer a variety of resources — downloadable, printed, viewable, interactive, and more — a religious growth and learning program for the twenty-first century
(http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/index.shtml).

The four strands that are part of the curriculum are**:**

- Ethical development
- Spiritual development
- Unitarian Universalist identity
- Faith development

The outcome of the curriculum is in the Vision Statement for all ages:
*We envision children, youth, and adults who**:***

- *know that they are lovable beings of infinite worth, imbued with powers of the soul, and obligated to use their gifts, talents, and potentials in the service of life;*
- *affirm that they are part of a Unitarian Universalist religious heritage and community of faith that has value and provides resources for living;*
- *accept that they are responsible for the stewardship and creative transformation of their religious heritage and community of faith;*
- *realize that they are moral agents, capable of making a difference in the lives of other people, challenging structures of social and political oppression, promoting the health and well-being of the planet, acting in the service of diversity, justice and compassion;*
- *recognize the need for community, affirming the importance of families, relationships and connections between and among the generations;*
- *appreciate the value of spiritual practice as a means of deepening faith and integrating beliefs and values with everyday life;*
- *experience hope, joy, mystery, healing, and personal transformation in the midst of life's challenges.*

This vision statement has become 'beliefs' in the literature of the Tapestry. (I find the wording of the original outcomes to be more dynamic, so have kept them here. HZ)

Discussion of this vision needs to be part of religious education program planning, and is critical in developing teachers who will move Unitarian Universalism forward as the vision is realized. More information and ongoing updates are on the web site at
http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/abouttapestry/130209.shtml

RELATIONAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A number of the essays in *Essex Conversations* focus on the need for developing relationships. This has been known in religious education for generations: children learn religiously as they experience relationships, from nursery care throughout life. We associate so much of what and how we learn with the people involved, as designated ‘teachers’ and with informal interactions. Some of the comments paraphrased from the essays are:

> We need to provide opportunities for the development of deep and authentic relationships;
>
> We need life-long skills, tools and attitudes to identify and dismantle oppressions and build bridges between people.
>
> The goals of religious education are to create and maintain a human environment and atmosphere where people of all ages can find and create a just community, grow and develop skills and the confidence to live their lives wholly, find and give comfort and solace, and celebrate life. (Ginger Luke, *The Children's Fire is the Community Fire)*

We are at once individuals, unique and separate, and part of communities, from the immediate family to the entire world. Focusing on the relationships has led me to develop what I call ‘Relational Religious Education.’ This is patterned after the Small Group Ministry or Covenant Group movement within Unitarian Universalism today.

Faith development and imparting tools for the spiritual journey occur in community. We can have spiritual experiences alone, which we bring to and share in the spiritual community as part of spiritual growth. The dialog focuses on how participants relate to stories and events rather than on how much they 'learn'. The 'learning' is from the impact of the story and the dialog, rather than on information gained. As Unitarian Universalist, without a specific body of knowledge that we expect everyone to have, we have the challenge and opportunity to focus on spiritual development and spiritual practices for a lifetime. Small group ministry is a tool that allows time and focus on spiritual aspects. As many of the characteristics of small group ministry should be used as possible.

TEACHER TRAINING TO TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

We are at a significant time in the development of the educational ministry within the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition. It is critical that we reflect on the role that teachers play and how we support them. Starting points for dialog around ‘teacher development’ within our Unitarian Universalist congregations are:

What do we want to impart in religious education/lifespan faith development sessions?

Excitement about Unitarian Universalism
Tools for spiritual journey/faith development: Rituals, Stories, Ability to question/search
Mutual learning between facilitator and participants
Relationships with each other and with the material
Inward faith development for outward faithful living
How we minister to each other (ministry of all believers)

What do people need in order to facilitate this type of session?

Willingness to share the excitement of their faith
Tools for their own faith development
Approach to material that develops discernment and relationships
Focus on the teacher development rather than session content: training for teaching/facilitating, regardless of the content.
Opportunity to develop/continue development of their own faith. This would include teaching with a more experienced facilitator and ongoing small group sessions for leaders.
Willingness to learn from the participants.

The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life
by Parker Palmer (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2007),
Reflections by Pat Hoertdoerfer

Author: Parker Palmer is a writer, teacher, and activist who works independently on issues in education, community, spirituality, and social change. He is a senior associate of the American Association for Higher Education and senior advisor to the Fetzer Institute, for whom he designed the Teacher Formation Program for K-12 teachers. His publications include *The Active Life, To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey,* and recently *Let Your Life Speak: Listening For the Voice of Vocation.*

We become teachers for reasons of the heart. But many of us lose heart as time goes by. How can we take heart, alone and together, so we can give heart to our students and our world – which is what good teachers do.

Palmer writes that *we teach who we are* and invites us into a deeper inquiry about education – teaching and learning – that is often overlooked. It is not the "what" question (what subjects shall we teach?) nor the "how" question (what methods and techniques are required?) nor the "why" question (for what purpose and to what ends do we teach?). It is the "who" question: who is the self that teaches? The book explores the inner landscape of the teacher's life along three related pathways – intellectual, emotional, and spiritual.

At the heart of *The Courage to Teach* is Palmer's image of teaching: "To teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced." He defines "truth" as "an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline." The purpose of leadership in community is to create a teaching and learning space centered on the "great things" that evoke the virtues we cherish in education: inviting *diversity,* embracing *ambiguity,* welcoming *creative conflict,* practicing *honesty,* experiencing *humility,* becoming *free.*

These are a few key themes from each chapter:

I. *Heart of the Teacher: Identity and Integrity in Teaching*

- If we want to grow as teachers, we must learn to talk to each other about our inner lives, our own identity and integrity.
- Identity lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up a life, while integrity lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring us wholeness and life.
- Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique.
- The best gift we receive from great mentors is not their knowledge or their approach to teaching but the sense of self they evoke within us.

II. *A Culture of Fear: Education and the Disconnected Life*

- Fear is a powerful feature of both educational culture and our inner landscape – the fear of having a live encounter with "otherness" in a participant, a colleague, a subject, or the voice of the inner teacher. The sequence of fears begins in the fear of diversity, leads to the fear of conflict, the fear of losing identity, and the final fear of the challenge to change our lives.
- Knowing is always communal. Knowing is a human way to seek relationship, to have encounters and exchanges that will alter us.

III. *The Hidden Wholeness: Paradox in Teaching and Learning*

- The nature of the human self is paradoxical: for every gift or strength we possess, there is a corresponding weakness or liability.

- We need to embrace opposites and appreciate paradoxes.
- Six paradoxes to build into the teaching and learning space:
  (1) The space should be bounded and open.
  (2) The space should be hospitable and "charged."
  (3) The space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group.
  (4) The space should honor the "little" stories of participants and the "big" stories of the disciplines and traditions.
  (5) The space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community.
  (6) The space should welcome both silence and speech.

IV. Knowing in Community: Joined By the Grace of Great Things

- To teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced.
- Truth is the eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline.
- The community of truth includes a transcendent dimension of truth knowing and truth-telling that takes us beyond relativism and absolutism alike.

V. Teaching in Community: A Subject-Centered Education

- The best classroom is neither teacher-centered nor participant-centered but subject- centered.
- To move us closer to the community of truth in the classroom, we must make ourselves as dependent on the participants as they are on us.

VI. Learning in Community: The Conversation of Colleagues

- We need to create a collegial community of discourse that promote "good talk about good teaching," such as workshops, learning communities, evaluations.

VII. Divided No More: Teaching from a Heart of Hope

- The four stages of a movement to reform education are:
  (1) The personal decision to live "divided no more."
  (2) The formation of "communities of congruence."
  (3) The move to "go public" with our values and commitments.
  (4) The emergence of a system of "alternative rewards."

SHARED PRAXIS: EDUCATION AND SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Following is a description of using a Shared Praxis model for both the informational and ministerial approaches to religious education for lifespan faith development. Shared praxis is a way of sharing information and of building community.

The Shared Praxis model is composed of 5 steps in which to address any issue of significance, moving back and forth between individual and community, in reflection and action. The first step in the model takes the individual in the present, by naming a present understanding of an issue in their life (their own truth). The second step helps the individual examine the basis and impact of that present understanding. The third step moves the person into dialogue with the faith community so that both are enriched by individual and community stories. The fourth step continues the dialogue between and among the individual and faith community as meaning is made of the intersections of the individual and community stories. The fifth step leads to decision for action on an issue on the part of both the community and the individual, in the context of the faith community. And so the reflection and dialogue can continue by returning to the first step and moving through the process again and again. In his later writing, *Educating for Life* (1998), Groome focuses on the spiritual life of the educator (including a focus on parents as religious educators) as absolutely critical to the educational process.

Praxis: Purposeful, intentional and reflectively chosen ethical action (reflection and action).
Shared: By an individual within a faith community.
--Turn people to look at and express their lives in the world -- what is there, what are they up to, and what is going on around them.
--Get people to reflect on their life in the world -- to contemplate it, question it, imagine new possibilities for it, and even probe their own reflections of it all, discerning why they think or feel or perceive the way they do.
(Groome, 1998, p.161)

1. PRESENT ACTION or Naming Your Own Knowing (Individual)
Whole human engagement in the world, intentionally. Invites participant's reactions, feelings, sentiments, and values.
This occurs within the *present*, which is the convergence of the past, present, and present aspects of the future.
The forming of presentation is critical in providing a gentle, non-threatening invitation to self-awareness.
Questions can elicit a response of theory (knowledge, information) or of praxis.

[Opening and sharing of the Small Group Ministry session]

2. CRITICAL REFLECTION (Individual)
Critical reflection includes:

- Critical reason to evaluate the present action (Why do I have this view or position?)
- Critical memory to uncover the past as related to the present (How does my past influence my present?)
- Creative imagination for the future (What is the implication for the future?)

Reflection: Reason/feeling, the mind and the heart
Critical: Affirming what is positive and true, recognizes limitations, and moves on
Individual becomes aware of own stories and visions. This will look different for different age levels. The primary task is to enable participants, including the leader/educator/facilitator, to reflect critically on the present action, their reasons for it and the consequences of it.

[Questions, thoughts for the dialogue]

3. COMMUNITY STORY AND VISION: DIALOGUE (Individual meets the community)

Dialogue implies the willingness to share and to learn, rather than to change others to our views.
Begins with ourselves, our own biographies, stories, visions, which, to be truly known, must be expressed and shared. Appreciation comes when others hear our stories and visions with their hearts.
Vision and story from the faith tradition enters this dialogue as tradition from lived experience.

[*Education*: presenter must be well informed of the community/faith tradition story and vision in order to pass that on. There is specific information to impart, in manner of *disclosure*, or presenting the faith tradition meaning for the individual rather than *closure* or as the only way the story can be told. The focus seems is more on having an impact on the outcome, including increased knowledge, increased understanding, and increased action.

Ministry: the focus is on how we relate to each other in the faith community as we live out our stories and visions, and the support from the community as we continue our faith journeys in dialogue with others. The learning is from the experiences of each other as we have brought them/expressed them to the faith community.]

4. THE STORY or Dialectic (Individual and community)
What does the story of the faith tradition mean to/for me? How does my story fit with the stories of others in the group?
Possibly what we should be asking is how does the participation in the faith community strengthen the presence of the faith community for me?
[*Education*: increasing information as part of the basis for ongoing learning.
Ministry: Relationships, small group ministry and worship]

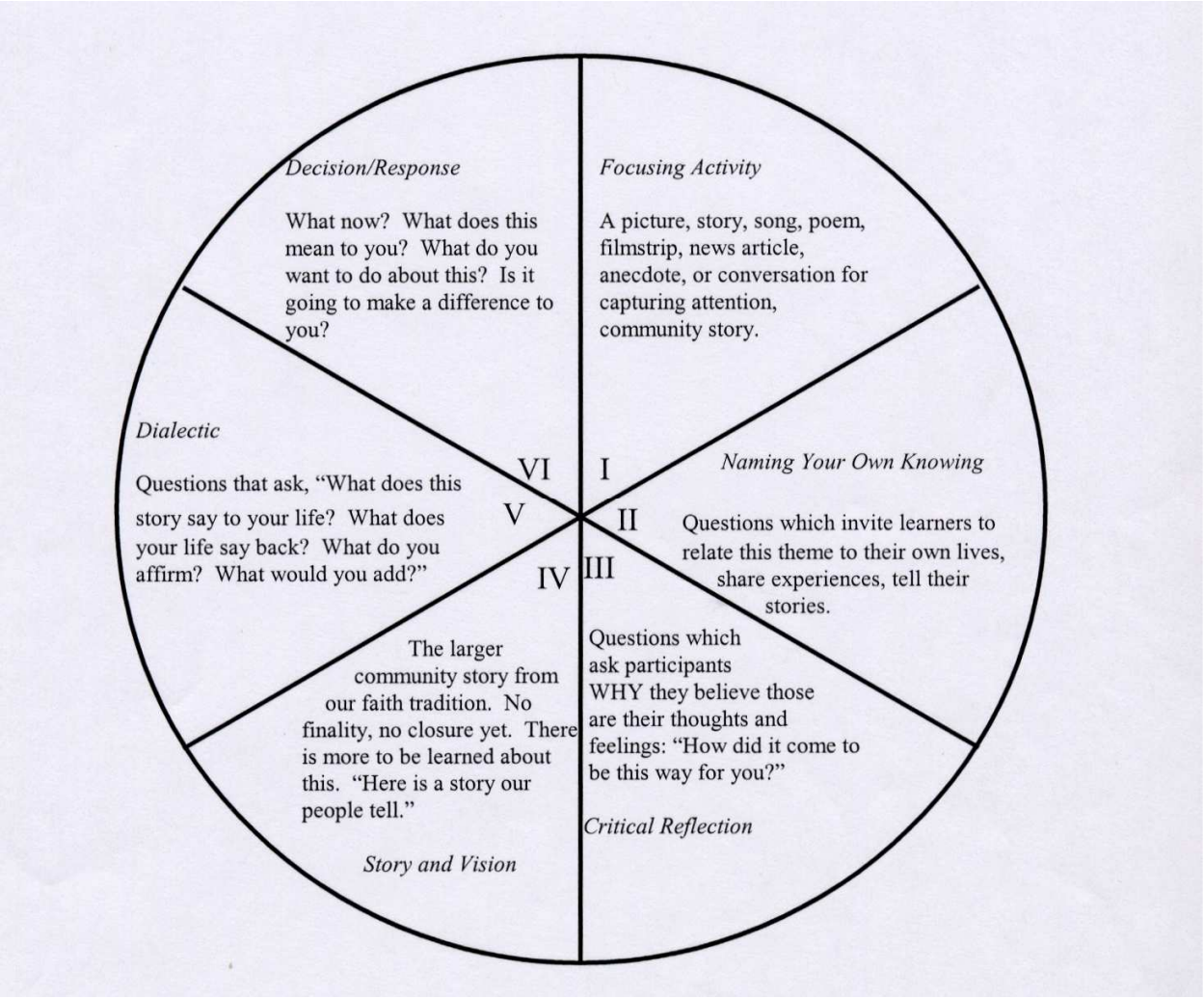
5. VISION Individual and community are changed.
Comprehensive response to the story within the context of the intentional religious community
Response is new and ongoing, developing, coming out of the mutual telling
How is our present action -- where we started -- creative or noncreative related to the future?

Shared Praxis is a process that occurs over and over.

Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis Model

Graphic Presentation of the Shared Praxis Module, adapted from Thomas Groome, *Christian Education,* HarperSan Francisco, 1980

Note: The numbering of the parts differs from sample in the book because the developer of the graphic added the "Focusing Activity" that is not in the model per se. In the following "Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis Model", Rev. Betty Jo Middleton uses slightly different terms, but the process is similar.



Shared Praxis had been the format of a number of Unitarian Universalists curricula, such as Messages *in Music, Stepping Stone Year, Travel in Time, Around the Church/Around the Year, and In Our Hands.*

Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis Model Sample

Topic: ***Each Person is Unique***

I. Focus: Materials for making personalized nametags. For younger children, you can use large gingerbread person cookie cutters, paper, markers, embroidery floss or yarn, etc.; for older children, have large cards and suggestions to put names in the center, and something about self in each corner of the card (such as: best feature, goal in life, favorite subject in school, something I like to do).

II. Naming Our Knowing: As the group gathers, each person tells about their nametag and anything else about themselves they care to.

III. Critical Reflection: Ask something like, "Why did each of us make the name tag we did? What things about ourselves are easiest to depict or talk about? What things are not so easy?" And, "In what ways are we all alike? How are we different?"

IV. Story and Vision: Read or tell a story or share a picture book about differences and similarities in people, emphasizing that the faith community believes that all people are important.

V. Story and Story: Talk about the *Community Story* (book or story shared) and compare/contrast with participants' stories about themselves.

VI. Vision and Vision: Song, game, art project or other activity that will give participants an opportunity to further explore the *Community Vision* and develop their own.
EXAMPLES: Making fingerprints or handprints and comparing them shows dramatically the differences between people, the uniqueness of each one. (Magnifying glasses are useful for the comparisons.) Make individual or group collages showing peoples of diverse populations.

VII. Personal Faith Response for the Future: In closing, go around the circle and invite each participant to share an "I message" about the morning's theme; teachers may want to go first to provide a model, such as "I want to remember that people don't all have to look the same to be okay," but emphasize that any "I..." response is acceptable. You may want to sing *I'm Unique and Unrepeatable* in conclusion.

Rev. Betty Jo Middleton

Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

Teaching and Learning in Unitarian Universalist Parish Life:
Placing Children at the Center

Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D., February 15, 2004

Introduction

I place working with children at the heart of thinking about adult teacher development. Most people teach because they want to be with children. Children are natural spiritual guides. They are comfortable with the process of seeking. They are immediate in their response to love and injustice. They are forgiving companions for a journey of faith.

Questions

- How does being with children nurture teachers?
- What is unique about being a part of a Unitarian Universalist lifespan faith development program with children?
- How can we further illuminate what is learned through the process of teaching in our parishes, both for children and adults?
- How can we support the learning communities of our classrooms and programs, with specific attention to teachers?

How does being with children nurture teachers?

The premise that children nurture their teachers is a radical one. It demands that we examine more deeply what touches us as adults working with children. Uncovering what is joyful, provocative and spiritual about being with children is both an individual and shared process. Creating processes that allow teachers to reflect about what they are gaining from being with children in RE is an essential step in understanding and supporting teachers. Structuring teaching so that adults can take time to enjoy and learn from children is essential.

Seeing the world through the eyes of the child is a gift. Walking slowly on the beach, with a toddler as our guide, we are overwhelmed at the intrigue and beauty that we see. Teaching and learning with children can provide alternate lens for teachers. Children's clarity can be startling. A youth says: "people would think you were nuts if you did that Jesus turning the other cheek thing in middle school," and the lesson takes a turn from philosophy to authentic life. A five year old says, "God doesn't really make babies but he doesn't mind if we say that anyway," and the teacher doesn't need to comment. Later she asks, "Are there some things that God does mind?" and adults and children ponder together the potentials of rights, wrongs, God and godlessness.

Children demand authenticity and force adults to declare truths, large and small. Teaching children during September 11, 2001, we as teachers were forced to reveal our sense of vulnerability to children. We also worked hard to maintain that we could indeed keep our communities safe. These conversations with children forced us to confront our concerns and claim our strength, as people of faith, anew. Many adults I worked with felt that teaching children was their most spiritually fortifying experience around September 11th.

Children also force us to explain parish life. Teaching three years olds this fall, I encountered a wonderful boy who asked me, "Can I walk in your maze [our outdoor labyrinth] sometime?" The way he worded this question made me pause: My maze? I explained (after giving him a clear **yes**) that the maze belongs to all of us at church. I told him that one of the things that makes church special is that we share everything and that we're all in charge of taking care of everything together. When he replied, "Oh, so this is my room too, and my maze," I knew that we had shared and learned together a truth about what it means to be a parish member that is dear to us both.

What is unique about being a part of a Unitarian Universalist lifespan faith development program with children?

Searching for truth and meaning, is one of our core Unitarian Universalist principles. All learners in UU RE programs (teachers and children) are explicitly on this journey together. Since our faith and our ways of teaching do not follow a transmission (tell/remember) model, the process of learning becomes a process of the creation of our theology. We are a living faith.

When creating resources for lifespan faith development at the UUA, we always consider four aspects of development that occur through our religious education programs: Ethical development, Faith development, Unitarian Universalist identity development and Spiritual development. These aspects or strands reveal the complexity and strength of what we are learning in RE programs. In the process, we further define Unitarian Universalism for children and adults; we deepen our understandings of our faith. Considering these four strands, may help teachers better articulate what they are learning and how they are developing as adults of faith. The four strands may be tools for self or group reflection that support teaching as a spiritual act.

How can we further illuminate what is learned through the process of teaching in our parishes, both for children and adults?

Teaching and learning in our lifespan faith development programs is spiritual engagement. Much of what we do for children sustains our greater parish communities. Working with children, we often create routines or rituals, which help them to quickly gain a sense of belonging. Thinking deeply about what we do on behalf of children can help teachers realize how essentially spiritual their work with children is. I offer two examples: Snack and the fall water communion.

- **Snack**. I always make snack part of any religious education experience that I plan or teach. The sharing of food is a sacrament of hospitality and of coming together. To have and enjoy food together is a simple grace, a shared human experience that is both ordinary and sacred. It is through our deep enjoyment with each other, our sense of wonder and sense of gratitude that faith develops. We nourish our authentic selves and grow our souls. Snack both literally and metaphorically is central to this process with children.
- **Water communion**. Our parish community is a place where we make what is common, wondrous. We ask children to bring water from an ordinary or special summer place, to church with them in the fall. We know that our faith is one that welcomes us with our diverse experiences and paths. We come together, literally and symbolically, as a community in the fall. The water from the backyard sprinkler is offered and received from a child. The spirituality of everyday life is illuminated.

How can we support the learning communities of our classrooms and programs, with specific attention to teachers?

Supporting teachers means supporting the children who are learning with them. Our lifespan learning environments must be ones that allow children to be natural spiritual seekers. This happens when adults are able to conceptualize teaching as engaging children in pondering the spiritual, seeking justice, searching for what is true, learning about what is ethical and creating our Unitarian Universalist faith. Provisions of adequate space, adults, curriculum, pastoral assistance and parish support, free teachers to enter fully into teaching as a spiritual act. The joys of teaching and learning with children can be realized most deeply when an adult enters with a lens of learning and a commitment to creating faith together. Small group ministry with teachers, journaling exercises, spiritual companioning, and reframing religious education in the lives of congregations, may all be tools for adults in this process.

The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act
Dr. Barry Andrews

I would like to share a few thoughts with you about teaching-and I mean especially religious education-as a spiritual practice. In my twenty years as a religious educator I have recruited hundreds of church schoolteachers. I am deeply grateful to them for volunteering. The lives of our children and youth have been tremendously enriched by the contribution of these men and women. The fact is, the congregations I have served simply couldn't have had a religious education program without them. Some of those who volunteered were teachers in the public schools, but the overwhelming majority was not. I would say that about ninety percent of them had no previous experience as teachers. Most were simply well intentioned parents who had relatively little experience working with children in groups. I don't mean for a moment to suggest that any of these people were lesser Sunday school teachers for not having a background in education. Far from it. Nor do I wish to slight professional teachers who love children and teaching so much that they are willing to give an extra day of the week to R.E.

But I do mean to say that what is important in religious education is not how much you know about children, teaching or even Unitarian Universalism, but how much you are willing to give of yourself, of your soul. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "In dealing with my child, my Latin and Greek, my accomplishments and my money stead me nothing; but as much soul as I have avails." I would say that this is true of religious education as well. We do try to equip Sunday school teachers with the basics with training and advice about teaching, curriculum, and the Unitarian Universalist philosophy of religious education. We try to pair new teachers with more experienced ones. We encourage teachers to attend workshops and classes. But there is only so much we can do with the time we have. The fact of the matter is that the best education our volunteers can receive about managing a classroom or what it means to be a practicing Unitarian Universalist is through the experience of teaching itself. I would be the last to suggest that knowledge doesn't count; but it is not the most important asset in religious education. The essential qualities of a good church schoolteacher are a love of children, a sense of wonder about life, empathy and the ability to listen, and a willingness more to share who you are than what you know. Above all, teachers are mentors and companions of the children as they undertake their religious journeys in life.

Compared to other churches and religious traditions, Unitarian Universalism is not strongly identified. Despite our inclusiveness and generosity of spirit, Unitarian Universalism is hardly a household word. Unitarian Universalist children and youth can feel isolated among their peers and family relatives. Our intellectual thrust is hard for young children to grasp. It can be difficult even for our youth to explain to others what a Unitarian Universalist is or believes. Our heritage is distinguished, but it is not rich with tradition the way Catholicism and Judaism are. We have only recently begun to develop distinct rituals, traditions and symbols, which are important building blocks of a child's religious identity. Without a sense of tradition, being a Unitarian Universalist can resemble being a Democrat or Republican. It may be what a child thinks or even stands for, but it is not necessarily who he or she is.

Having a Unitarian Universalist religious identity is not necessarily the same thing as knowing our history and heritage, although it includes them. Our heritage is made up of our values and ideals, our art, architecture, music and poetry, our summer camps and sacred sites, our traditions and folklore. Our history includes all the facts about us--people, places and events, not only "from long ago and many lands," but also here and now at our own churches and fellowships. Fundamentally, religious identity is a feeling that, "This is my church. People know me here. And I know them." As much as a knowledge of their history and heritage, children need experiences of common worship, intergenerational activities, and "at-homeness" in the church, including familiar faces and spaces. This is a tall order. Helping to nurture a sense of religious identity is primarily a parental responsibility. But those of us in religious education have made a commitment to aid and abet the

parents of our congregation's children in this important effort. We guarantee, as parents or teachers, that our children will remain Unitarian Universalists. We do believe, after all, that at some point our children will make their own decisions about religion, as well as other matters. But as long as they are with us we can foster their sense of identity as Unitarian Universalists, and, in this way, at least increase the odds that they will continue to find a religious home here.

I put the emphasis on religious identity because it involves more than knowing about our Unitarian Universalist history and heritage, even our principles. Religion is not, fundamentally, *about* anything. Religion is life. Or as Emerson put it, religion is neither doctrines nor rituals; "it is not something else *to be got,* to be *added,* but it is a new life of those faculties which you have." If it is *about* anything, religion is about being alive and engaged in the world. It is 'about enchantment and compassion. And it is about transformation and self-renewal. For William Ellery Channing, "The great end in religious instruction is to awaken the soul, to excite and cherish spiritual life." As religious educators, our task "is not to stamp our minds on the young, but to stir up their own; not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth; . . . not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs." In all the years since Channing wrote these words, no one has said anything wiser and more profound on the subject of religious education. Teaching the young, then, is not about filling their heads, but expanding their horizons; it is not about charting a course for them, but about being companions with them on their own journey in life. I am convinced that in religious education "the soul only avails," and that teaching is a spiritual practice requiring a certain discipline or adherence to fundamental principles. Perhaps you have others to add to the list, but here are the seven principles I would suggest as essential to the spiritual practice of religious education.

The first principle is *respect the children.* Our program is not centered on the curriculum, but on the child. If I may, I would like to offer yet another bit of advice from Emerson, who had this to say: "Our own experience with children instructs us that the secret of education is in respecting the children. It is not for us to choose what they shall know, what they shall do. By our tampering and thwarting and too much governing they may be hindered from their end. Respect the children. Be not too much their parent. But we hear the outcry which replies to this suggestion-Would you throw up the reigns of discipline? Would you leave the young to the mad career of their own passions and whimsies and call this anarchy a respect for children's nature? We answer, Respect the children, respect them to the end, but also respect yourselves. Be the companions of their thoughts, the lovers of their virtue. Let them find us so true to our own selves, that they will be true to theirs."

My second principle, then, is *be true to yourself* Confront the children, as Sidney Harris suggests, with your own humanhood. By being exposed to a variety of adults, children and youth learn more about the possibilities of being human. This includes sharing your own faith and religious identity. Unitarian Universalism is not a normative religion. There is no one way of being Unitarian Universalist, and children benefit from being exposed to a multiplicity of perspectives. What is important is that we embody our faith, that we are an example to children and youth of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. And when you talk with children, speak from the heart; answer for yourself as a living, breathing Unitarian Universalist, and not as a spokesperson for an official Unitarian Universalist point-of-view.

My third principle is *promote community.* One of the basic rights of children, recognized by the United Nations, is the right to a religious identity. We all experience a need to belong and to be accepted. A good community, in the words of TV's Mr. Rogers, "likes you just the way you are." A good community leaves no child behind--not the shy, the handicapped, the infrequent attendee, not even the disruptive or the hard-to-reach. It is in community, when we gather together in a special place, that our faith and values take on a visible shape, where our Unitarian Universalist principles are promoted and reinforced. And, truth be told, in providing a place for children and youth, we are developing a valuable sense of community for ourselves, too.

My fourth principle is *make it sacred.* As a minister of religious education I am painfully aware of how difficult it is to be spiritual amidst the welter of activities in the RE wing on Sunday mornings. Nevertheless, the primary reason people come to churches and bring their children is to develop a spiritual life. Spirituality has many facets, of course, including social outreach and teaching in the church school. But whatever we do as teachers, consultants and committee members needs to be performed in light of our Unitarian Universalist principles and with the intention of touching inward springs, as Channing suggests. This is why worship is so important, not only in the Chapel and the Worship Hall, but in the classroom as well.

My fifth principle is *cultivate your soul.* As much as children and youth need a spiritual life, teachers need one, too. We all lead busy, stressful lives, juggling jobs, personal needs and family obligations. But, the fact is, we can only give out of a fullness of the soul, never out of an emptiness. To be effective teachers we need to awaken and excite our slumbering souls, to rediscover a sense of wonder. As Dag Hammarskjold once said, "We die on the day when our lives cease to be illuminated by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond reason." The good news is that the children, according to Swiss psychologist Alice Miller, are "messengers from a world we once deeply knew, but have long since forgotten." As we walk the spiritual path with them, they help us to remember.

My sixth principle is grow in *your faith.* Embrace your own spiritual identity as a Unitarian Universalist. Discover the richness of your religious history and heritage. By immersing yourself in your faith you will find that you will grow, as your children have done, by a process of enlargement, leading to new vistas of understanding and appreciation. There are many opportunities for growth as a Unitarian Universalist. There are district retreats, summer conferences, Renaissance Modules, the annual General Assembly, and workshops and classes in local congregations. And, of course, there are many books you might wish to read as well.

My seventh and last principle is *put down roots.* Thomas Jefferson once said that he was content to be a Unitarian by himself. If we all felt that way, Unitarian Universalism would be a one-generation phenomenon. If we feel grateful for the fact that this congregation was here for us when we needed it, we must take responsibility for making it a sanctuary for others. Our work as religious educators is a vital part of the life of the congregation as a whole, and what we do for children and youth cannot be done in isolation. Therefore, I would urge all of you to take an active interest in the affairs of the congregation-its meetings, committees, and fund-raising efforts. Get involved in the issues facing your congregation. Make your voice heard, and be an advocate for the needs of the children and youth.

The reason why I love my work as a religious educator is that in the course of a few short years I can see the results of my efforts coming to fruition right in front of me. I witness the wide-eyed innocence of the very young and the growing self-assurance of youth. Working with children and youth renews my sense of wonder and hope. And I am a better Unitarian Universalist for what they have taught me. It may be heresy to say so, but I could exist without the church. So could our children. But I do not come here just to exist; I come here to find out what it means to be a spiritual person. And the children have taught me as much about this as anyone.

Summary of Seven Principles of Making Teaching a Spiritual Act – with suggested Tools for Teachers and Packet Readings

- adapted from Barry Andrews, "Soul Only Prevails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act"

- The first principle is *respect the children.* Respect the children, respect them to the end, but also respect yourselves. Be the companions of their thoughts, the lovers of their virtue. Let them find us so true to our own selves, that they will be true to theirs.
    - Tools for Teachers: Knowledge of the following can serve as tools, including knowledge of child development; recognition that people learn in different ways; ability to listen; confidence to suspend "curriculum" to hear the concerns of children
    - Packet readings to note:
        - Teaching and Learning in Unitarian Universalist Parish Life: Placing Children in the Center
        - The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act
        - Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay on the Theology of Teaching
        - UU Teacher Development: Using a Small Group Ministry Model

- The second principle, then, is *be true to yourself.* When you talk with children, speak from the heart; answer for yourself as a living, breathing Unitarian Universalist, and not as a spokesperson for an official Unitarian Universalist point-of-view.
    - Tools for Teachers: It's easier for people to be true to themselves if they are relaxed. Providing teachers with enough structure to be successful allows them to unfold as a teacher. Provision of appropriate level of teaching, curriculum that is do-able, and support help teachers be free to be themselves.
    - Packet readings to note:
        - Levels of Teaching
        - Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers
        - Care and Feeding of Volunteers

- The third principle is *promote community.* It is in community, when we gather together in a special place, that our faith and values take on a visible shape, where our Unitarian Universalist principles are promoted and reinforced.
    - Tools for Teachers: Teaching, even team teaching, can make adults feel apart from "upstairs" congregational life. Team teaching, teaching rotation schedules that allow teachers to be part of a larger team rotated "off" regularly, monthly teacher "breakfasts" or gatherings, teacher small group ministries, and communication mechanisms (such as newsletters or email updates) that update the congregation of what teachers/children are doing can all be tools.
    - Packet readings to note:
        - Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers
        - A Few Thoughts about Recognition and Support of Teachers

- The fourth principle is *make it sacred.* The primary reason people come to churches and bring their children is to develop a spiritual life.
    - Tools for Teachers: Many adults need help in seeing their work with children as ministry to and with children. Providing teachers with opening chalice lighting scripts, ways to pray and/or meditate with children, and hints about creating space as sacred are all helpful tools.
    - Packet readings to note:
        - Teacher Dedication: Homecoming Sunday
        - Appendix 2: Spiritual Practices with children
        - Appendix 1: Small Group Ministry

- The fifth principle is *cultivate your soul.* As much as children and youth need a spiritual life, teachers need one, too. To be effective teachers we need to awaken and excite our slumbering souls, to rediscover a sense of wonder.
    - Tools for Teachers: Frame teaching as a spiritual, soul enriching experience. Provide teachers with ways to spiritually center their experience. Even weekly evaluation sheets can provide an intervention of this type—ask teachers to reflect about **their** experience, and **their** connections to others and the materials. Encourage teachers to grow with enrichment opportunities, as you are able.
    - Packet readings to note:
        - UU Church School Program – Teacher's Weekly Report Form
        - Alternative Teacher Reflection Form

- The sixth principle is grow in *your faith.* Embrace your own spiritual identity as a Unitarian Universalist.
    - Tools for Teachers: Make teaching relational for teachers—keep in touch with their processes—and if your program is too large to do so, then create a system of peer/congregant support. Ours is a lived, relational faith and we need each other to grow.
    - Packet readings to note:
        - Appendix 2: Spiritual Practices with children
        - Appendix 1: Small Group Ministry

- My seventh and last principle is *put down roots.*
    - Tools for Teachers: Recruitment and retention of teachers depends on linking the teaching experience as integral to the life of the church. Teacher recognition, teacher dedications, and communal expressions of gratitude can help teachers understand how serving the faith development program is serving the greater congregation.
    - Packet readings to note:
        - A Few Thoughts about Recognition and Support of Teachers

Meadville Lombard Mid-Winter 2003 Presentation
Universalist Spirituality in Religious Education
The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth M. Strong

"Ask me whether what I have done is my life."

In his book *Let Your Life Speak,* Parker Palmer poses this question from a line in William Stafford's poem, Ask Me.

It gave me pause to reflect on my life and how I have lived it. How does my life speak to how I have lived? Is what I have done been my life? What have been the factors that enabled me to make my initial response to the question a yes? I am a white woman, an identical twin, a third generation Universalist, a minister of religious education, a mother, a grandmother, and a friend. Each of these designations has given me experiences that shaped my life in profound ways. As a child growing up in a Universalist home and faith, I believed there was a God somewhere who loved me and all of creation. My mother and my father told me so, my Sunday School teachers told me so, and what I experienced in my home and in my church affirmed what I was told. I believed that we are created by a loving God and are therefore called to listen to our lives with reverence. My Universalist God was, in the words of agnostic Robert Ingersoll, a God who would leave the latch string out until the last child was home.

In the Sunday school we learned this Covenant: Love is the doctrine of this church, the quest of truth is its sacrament, and service is its prayer. To dwell together in peace, to seek knowledge in freedom, to serve human need to the end that all souls shall grow into harmony with the Divine – Thus do we covenant with each other and with God.

This was a powerful message, and one which has served me well in my years. I always understood that love was at the center of Universalism, that truth was something to strive for in all aspects of my life, that I needed to act on my beliefs in the service of humankind, and that in the end, all would be well.

For me the essence of Universalism lies in the message of God as a transformative power of love available to all people and, that that theology grounds us in an ethical and moral response to our individual lives and to all humankind as participants in that love. I internalized that as meaning that humankind was inherently good, and that was the reason our behavior was to be good. It was the highest level of moral development and, with a bit of humor stated that we were to be good for nothing. That because humankind was created out of goodness to be good, that was all the reason we should need for our behavior to be good.

I have come to realize how deeply my Universalist heritage from childhood is interwoven into what I know as an adult. I do not need to question that I am a Universalist. I understood the faith long before I knew

the theology or history of Universalism. It is that depth of knowing as we engage in liberal religious discourse within Unitarian Universalism that I want us to reach in our experiences and knowledge. An educational practice that congruently relates intuitive experience with learning enhances the depth of one's spiritual life. Universalist Professor Angus MacLean told us that in his 1962 pamphlet *The Method is the Message*. How we teach reflects not only what is learned by the pupil, but also who we are as a person, as a teacher, and as a spiritual and religious being.

Parker Palmer uses different language, but he is giving us the same message. In *The Courage to Teach* he writes that good teaching cannot be reduced to technique, good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.

The historical struggle of Universalists throughout the centuries to affirm their own identity and integrity as a religious people was difficult and not at all affirmed by the society around them. Their efforts to affirm and teach their faith was denigrated vehemently as testified to by Universalist minister John Coleman Adams who lived from 1849 to 1922, in this quote: "Wherever the heralds of the new doctrine went, they were encouraged and sustained in their work by those who received it with joy and provided for its hearing and helped it spread. They gathered in halls, in school-houses, in court-houses, in private dwellings, in barns, sometimes in the open air, to hear the proclamation of these new tidings of joy. They were attacked and they were slandered; they were threatened with violence and with the law of the land; they were made to suffer social ostracism and business boycott; they were treated as heretics and infidels; friends grew cold and enemies plotted against them. It was no light matter to be a Universalist in those days"[1]

But as the Universalists met and faced the challenges to their theology and practices they maintained the integrity of their faith. Within the broad story of Universalism their religious education story is a powerful reminder of how to advocate for one's faith, how to nurture one's spiritual life, and how to remain relevant in a rapidly and vastly changing world.

As I read Palmers descriptions of the community of truth I could not help but marvel at how our Universalists ancestors were able to create their small communities of truth in such hostile environments.

I was fortunate to grow up in a small Universalist community where my teachers and mentors were family friends and neighbors. At the youth gatherings and at summer camp at Unirondack all of the leaders and counselors were the ministers and religious educators from the New York State Convention of Universalists. As a teenager I knew most all of the ministers in the Convention and had many conversations with them about such wondrous things as infinity and the concept of nothingness. And I learned through them the history of the struggles and the beliefs of my people of faith.

I have come to understand the depth of their influence on my life and, again in Palmer's words, to understand the power in their capacity to awaken in me a truth I have been able to reclaim in my adult life as I

recall them from memory. It is why we light candles to remember our mentors, and why the Service of Living Tradition is so powerful. It is why our Memorial Services are not only a mourning of loss but also a celebration of a life. By remembering our mentors we remember ourselves, as Palmer says, and by remembering ourselves, we remember those who we teach.

Then as now challenges and changes that surround us have a profound impact on who and what we become as a person, and collectively as a people. As we traverse our individual religious journeys we must not forget to remember the sources and roots of the religious tradition that now claims our hearts and souls and see only what the present circumstances offer.

Parker Palmer reminds us to remember who we were when we first arrived. Universalism is a very old faith within the Christian context. "…the first system of Christian theology was composed and issued by Origen in the year 230 after Christ, of which a fundamental essential element was the doctrine of Universal restoration of all fallen beings to their original holiness, and union with god."[2]

Therefore, if we are to remember Universalism into life today, if we are to remember who we were when we first arrived, we must start with our understanding that we are beings who were created in a sacred holiness and we will end in union with that holiness: however you define what that holiness is. It is Universalism's steadfast beliefs in faith, hope, and love that enabled our ancestors to forge a then heretical belief in a God of love, no hell, and salvation for all.

In *The Courage to Teach* Palmer talks about teaching in a culture of fear. While the circumstances are different we can certainly learn much from our Universalist ancestors about how to live and flourish within a culture of fear. The source of the fear came to Universalists from orthodox Christianity rather than from an educational system. In the late 1700's and early 1800's the Universalists espoused the religious expression that was feared by orthodoxy above all others and the orthodox response to it caused a culture of fear within the Universalists.

Universalist minister and educator John Coleman Adams wrote of that fear, "The 'scheme of salvation was a closely reasoned, logically built system, whose parts depended one upon the other, like stones in an arch. But the keystone is the vulnerable place in the arch, the strategic point, so to speak, of the structure, and the keystone of American Orthodoxy was the doctrine of everlasting punishment….If, for instance, there were no hell, why should there be any need of the vicarious atonement?...No theological question was ever debated with more eagerness and heat than that of the final salvation of all men. It was fundamental, it was pervasive, it was personal."[3]

Because Universalism arrived in America in at least five formulations it was necessary for them to create a Profession of Faith in 1790 to meet the harsh criticism of their belief in universal salvation and no hell. From our own theologians of the time there was the Trinitarian Calvinist Universalism of John Murray that held

that in Adam all fell and in Christ and from George de Benneville came a mystical Universalism which he formulated from several near-death experiences. In 1805 Hosea Ballou espoused a deterministic Universalism where God saves all creation and one cannot not be saved. From its beginning the theology of Universalism has been on a lifespan faith development journey along with its adherents. It was important for them to know themselves as they were known by others, and to understand who they were as they were known among themselves, and they had to articulate that knowing succinctly. It demanded of them a radical commitment to their faith.

HAND OUT PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

There have been five major statements of faith by the Universalists that demonstrate how the theological process evolved from 1790 to 1961. They are the Philadelphia Profession of 1790, the Winchester Profession of 1803, the Five Principles of Universalism of 1899, the 1935 Bond of Union and the 1961 Principles of the newly formed Unitarian Universalist Association.

Angus MacLean again reminds us of this need to be ever facing the future. In his book *The Wind in Both Ears* he writes: We wonder about truth, about all the whats and whys and withers of life. Wondering is very important, but it should bear the fruits of faith and thought, and it should turn our faces to whatever is coming down the winds of time and circumstance. We should be finding ourselves on the highway to the realization of great human goals, but there is no clear light on the highway except as an individual may see it for him or herself.[4]

He reminds us to always face into the future, or the wind, in such a way as to hear the wind in both ears, or listen to both sides of the answers we receive to our questionings as we move along on our religious journey.

As Universalism moved theologically their efforts in the Sunday school reflected and responded to these challenges as well as to the cultural challenges of the day. While there are many sources of the Sunday school Movement, one that can be traced with clear and direct lineage involves Universalists at the outset.

Both the Methodists and the Universalists lay claim to the first Sunday school in America. Dr. Benjamin Rush, an ardent Universalist in Philadelphia was one of a group of men who came together in 1791 to begin the First Day School Society.

By 1819 the First Day Schools were replaced by the religious schools of the evangelical Protestant church. These schools were ecumenical in their early nature, but evolved into a separate congregational endeavor and, much later, into denomination-wide systems.

Parker Palmer reminds us that community is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, the flowing of personal identity and integrity into the world of relationships. With his definition of

community, even though he is referring to an educational community of learning, I can better understand the Universalists' need to bring their children into their faith community for instruction and spiritual nurture.

Palmer's model of the community of truth in which a great subject is at the center of learning made me think more deeply about what was going on for Universalists a century ago. For Universalists of the time the Bible was the great subject at the center of learning, but the structure was certainly the mythical objective model. Catechisms had long been the methodology most favored, but at the turn of the last century new ideas were entering the field of education from the progressive education movement.

From the 1870's through 1901 Universalists had been publishing materials in the form of Sunday school helps and articles in the denomination's newspaper that supplemented the Uniform Lesson System of the Evangelical Protestants, a system in which they had participated since its inception in 1872.

In 1901 Universalists published their first graded series for their Sunday schools and in 1912 *The Murray Graded Sunday School Lessons*, were published that reflected higher biblical criticism, evolutionary theory, progressive education theory, and geological research. By the 1930's these lessons were no longer reflective of Universalist theology as seen by the 1935 Bond of Union.

The religious education ancestors of Universalism were participants in the rise of the Sunday school movement and contributed significant scholarship to it. It is a heritage of which Unitarian Universalists can be proud.

We have responded to an angry God with a loving God. We have asserted that God is One and God is Love. We have affirmed Jesus as teacher and Prophet. We have affirmed the capacity and worthiness of humankind, of truths known and to be known, and that all religions have some truth but no one religion has all the truth. We have moved with an evolving culture and increased knowledge with reason and faith, hope and tolerance, love and freedom.

We embrace the ethical teachings of the world's religions, the transformative power of love, the belief in human potential, the necessity to co-create good, justice, and mercy, and the need to gather in community. We have embraced the ability to disagree in love, to nurture individual differences within caring communities, and to be prepared for change while engaging in scientific inquiry that honors our spiritual needs. We are, as Parker Palmer reminds us, "participants in a vast communion of being." And we can affirm what Thomas Merton writes, "there is in all living things a hidden wholeness."

I learned this all from mentors, teachers, and parents who served as my spiritual guides. I, as a Universalist can only stand here and tell you I believe that the transformative power of Love is eternal and all conquering and, in the words of Julian of Norwich, in the end all shall be well.

Footnotes

1) John Coleman Adams, Universalism and the Universalist Church (Boston: The Universalist Publishing House, The Murray Press, 1915), 25-26

2) Richard Eddy, Universalism in America, Volume II, 1801-1886 (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1886), 416

3) John Coleman Adams, Universalism and the Universalist Church (Boston: The Universalist Publishing House, The Murray Press, 1915), 25-26

4) Angus MacLean, The Wind in Both Ears (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 133.

Unitarian Universalist Teacher Development
Using a Small Group Ministry Model

Gail Forsyth-Vail, Adult Programs Director, UUA,
Ministries and Faith Development

Role of the teacher

1. Mentor, guide, facilitator
2. Representative of the congregation in companioning youth and children on their spiritual journey
3. Primary pastoral caregiver for children

Skills/personal qualities that enhance teaching

1. Personal spiritual practice and the ability to reflect on life's journey
2. Understanding that spiritual journey is not a ladder, but rather a process
3. Confidence to "go with the flow" and draw out the thoughts of the children
4. Willingness to be silly, adventurous, etc, in order to encourage children to try out new experiences and ideas
5. Classroom management skills

Method for developing skills/personal qualities

1. A once monthly small group session in a covenanted group using the small group ministry format:
    - Check-in
    - Opening story/question/reflection
    - Individual responses to the question at hand
    - Conversation about responses
    - Questions/problems/concerns about situations or children
    - Closing
2. Possible topics for reflections might include:
    - A conversation about our own wilderness journeys in preparation for a session on the Exodus
    - A conversation about balance in our lives in preparation for a session on Buddhism
    - A conversation about death in preparation for a session on death and dying.
3. Religious professional would carefully plan, prepare, and facilitate the sessions.

Benefits to the teacher

1. The teacher would have a chance to reflect regularly on his/her spiritual journey with other adults.
2. The teacher would have the support of others in figuring out how to handle sticky situations.
3. The teacher would feel competent to lead a class, and comfortable with sharing "processed" parts of their own journey with children.
4. The teacher's spiritual journey would become a gift to the children of the congregation.
5. The teacher's contribution would be respected as that of guide and mentor, representing the congregation in companioning its children as they grow in faith.

Benefits to the congregation and the children

1. The congregation would be seeded with many adults who have done some thoughtful spiritual work. This approach would deepen the religious life of the congregation.
2. Children would have models, mentors, and guides all the way through as they learn how to take responsibility for their own spiritual well being and to reflect thoughtfully on their own life experiences.
3. Group wisdom would be available for help with "extra care required" children.

4. Pastoral needs of children would receive true attention.
5. Children would have the chance to truly know others in the congregation and to be known.
6. Parents would have a format for sharing pieces of their own spiritual journey with their children and with other children.

Potential problems/drawbacks to this approach

1. It requires time, perhaps more time than adult volunteers are willing to devote to personal spiritual growth (at least one 2-hour session per month and some regular reflection time).
2. There is no provision in this model for a safe congregation orientation (minimum one hour) or for a basic “nuts and bolts” orientation.
3. It requires the attention and time of a religious professional to work with the teachers and to prepare and facilitate the sessions.

Session 3: Supporting Children as Learners and Seekers

Disability Etiquette

By Reverend Dr. Devorah Greenstein, Accessibilities Associate, Identity Based Ministries, UUA

Etiquette may seem a rather formal term to portray the give and take of our interactions with other people. And yet, etiquette really feels like the right word to use to describe the thoughtful, considerate behavior that we expect to receive from others and give to them.

This is the mission of our faith:
To teach the fragile art of hospitality;
To revere both the critical mind and the generous heart;
To prove that diversity need not mean divisiveness;
And to witness to all that we must hold the whole world in our hands.

- Rev. William F. Schulz, Reading 459, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Until you know someone with a disability, you may never have had reason to think about the key points that make relationships with someone who has a disability easier and more relaxed. With the intent to create a welcoming and relaxed environment for everyone, here are some basic ground rules we should all keep in mind.

When you are with a person who has visual impairments:

- Speak directly, not through an intermediary. Use a natural conversational volume and tone.
- When you are greeting a person who is blind or visually impaired, use their name and don't forget to identify yourself. For example, “Hi Sam, it's Joe.”
- When the person enters a room, be sure to greet them, using your own name (as above).
- It is really okay to use say things like "See you soon." Feel comfortable using everyday words relating to vision like “look”, “see”, “watching TV”.
- During a conversation, give verbal feedback to let them know you're listening. They may not be able to see the expression on your face.
- Do not take care of tasks for a person that they would normally do. First ask if they need help, then offer to assist, and be guided by the person's response to your offer.
- If you see someone about to encounter a dangerous situation, be calm and clear about your warning. For example, if they are about to bump into a pole, calmly and clearly call out, “Wait there for a moment; there is a pole in front of you.”
- Never hold a person's arm while walking. Let the person hold your arm. This will let them walk slightly behind you, and the motion of your body will tell them what to expect. Offer verbal cues as to what is ahead when you approach steps, curbs, escalators, or doors.
- When you leave, say you are leaving. Never leave a person who is totally blind or severely visually impaired in an open area. Instead, lead them to the side of a room, to a chair, or some landmark.

- Never distract, pet, or offer food to a guide dog without permission from the owner. The dog is working and must not be petted without permission.

When you are with a person who has hearing impairments:

- Look directly at the person you are speaking to. If you are working with a sign language interpreter, talk directly to the person who is deaf, not to the interpreter. While working, the interpreter is not a participant in the conversation, but a transmitter for the person who is deaf.
- Don't cover your mouth, and don't create shadow on your face by standing with your back or side to a bright light or window.
- Speak at a slow to moderate rate and don't use exaggerated lip movement. Some people's voices are easier to understand. Women with soft voices can be more difficult to understand.
- If there is a misunderstanding about something you've said, repeat the same idea using different words.
- Keep paper and pen nearby. If communication is difficult, feel comfortable resorting to writing key words or brief phrases – and writing phone numbers or addresses is often a good idea.
- Don't shout – it won't help. Hearing aids make sounds louder, not clearer.
- To get a person's attention, gently tap the Deaf/hard of hearing person on the arm or elbow and make sure they are looking at you before you speak.
- Be aware that being able to hear conversation in a crowd and/or with background noise is most difficult.

When you are with a person who has mobility impairment:

- Look at and talk directly to everyone with whom we converse.
- Be at eye level with everyone with whom we speak, if possible.
- Ask how we can best help when assisting a wheelchair user to go up or down a curb.
- Move crutches, walkers, canes, or wheelchairs only with the permission of the user. Return the devices as soon as possible.
- Ask if and how we can help in buffet lines.
- Respect everyone's individual space. Do not lean on someone's wheelchair.
- Allow children to ask questions and allow the person being questioned to answer.
- Ask “May I help?” when wanting to be helpful. And if given permission to do so, ask “How may I help?” Unsolicited assistance is rude and intrusive.
- People who use wheelchairs are “wheelchair users”, not “confined to a wheelchair”.
- Grasp the push handles tightly so that the chair does not go too fast when helping to guide a wheelchair user down an incline,
- When assisting a wheelchair user go up or down more than one step tilt the wheelchair back at all times while descending or ascending the stairs.

- Learn the location of wheelchair-accessible ramps, rest rooms, elevators, doors, water fountains, and telephones.
- Relax and smile! Very few people (even those with mobility impairments) bite! (That's a joke.) Everyone responds to a smile and a warm “hello”.

When you are with a person who has an invisible disability:

- *Don't refuse to believe what you cannot see* by doubting a person's truthfulness.
- People do not like to always have to identify themselves as a person with a disability. *When planning an event, add a note about accessibility needs with a direct number to a real person.* That opens the door for the person to reach out and not feel like they are imposing.
- The best tactic is to simply *talk to a person and ask what they can and cannot do.*
- *Always assume there is a person with a hidden disability in a group.* So always say “Rise if you are willing and able,” and always plan quick stretch breaks every 30-45 minutes.
- *If a person says they cannot do something, don't try to coax or cajole or convince them to try anyway.*
- *Invite partial participation,* and ask what you can do to make participation possible.
- *A hearing impairment is a hidden disability;* always assume there is a person in your group with hearing loss so face your audience.
- *Don't judge another person's pain or limitations;* accept as true what the person tells you.

When you are with a person who has a learning disability

- *Understand that the term learning disability is broad* and covers many types of learning styles and behavioral differences.
- *Ask a person what accommodation will be most helpful.* Then, with the person as partner, try different strategies.
- *Recognize that a person with learning disabilities has limitations,* as we all do, and be patient, flexible, and realistic, as we should all be with each other.
- *Ask if they have understood specific information* or if the information needs to be communicated in a different way. Ask what works best.
- *Offer encouragement and support...and patience.*

When you are with a person who has a psychiatric problem:

- *Use an open, caring, accepting manner;* find some common ground on which to interact
- *Be genuine;* like anyone else, a person with mental illness can pick up on a false or demeaning approach
- *Try to understand what is being said from the person's perspective;* be comfortable even if you feel this person's mind is working in a way that is different from yours.
- *Stay calm, keep eye contact and retain a calm facial expression and body manner;* what is most important is to communicate that you care.

- *Use sentences and words that are short, simple and uncomplicated.* If something you say is not understood, repeat the message, using other words.
- *Be a good listener.* Don't criticize, lecture, or argue. Try to be supportive. Treat the person with respect.
- *If the person is angry, don't take it personally,* and don't approach or touch the person without his or her request or permission.
- *If the person is willing or indicates a need, offer to get the help of a friend, relative, clergy, or qualified professional.*
- *Focus on the person's strengths and what has been accomplished, and treat this in a positive way.*
- *Structure limits, behaviors and responses in an appropriate way.* Ask for advice about how to handle limit-setting. In a non-judgmental and confidential way, ask your minister, Accessibility or Disability Committee, or Caring/Pastoral Care Committee.

When you are with a person who has multiple chemical sensitivities:

- Choose personal products that are fragrance-free. Be aware that there are hidden, long-lasting fragrances in detergents, fabric softeners, new clothing, deodorants, tissues, toilet paper, potpourris, scented candles, hair sprays, magazines, hand lotions, disposable diapers, and dishwashing liquids.
- Use only unscented soap in restrooms, and carefully wrap and dispose of chemical air “fresheners”
- Designate fragrance-free seating sections for church and community events
- Designate smoking areas away from buildings so people don't have to pass through smoke when entering, or have smoke waft in through doorways or windows
- Adopt a policy of using fragrance-free cleaning products
- Provide adequate ventilation; clean furnace filters frequently
- Make sure toxic substances are labeled, tightly sealed, and stored in a separate safe area
- Post herbicide or insecticide application schedule in your newsletter. Post signs of treatment dates prominently. Use integrated pest management best practices
- Avoid wearing scented personal care products in public places. Improve indoor air quality simply by not wearing fragrance. Fragrance, like second-hand smoke, affects the health of those around you
- Unscented beeswax candles are often well-tolerated by people with sensitivities. Use them, as an alternative to scented or paraffin candles
- Learn what an individual is sensitive/allergic to and make accommodations respectfully

When you are with a person who has special needs:

- Use simple sentences – not baby talk – and please speak in a normal tone of voice – but don't use complex words where simple words will do. Talk to the person as a person; talk to adults as adults, not children. Do not be condescending.
- Find commonalities to talk about – TV shows, movies, church events, families

- Make instructions clear and concise. Don't combine many steps into one instruction.
- Talk with the person even though they may not be verbal enough to respond. If they cannot respond, at the very least, introduce yourself, tell them who you are and that you are pleased to meet them. Shake hands if that is appropriate.
- Give clear, non-judgmental feedback when behavior is not appropriate. If you are unsure about how to respond or handle a situation, ask your minister, Accessibility Committee, family member. Be non-judgmental and patient.
- Be generous, but appropriate, with compliments when behavior is appropriate – or when the person has accomplished a task, or taken initiative.

DISABILITY DESCRIPTIONS

This material is from Sally Patton's book, *Welcoming Children with Special Needs,* published by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Following are stories from children with conditions that may create challenges to participation in an organized program. The brief description of the child is followed by the child's story (in italics). You are the teacher for the group in which the child is or will be participating.

A child in a wheelchair. The Child with a spinal injury can use of the arms with braces, but has no use of the legs. Sometimes the Child involuntarily jerks forward. The Child likes sports and reading poetry.

The last church I went to did not have any ramps so I had to be carried everywhere. It was humiliating. After they brought my chair upstairs, I could not move around much because there was furniture everywhere. The teacher was nice and the kids were curious, but I don't mind that because I am different from them. But, they had this circle meditation and talk and all the kids and teacher sat on pillows on the floor and I sat in my chair and had to look down on everyone. People have a tendency to think I am stupid just because I am in a wheel chair so the teacher and kids talked to me as if I were three years old. Every time I jerked forward, everyone would stop and stare at me. I wish there was a way for me to feel more welcome. I hope my experience in the new church is better.

A child with Down Syndrome. The Child has the visible physical attributes of a Down syndrome child and is aware of this. Sometimes the Child can't follow what is going on, but if someone explains it, the Child feels more comfortable. The Child likes caring for smaller children and singing.

The last church I went to did not think I belonged with other kids my age, so they gave me a special tutor who invented activities for me. I missed being with the other kids. I know I look different and some kids think I am dumb and fat and make fun of me, but still, I'd rather be around other kids. Sometimes I am clumsy and too loud and the teacher and kids get upset. That's why they put me with my own special tutor. I hope in this new church that I get to be with kids.

A child who has ADHD. The Child always has a lot of energy and can't stand to sit still. The Child likes to talk about everything. The Child knows adults think he/she is often disruptive and uncontrollable but the Child doesn't understand why everyone gets so upset. The Child feels that people think he/she is odd and, when things get out of hand, is deliberately trying to be bad. The Child likes to build things and climb trees.)

It was awful at the last church. I got kicked out of the program three times. They kept doing these boring discussion groups so I invented stuff to do to keep me busy-- that is when I got into trouble. Some of the kids like doing things with me and then they also got into trouble. Then they couldn't be friends with me anymore. I don't understand why this happens and it makes me so angry. No one understands. I don't think this new church will be any better. No one ever likes me.

A child with Asperger's Syndrome (high functioning). The Child knows that she/he is different but not why. The Child does not understand people, and thinks of them as alien objects. It makes the Child so uncomfortable to be touched or when someone tries and make eye contact. The child focuses on one thing at a time but not for long. The Child likes dinosaurs and knows everything about when they lived, what they ate, what the different species are. The child wishes they still lived so she/he could have one as a pet.

Mommy and Daddy are making me go to another church. I would rather stay at home and build dinosaurs or read books about dinosaurs. I don't understand why the other kids aren't interested in dinosaurs like I am. The kids annoy me and I would much rather play by myself. At the last church, they wouldn't let me talk about dinosaurs and they wanted me to hold hands all the time. I like to do stuff, though. At this new church I hope I can bring my dinosaurs.

A child with a learning disability. Sometimes the Child feels as if he/she must be from another planet because when he/she talks, people look at him/her funny, as if he/she were strange and not making any sense. The Child tries so hard to understand but always seems to be screwing up. The child thinks he/she is creative and intelligent, but has such difficulty reading the words and doing the math. The Child can invent things in and loves to draw.

I hate school, everyone there thinks I am dumb except for my tutor. I have all these special classes so the kids know I am stupid. In the regular classes I get so anxious that I'm going to screw up, I almost always have a stomachache. The last church we went to wasn't much better than school. They kept having the kids read these stories and everyone knew that the reason I never volunteered to read is because I don't read very well. The discussions were interesting, but whenever they asked me for my opinion I would get so scared that I couldn't say anything. I always had an answer afterwards, but then it was too late. I know I have good ideas though, so, I hope I get to share what's inside of me at the new church.

How to rephrase behavior to make working with ADHD children easier and more productive for everyone. This list is from Sally Patton and was presented at a Mass Bay RE Team presentation in 2003.

Hyperactive	energetic
Impulsive	spontaneous
A daydreamer	creative
Inattentive	global thinker with a wide focus
Unpredictable	flexible
Argumentative	independent
Stubborn	committed to a point of view
Irritable	sensitive
Aggressive	assertive
Attention deficit disorder	unique

Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church
Religious Education Program (adapted)

INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
REFERRAL FOR STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Please complete the front side of this form and submit it to the Director of Religious Education, who will forward it, of necessary, to the Special Needs Liaison to the Religious Education Committee. You will be contacted soon to discuss possible options and program modifications. Thank you for your involvement in this process.

NAME OF CHILD:	
AGE:	CLASS/TEACHER (IF ENROLLED):
PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM:	
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:	DATE:
PARENT/GUARDIAN:	TELEPHONE:

Please briefly describe your concerns and the special needs of the child, using specific examples wherever possible:

What suggestions do you have?

Individual Religious Education Plan
(to be completed by the planning team)

Brief statement of the child's strengths and needs:

Goals/objectives for participation in the RE program related to the child's special needs:

Strategies to be utilized:

Follow up notes:

The Maple Syrup Lady and Other Sticky Subjects

By Judith A. Frediani, Faith Development Resources Director
UUA Ministries and Faith Development

This talk was first given at the *Safe Congregations Conference* January 28, 2006 Milton, MA

Many years ago, I was in a church that had a beautiful grand piano. It also had a woman who liked to pour bottles of maple syrup up and down the keyboard. She would slip into the sanctuary when no one was there and christen all the keys with the sticky imitation stuff. Keyboards don't like maple syrup – real or imitation. The keyboard had to be removed and cleaned at some expense. And, of course, we had no piano for weeks or months during repairs.

From the very first incident, we strongly suspected who it was, although there were no eyewitnesses. But we didn't want to falsely accuse anyone, so we didn't say anything. The second time the keyboard was drenched in syrup. We had to do something, so the minister spoke with the woman and asked her not to do it again. We didn't want to hurt her feelings. And clearly, she had mental health issues – we felt uncomfortable about that. The third time, someone on the Parish Committee said, "Can't we <u>do</u> something? This is getting ridiculous!"

We became aware that the whole congregation was being held hostage to this anti-social behavior; that we all felt powerless and unsafe. Would she attack the historic organ next?
Is it possible she would actually attack a person? (She did seem angry about something!)

The minister again agreed to talk with her, this time saying, "If you come into the building again, we will call the police, and you will be arrested." She never came back.

Most situations are not <u>literally</u> sticky – they are <u>figuratively</u> sticky or worse – they are painful, dangerous or occasionally traumatic. But the common threat to a safe congregation is bad behavior, which comes in many forms. By "bad behavior" I mean behavior that erodes or destroys community. And every congregation – every human community – will experience bad behavior.

But a **safe** congregation does at least three things:
It prevents as much <u>preventable</u> bad behavior as it can,
It <u>stops</u> bad behavior when it is identified,
And it <u>manages the consequences</u> of bad behavior as well as possible.

Much of our work today will address *preventing* bad behavior – or more accurately, taking steps to reduce the risk of harm to our faith communities and their members.
If "an ounce of prevention is indeed worth a pound of cure," a congregation should embrace preventative measures with open arms, but this is not always the case. Some ethical and legal safeguards that a congregation can employ – background checks, for example – may be met with resistance. Prevention or risk reduction can be a sticky subject.

But surely a congregation will be united in ending bad behavior once it has been identified? And the more abusive the behavior and the more vulnerable the victim, the stronger the resolve to take decisive action, right?

Not exactly.

There may be disagreement about whether the behavior is really bad,
Whether it really happened,
And whether a certain individual really did it.
Conflicted feelings and opinions, and uncertainty about rights and responsibilities, will likely lead to denial, hesitation, and avoidance. When bad behavior is first identified, there may be paralyzing conflict about how to proceed. Confronting bad behavior is a sticky subject.

Managing the consequences. Safe congregations follow through. Even when bad behavior has been identified, confronted, and ended; there is still work to be done.

- Is there healing to attend to?
- Justice to pursue?
- What communication is appropriate within the religious community?
- What do children and youth, as well as adults, need to know?
- Are there media and public relations issues to manage?
- Would professional legal, psychological, or other expertise would be helpful?
- Is the congregation divided around this experience? Feeling guilty? Angry?
- What can the congregation learn from this experience?
- What does it need to change, do differently?
- How can it grow in its ministry and faith?

Managing the impact of bad behavior brings up sticky issues.

Risk reduction, confrontation, and impact management all require certain policies, procedures, protocols, and skills that are available to congregations and their leadership.
These measures are very do-able, and many congregations have done what they need to do to protect the safety of their communities. We are here today to learn about many of these strategies to prevent, confront, and cope with bad behavior.

But I need to acknowledge that it can still happen, and it's a terrible shock: someone in the congregation commits a serious but unforeseeable offense within or outside the church. No one could have prevented it. But there it is. And that's when you need to know that you have done what you are ethically, legally, and religiously called to do to protect your congregation, and that you are prepared to respond to this difficult situation effectively. It can be the difference between being weakened or strengthened as a community by the experience.

You probably didn't come here today because you live in fear of someone's pouring maple syrup on your piano. You're probably more concerned about other behaviors – sexual abuse, for example.

Bad behavior is a continuum.
And it is my experience that when we cannot confront someone who dominates every congregational meeting to the point of literally driving people away; when we cannot deal effectively with that bad – but certainly not heinous – behavior, we are not likely the deal well with any bad behaviors and the sticky issues that surround them.

When our piano was being attacked, we went through feelings of discomfort, embarrassment, powerlessness, ambivalence, anxiety, and conflict avoidance.

These responses are common in the face of any number of behaviors on the continuum of "bad."

Policies, procedures, and skills are crucial to creating safe, healthy congregations, but first there has to be clarity about the preciousness of community and the resolve to respect and protect it. We want our congregations to be welcoming places. We want to offer religious hospitality which, in Reverend Peter Morales's words, "touches something very deep in us – our profound human longing to feel accepted, to belong, to be loved, to feel safe, to be valued and respected." This precious place is what we want for ourselves and others, but this is exactly what can be destroyed by bad actions and our ineffective responses to them.

- Sometimes we are ineffective because we lack the needed skills. We can acquire skills we lack.

- And sometimes we are just scared, intimidated, or lacking in courage. We can learn strategies to overcome fear.

- Sometimes safety is jeopardized because we just don't communicate and collaborate.

There was a church with a damp basement. And the preschool was located in the damp basement. The Building and Grounds Committee wanted to ameliorate the situation by installing a de-humidifier. The DRE asked to participate in the plan, especially the installation of this heavy appliance in the toddler room. The chair of the committee agreed, but one Sunday the DRE came in and was surprised to find that an enormous de-humidifier had been installed in the middle of the room on a sharp iron rack at the exact level of a toddler's face.

Beneath this suspended de-humidifier were colorful toddler toys just beckoning children to crawl under, then try to stand up, no doubt hitting their heads. The well-meaning chair of the Building and Grounds Committee wasn't seeing from a toddler's perspective. But a religious educator, teacher, or parent would have. We can consult with our members about their needs – people with disabilities or special needs, elders, children, youth, parents. We can invite input on our space and any changes we plan to make to it.

But I think the trickiest part is the Edwin Markham thing.

You know, the poem "Outwitted:"

He drew a circle that shut me out -

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

As religious communities we find it very hard to draw a circle that shuts one of us out. We struggle with what "the worth and dignity of every person" actually means when one's behavior diminishes others.

- We need to be clear that community is a larger good worth protecting.
- We need to be confident that we can be compassionate to all, and still have high expectations for right relations.
- We need to be able to say, "Our children's safety comes before your discomfort. We have policies."
- We need to be able to say, "Our teenagers' safety comes before our need for their approval. We have boundaries."
- We need to be able to say, "Our community comes before each individual's idiosyncratic needs. We take seriously our stewardship of this beloved community."

Is this always easy and simple? No, it can get sticky.
That's okay-- we can deal with sticky.

Is it a one-time policy statement by the board? No, it is an ongoing process and a culture of health and maturity. Many of our congregations covenant with words such as these:

Love is the spirit of this church,
And service is its law.
This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace,
To seek truth in love,
And to help one another.

Safe congregations are keepers of the covenant. As religious leaders, let us help our precious communities keep their covenant.

Safety, Health and Ethics in Congregations

Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D.

The health and well being of every member of a congregation depends on the development and maintenance of the intentionally safe and healthy congregation. We cannot respect and affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all beings when we do not feel safe. The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations provides comprehensive on-line resources to support healthy and safe congregations. Questions frequently asked by those working in lifespan religious education are listed with resources, sample forms, and step-by-step guides to support safe congregational communities.

Frequently Asked Questions about Health in Congregations with Resources

What can I do to create a congregational environment that is healthy and safe?

- Provide information and procedures to minimize health and safety risks
- Customize forms and procedures provided on links to suit your congregation
- See http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/responsiblestaffing/index.shtml for sample procedures and numerous forms

In the event that a child or youth is injured, what do I do?

- Treat the child; inform the DRE and family; record for congregation files what occurred including treatment; and follow up with child/youth/family as needed
- Incident Report Form

Frequently Asked Questions about Safe Congregations with Resources

Is there one Comprehensive Safe Congregation Resource?

- Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations, by Rev. Debra W. Haffner

http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/index.shtml

What can I do to keep children and youth safe?

- http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/congregationalhandbook/34764.shtml
- Covenant to define adults' responsibility to the children and youth
- Develop and implement congregational policies with responsible staffing
- http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/responsiblestaffing/index.shtml

How can I covenant with those working with youth and children to adhere to Safe Congregations guidelines?

- Screening Form for Religious Educators and Youth Group Staff and Volunteers http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/appendices/23515.shtml
- Agreement to Teach Form for Religious Educators and Youth Group Leaders http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/appendices/23519.shtml
- Code of Ethics http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/appendices/23521.shtml

How can I educate children for safety?

- Provide sexuality and sexual abuse education
- http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/23445.shtml
- Offer age-appropriate messages for preschoolers and elementary school-age children

What do I do in a crisis or if I suspect abuse?

- Suspecting Abuse and Mandated Reporting: http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/23447.shtml
- During a Crisis: http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/23443.shtml

Please contact safecongregations@uua.org for support around Safe Congregation issues.

Sample Screening Form for Religious Educators and Youth Group Staff and Volunteers

Prepared by Rev. Debra Haffner**, on behalf of the UUA**

http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/balancingacts/appendices/23515.shtml

Thank you for your interest in working with the children and youth of our congregation. Our congregation takes seriously our responsibility of assuring the safety of our youth.

Please fill out this form and give it to the religious educator. Thank you for your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of the congregation's children and youth.

NAME:

First Middle Last

Have you ever used a different name? ___No ___Yes

If yes, please list with dates:

How long have you been attending this congregation? _____

ADDRESS:

_____

Street

_____

Town, State, Zip

Number of years at current address: _____

If you have not lived at this address for at least 5 years, please list any previous addresses with dates.

What states have you lived in since you were 18 years old?

Home Phone_____

Work Phone_____

Place of work _____

Number of years at current employment_____

May we call your current employer for a character reference? ____ yes ____ no

If not, please tell us why.

A. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense? If yes, please explain.

B. Have you ever been accused of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor?

If yes, please provide details:

C. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by any employer for reasons related to sexual misconduct or child abuse?

If yes, please provide details:

D. Have you ever been convicted of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor?

If yes, please provide details:

E. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth?

If yes, please provide details.

Congregation History and Prior Work with Children and Youth

List congregations you have attended during the past five years.

Name of congregation: _____

_____

City, State

When did attend _____

List all previous work involving children and youth (list name, type of work performed, person you were responsible to)

Please list two references who are not relatives who have known you for at least three years and who are familiar with your character as it pertain to your experience with children or youth:

1) Name_____ Phone_____

Address_____ Relationship to you:_____

2) Name_____ Phone_____

Address_____ Relationship to you: _____

I authorize the congregation to contact references and other congregations to obtain information about my background regarding my character and fitness for work with children and youth. I authorize references to provide such information about me. I hereby release and hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless this congregation, its trustees, employees and volunteers.

Further, I understand that a member of the staff may check the sex offender registry and/or contact the local police for more information about my background.

This information will be available only to those responsible for screening staff or volunteers or participating in a response team, or as required by law.

I attest that the above information is true and correct.

Signature_____ Date_____

Code of Ethics for Adults and Older Youth
Who are in leadership roles with children/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 _____

Name (printed)

_____

Name (signed)

*This code of ethics was adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1986.
Thank you for being a volunteer in our church school program during the 1995-96 school year. Please read and sign this contract (filling in where necessary), and also read and sign the code of ethics on the back. More information about ethics and safety in congregational settings can be found at http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/index.shtml.

CHURCH SCHOOL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES
University Unitarian Church, sample

At UUC we are concerned with your child's health and safety as well as your child's spirituality and religious education. Children and Youth Programs (CYP) sets up health and safety guidelines for the church school to insure that UUC is a safe and healthy place for all children and youth. Please become familiar with the following guidelines for the church school.

Classroom Drop-off and Pickup
Drop-off for church school begins at 10 minutes prior to the church service. We ask that parents let their child's teacher know that their child is ready to attend class and that the care and responsibility for the child will be shifted to the teacher.

Parents are to pick up their children in grades 3 and under by 10:45am for the first service and 12:30pm for the second service. Only children in the 4th grade and above are allowed to leave the classroom by themselves after church school. Children not picked up by 10:45 and 12:30 will be taken to the Church School office to wait for their parents.

Snacks
Snacks at church school are not meant to be either a meal or a dessert. Crackers and/or fruits and veggies are preferred. Please let church school teachers know of any food allergies or special dietary needs your child has. All food allergies or food not tolerated by your child will be posted in your child's classroom.

Medical Alerts
We ask that parents whose children are on specific medications or have medical conditions alert their child's teachers to their child's special needs as they see fit. Please fill out the Medical Alert Form in your child's classroom and it will be posted.

Infant Room
The church school does not provide snacks for the Infant Room. Please let the Infant Room caregivers know if you bring a bottle or other snack for your infant.

Guidelines for Children Under Age 4
Children under age 4 do well with crackers, dry cereal mixes, soft fruits, and small finger food items. The young toddlers are still learning to use a cup and spills with paper cups are frequent and messy. Therefore, we do not recommend bringing juice for Toddler I and II classes as cleanup is sticky. Water in cups will be provided for these classes. Bottles are fine for all toddlers as long as they are labeled.

Please do not bring the following food items to church school for children ages 3 and under, since they could cause choking: nuts, grapes, raisins, dried fruits, apple slices, hard candy, or popcorn. We also ask that toddlers not bring toys with small pieces or coins to the classroom.

Building Safety
A first aid kit is available in the church school office. An escape plan and location of the fire extinguisher are posted near each classroom door. A review of first aid skills and fire escape plans is part of teacher training. The church school conducts Sunday morning fire drills on the first Sunday in October. A list of CPR trained adults is posted in the church school office.

Playground
Children of all ages enjoy the playground equipment and several classes may be on the playground during fair weather. Children of all ages MUST be supervised by an adult on the playground. This supervision includes the time before and after services. Parents are responsible for supervising their children on the playground after they pick them up from church school.

Illness
Please do not bring children to church school with fever, flu, or communicable illness such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc.

Field Trips
Parents need to sign permission slips when children are leaving the church premises. The destination and expected time of return will be posted in the church school office. The leaders will carry a list of names, emergency contacts, and medical conditions with them at all times. There will be a minimum of two adults with the groups that use vehicles. All drivers must be covered by car insurance. Children 4 and under must be in appropriate car seats and all passengers must wear a seat belt. If a driver is under 21, children may ride only with written permission of a parent or guardian.

Child Protection Safety
A minimum of two adults will be present in the building during youth group meetings and at other events involving children and youth of the church. If a teacher or youth group leader suspects or is made aware of child abuse or has a concern about a child's safety and wellbeing, this information will be reported to the Minister of Religious Education as soon as possible. There must be no use of alcohol or illegal drugs at events involving the children or youth groups.

BLOOD OR BODY FLUID CLEAN UP

A. Keep the children away from the area.

B. Put on the disposable gloves

C. Wipe up blood (or other body fluids) with paper towels.
Throw away dirty paper towels in safe disposal can

D. Dilute the bleach bottle to the line with tap water.

E. Flood contaminated area with diluted bleach.
Let sit at least two minutes.

F. Wipe up with paper towels and throw away.
Wipe area until dry.

G. Using soapy water, wipe area again.
Dry with paper towels.

H. Throw away gloves and
WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY!

I. If you need help, send for it!!!!!!!

J. If you have any questions,
please contact your religious educator.

SUPPORT SCENARIO Rev. Helen Zidowecki

The Support Scenario includes concrete details and philosophy, as both are needed. The topics are alphabetical, but can be discussed in any order. While many of these items focus on children, consider them for all ages. Constantly consider other details that need to be addressed.

SAFETY

Physical safety:

How safe it the space for the age-specific group that will be used the area?
Are the furnishings safe, including toys?
Are the heat, ventilation and lighting adequate?
Are there at least two ways to exit the space and the building? Are these posted in each space?
Is there a first aid kit? Does this include a write-up of universal precautions and supplies (such as non-latex gloves) in the kit? Of other first aid procedures?
Can the space accommodate mobility, other needs?
If there are maintenance problems, such as burned out lights, what is the maintenance/repair procedure?

Personal safety: (Also see Students)
Is it clearly noted with whom children can leave the activity and the church?
Is personal information, such as addresses and phone numbers, protected? Names on pictures?
How do children leave the session: Do parents come to get them? Are they accompanied by an adult to a specific area of the church, or allowed to leave the session by themselves?

Playground safety:
Is the playground equipment safe for the age groups that will be using it? (Consider type and condition)
What is the arrangement for adult supervision?

Abuse considerations/children and adults
What are the provisions for protection of children and adults around abuse concerns?
Are there two adults with children? OR adults nearby?
Space that has a "window" to the outside?
Reporting procedure if problems arise? Is the Code of Ethics used/signed?
Is there a procedure for addressing abuse or neglect that may come to the attention of leaders?

What are the arrangements for activities that are outside of the designated group space?
Are permission forms needed for field trips?
Who needs to be informed of such activities and how?
Who transports and are licenses and insurance current?
Is the vehicle safe, including proper seats and seatbelts?

SCHEDULE
Are the children in the opening part of the service?
Each Sunday? If not, how often? How is this scheduled?
Is there a gathering with other groups, such as a children's worship or a common closing?
Who leads these?
What is the projected length and clock time for sessions? (And working clocks in the rooms?)

Church calendar:
What are the special events in the church year in which children are or could be involved?
How will these affect the teaching schedules?

Scheduling who is teaching what when. To the degree possible, teachers schedule themselves. What are the specific practices that need to be considered, such as two teachers with every group every session, rotating teams, different teams for different blocks of time.

SETTING THE STAGE (Also see Space)
How does the space reflect the theme for the session?
Is the set-up inviting?
What welcomes participants? Music, pictures, artifacts?
How are participants welcomed?

Space walk: walk into the space as if you were a group participant rather than the leader (or ask another person to do this). Describe what you see, what you hear, how you feel?

SHARING
How do you share what is going on Sunday with the larger church community? The children's families?
What is the opportunity for sharing from the respective groups in the church newsletter?
How would a family that is new know what is happening for their children ?
Are Religious Education activities in the Order of Service, including when children leave the service, their schedule and locations?

SICK CHILDREN/ADULTS
Do not bring children – or attend yourself – with fever, flu, or communicable illness such as chickenpox, conjunctivitis, etc. Some churches are concerned about immunization status.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
This approach focuses on the relational components of the church community and religious education.

Small groups: We connect better with groups of 8 or fewer, including adults, in which there is consistency and which meet regularly and frequently. When the number of participants exceeds eight, consider starting another group.

Ministry: serving, caring about. Take time to care, initially as the group forms; in inviting and including newcomers to the group; and acknowledging those who are missing from a session. This can be part of taking attendance, or "attending to" those who are present, and acknowledging those who are "absent." Knowing who is present and who is absent, and possibly the reason, is a matter of caring primarily, and the record keeping for planning is secondary.

Implications for Religious Education:
<>When preparing for a session, keep the people in your group in mind. Are there special considerations?
<>Group defines its "Guidelines for Being Together," so that the expectations are clear, are formed with input from everyone, and are in the language of the group.
<>Attentiveness to each other. This can be described as being present, sensing where you are (how you are feeling, etc.) and where the group is.
<>Leaders are facilitators, setting the stage for the session, providing resources and structure, but not responsible for the learning itself. This also means that the leaders also learn in the process!
<>Support is available for leaders. The leaders meet together on a regular basis, such as monthly, to discuss how things are going within the groups, how they are feeling about their role as leaders, and how they can support each other. These meetings are with a "coach," such as the DRE. The role of the coach is to support the leaders and to assist with the problem solving.

SNACK:
Are snacks provided for the groups?
If so, who is responsible for providing these?
What type of snacks are suggested? (consider nutritional value and age-specific needs)
How are dietary needs and allergies addressed?
If children attend Social/Fellowship Time with the adults, what are the specific arrangements?

For younger children, are parents encouraged to bring their own snacks, such as bottles?

SOCIAL ACTION
What are the social action events within the church community?
How can these include the children, and what impact will this have on the Sunday schedule?
What are the social action components of the curriculum and how can the church community become involved?

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
What activities are included in the curriculum or in the classroom ritual that increase a child's sense of being included and saying that they are important? Examples: each person saying their name and being welcomed by the group. Group check-in regarding how they are feeling or what they have to share (briefly).

SPACE This section relates to use of space. (see Safety)
Is the space shared with other groups?
How much can be hung on walls, or left out?
What are the limitations of the space?
If the space does not allow for the activities in the curriculum, how can this be addressed?
Who sets up the space before the group meets?
What are the expectations on clean up? Is there janitorial service and what is included?

What is included in the space that is considered as part of the session? (room, additional play area)
What are the space arrangements outside of the session time, such as between activities, during social hour?

SPECIAL MOMENTS (Teachable Moments)
These are the times when you stop and talk about a pet dying, or answer a question about something that a child has heard in the first part of the service -- even when it doesn't fit into the lesson. They do not come every session, and are usually unpredicted -- which is part of what makes them so special! One of the greatest gifts of a teacher is to facilitate and utilize these special moments. This requires being in the present moment with the children and being willing to share of self.

SPIRITUALITY
Are there specific rituals that are used to set aside time together as special, sacred? This might be lighting a chalice or taking a moment when everyone is gathered to just be quiet or to take deep breaths.
What is spiritual in the topic being discussed?
How are your own spiritual needs being met?

"STAFF"
The concept of "staffing" a program relates to providing personnel, paid or voluntary, so that the program can take place.
Have you had adequate preparation for working with the specific age group?
This particular curriculum?
What is your understanding of Unitarian Universalism?
Do you feel the need for more experience or information as you work with this group?

Have staff been informed of/signed the "Code of Ethics for Working Adults/Older Youth"?
What are the security procedures in your congregation related to safe environments?

STUDENTS
Are registration of participant information forms completed?
How are specific considerations addressed, such as mobility limitations, dietary and allergy considerations, medications and conditions that may influence behavior, patterns of attendance.
How are children are grouped?
How many children are in the specific group?
What are the ages? Gender distribution?
Some groups may need time and activities for group bonding before the curriculum or program is introduced.

SUBSTITUTES
What are the plans for coverage if a teacher is not able to teach a particular session? Who is to be called?
If there is a change, how is the DRE/Sunday morning coordinator informed?

SUCCESS
How do you define a successful day?
Discuss how to share successes and the creative things that occur within the groups. This can include articles in the newsletter, speaking in the service, etc.

SUPPLIES
What are the standard supplies available for each group?
Where are these supplies kept, and how are they obtained and maintained?
What is the procedure for obtaining special supplies?
Will teachers be reimbursed for special expenses?
If so, what is the procedure for getting reimbursement?

SUPPORT
What is the support that is available to teachers if assistance is needed on Sunday morning?
What is the support if there is an issue in a group, such as a child is not able to function in a manner that allows the others to be safe or to participate?
How is support given to leaders as a group or as a team? How do you get support for addressing a topic in the curriculum that may be difficult for you?

One of the key support people for Religious Education is the minister. This includes advocating for the program, being available for pastoral care for participants and their families, supporting the leaders, meeting and being known to the participants.

Session 4: Toolkits for Teachers

Recruiting Ideas from Jackie Shepherd (then at Concord, NH), adapted

First ask the people you would most like to be our teachers. Make them feel honored to be asked. It's best to talk to them in person. Examples:

1. "The R.E. Committee suggested I contact you as a person we'd like on our teaching staff."
2. "I really would like to work with you. The curriculum is good, our coordinator is very helpful. You're a great person for our kids to be around."

If someone says "yes," then ask them if there is someone they'd like to teach with. Would they like to ask that person or would they like you to ask them? Do they prefer children of a certain age? Would they like to examine some of the curriculum?

When someone says "no," be sure to ask if they would be willing to teach some other session or to substitute. It helps if people are expecting you to contact them later.

Some parents want to teach a class their child is in. This gives them a planned activity with their own child. Others find it best to teach a different class. This gives a parent a chance to see their own child interacting with children the same age and gives a parent a chance to see what other children the same age do and say.

We have team teaching. Two adults are used in each classroom each session. Teaching is done on a semester basis. [Or discuss the plan for your own situation.]

Give people a specific time commitment—they feel overwhelmed with open-ended requests. We prefer that people do not teach a whole year, unless there is a team of four or five people who have worked out their own schedule.

Continuity must be built into all teaching, so that the child sees a familiar face and knows what's expected; and so the teacher knows where the class has been in previous lessons.

When recruiting teachers, you should be able to tell them exactly what you expect of them and what they can expect, such as teaching dates, preparation during the week, and possible teacher meetings. There will be teacher training before church school opens in the fall and help available from the coordinator in an on-going way. Teachers are happier if they have a sense of competency and training. Children respond better when the teacher feels and acts in charge.

Let's think of our pool of possible teachers as all the members of our community. Especially think of our teachers as important "role models" for our children. We want our children to be around caring, thoughtful, playful adults—like you!

Some Additional Points – Tracey L. Hurd

- Include parents but look beyond parents
- Being part of the religious education program – as a leader – can help people have their spiritual needs met. This particularly applies to individuals who are new to the church and to Unitarian Universalism – they quickly get a sense of belonging. However some people need help in realizing how teaching can be a faith development experience. They may need to be part of congregational life for a while before becoming involved in religious education. For some people, involvement in religious education needs to be gradual.

- Diversity in recruitment adds to different perspectives being brought to the program. This includes diversity in gender, race and ethnicity, parents and non-parents, age, ability, economic status, sexual orientation, and occupations. This diversity promotes the concept of being a welcoming community and helps destroy myths, misinformation and stereotypes. Child development literature affirms that the best way to raise children who are open-minded and have fewer stereotypes is to involve them meaningfully with a diversity of people.
- If you don't know a recruit very well, enlist the help of your minister, administrator, music director, or anyone else at church who might know this person a little better and can help determine where the recruit would be most effective.

Discipline in Sunday School: What Would a UU Do?

By Abby L. W. Crowley, Ed.D.

We believe in the right of every teacher and child to teach and learn
in a safe, supportive and (relatively) distraction-free environment,
thereby making the Sunday school experience a positive one for all concerned.

What do you get when you put 10 - 15 bright, talkative, enthusiastic and sometimes reluctant kids together in a room with two eager, but not professionally trained teachers for seventy-five minutes on a Sunday morning? Depending on the teachers, the kids, the content, the space and maybe even the weather or what the kids had for breakfast, the result can range from chaos to ecstasy. With training and support from the Religious Educator and the Religious Education Committee, we can increase the chances that the experience will be largely positive and keep teacher frustration and burnout to a minimum.

What follows are the seven principles of teaching in a Unitarian Universalist church school that can make classroom management and discipline reflective of our principles and can make Sunday school worth getting up early for.

Principle 1: Prepare, prepare, prepare.

Hopefully those responsible for selecting curriculum have done a good job and you have an age appropriate, experiential and interesting curriculum to work with. Become intimately familiar with your curriculum, perhaps getting it in the spring and having all summer to read it through. Make notes in the margins or with sticky notes of ideas you have, special materials or resources you will need and questions you have. Make adaptations and choices from among recommended activities based on what you know your class has responded positively or negatively to in the past. Each week, come early enough to have everything set up and ready to go for the entire session before the children come in. Confer with your assistant or co-teacher to be clear as to who will do what. If you see in advance that the children may need extra help on a project, line up a few extra warm bodies for the morning. Advance preparation will eliminate many of the behavior problems that occur in a less prepared classroom.

Principle 2: Build Relationships and Community

One teacher I know who works with troubled teens told me that she believes that 90% of discipline is relationship, and in my 25 years of working with kids with emotional and behavioral disorders, I would have to agree. In addition, research has clearly shown that classrooms where a strong sense of community is forged have the fewest behavior problems. Get to know your kids. Wear nametags every week. Celebrate the diversity that exists in your classroom. Find out what the kids like, what they do outside of church. Sunday mornings can be hectic and rushed, so you might want to take the time and effort to arrange a social gathering of kids and parents early in the church year such as a picnic, sleepover, or bonfire. In addition, help the children form friendships with each other. Ask the Religious Educator if you can get a list of names and phone numbers to distribute to the kids in the class. I have gotten my own reluctant child to attend by having a Sunday school friend sleep over on Saturday night. Once the friendship was formed, my son became eager to go to Sunday school on subsequent Sundays to see his new friend.

Another trick that may work for you, especially with preteens and older elementary children who are losing their interest in Sunday school, is getting them involved in service activities in the community and in the church. Do the AIDS Walk as a group. Plant a flowerbed in the parking lot. Give them responsibility around the church in areas such as ushering and helping with the younger children. These kinds of activities have the power to transform a reluctant group into a cohesive, involved one.

Principle 3: Create Class Standards
In the first session or two, take time to generate a list of no more than 5 class standards for behavior. The way I find this most effectively done is to have the kids suggest standards that they write on a large piece of newsprint. All ideas are accepted. After a list has been generated, work with the class to hone the list into a more concise list. For example, if you have "no hitting" and "no teasing" on the first list, ask the children if there is a general rule (i.e., "respect each other") that would encompass both. Make sure that in your final list, all of the rules are stated positively. For example, instead of "don't misuse the materials', suggest "take care of the materials". For older kids, have them look at the UU principles and see if there is anything there they would like to include as a standard. Make a final poster of the rules to be posted every week. Send a copy home. When misbehavior occurs, simply ask the child, "Are you breaking a rule? Which one?" When problems occur reflecting behavior that is not addressed in the rules, have a class discussion asking the students if they would like to add a new rule. Overall, make sure that the kids take ownership of the rules and facilitate their encouragement of each other in following them.

Principle 4: Respond clearly, supportively and consistently to misbehavior.
What is the process for responding to misbehavior in your classroom and church school? If you do not have a clear process, work with your teaching team and Religious Educator to develop one. For example, for younger children, we might rely heavily on distraction, redirection and one-on-one support. For older children, chronic misbehavior may have to be referred to the Religious Educator. The Religious Educator can then intervene non-punitively with the child to find out what is at the root of the problem and what can be done to resolve the issues. At times, it will be necessary to bring the parents of the child into the process for additional information and support. For example, in my intervention with a family of a child who had been quite disruptive, I learned that he was not taking his medication on the weekends. We decided (after consulting with his doctor) to try giving his medication to him before Sunday school and to involve him in helping out with snacks (to give him a break from the classroom). Our adjustments made a world of difference! Overall, I urge all of my teachers to let me know about problems while they are still small. It is much harder to resolve these issues when anger and resentment has built up over a number of weeks.

Principle 5: Talk so kids will listen; Listen so kids will talk.
When you think back on the teachers that you have had or observed that were the most effective, you will probably recall their respectful attitude, the positive choices that they constantly gave their students and the active way that they listened to what their students had to say. Effective teachers describe the problem ("there are crayons on the floor") and offer choices ("would you like to pick up the crayons or put away the snack?) instead of making demands ("pick up the crayons"). They give information ("that paint is not the kind that can be washed out of your clothes") instead of giving orders ("put on a smock").They describe how they feel ("I feel frustrated when kids interrupt each other because I want to hear what each one of you has to say") rather than blaming ("you are being very rude"). They involve children in problem solving individually and as a group. Adele Faber and Elaine Maislich have an excellent book that describes these techniques clearly for home or classroom use titled *How to Talk so Kids Can Learn*. Put it on your reading list!

Principle 6: Ask questions
Now that should be easy for a UU! When you don't understand, need ideas, or simply need to vent, seek the support of another teacher, your Religious Educator or ask to have a Religious Education Committee member as liaison to your class. Although you are probably very busy, take advantage of any training opportunities that are offered in your church or district. You will gain a great deal of information and have a wonderful opportunity to network with other teachers. Church school is a dynamic process, a true village where we can come together to create wonder and joy with the children. Be part of the village. Don't try to go it alone.

Principle 7: Remember why we are there.
You planned that lesson all week. You spent seven hours cutting out game board pieces and rubber banding them in packets for each student. You went to three libraries before you found the right book on about friendship. You invited an origami expert to come and make paper cranes with the children she decided to give birth to twins last night instead. It is the first day of spring, the birds are singing, and you did not plan time to go outside and play in the creek. What should you do? Change gears. The real value of Sunday morning is the feelings between teachers and kids and the positive memories created. Sure, the curricula are terrific, but you will know when it is time to let go of it because it isn't working or something else draws the attention and passion of the children. Trust your gut. The more you do, the better you will get at it.

Abby L. W. Crowley, Ed.D., Director of Religious Education,
Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church, Adelphi, MD
Please e-mail your comments and feedback to crowleys@prodigy.net

GROUP PRESENTATION

Renaissance Modules are designed to start with sharing information, engaging the participants with the material, and providing an opportunity to integrate materials and learnings –culminating in Group Presentations from which we all gain new insights and ideas.

You will be working with several other participants. Please consider information and activities that have occurred over the course of this module, and resources that have surrounded you.

Prepare a presentation of a teacher development workshop. Decide:

Number of teachers to be involved
Mission and goals for the program
Format and length
Scheduling (with leadership)
Content (including activities)
Tools (forms, resources, etc.) that teachers need for ongoing support and daily use

Put the information on flipcharts.

They should decide on their goals for the workshop, the format, what activities to include, who will lead it, and any other necessary details. They should outline everything on newsprint. The presentations should include an overview of the teacher development workshop, with statement of the mission and goals of the workshop, a list of "tools" that teachers need for ongoing support and for daily use as they facilitate in lifespan faith development classrooms (Groups may choose to literally create representations of those tools. Tools may include forms, resources, etc.), and a demonstration of at least one activity they would do with their teachers.

Presentation itself: 25 minutes

Include the basic information about the program (from Prepare)
Demonstrate one activity.
Present literal representation of tools (optional)

Post-presentation: Response 5 minutes

Presenters: How did you feel as you created the program?
Total group: responses, comments, and questions

Alternative Activities for a Teacher Development Workshop

Links between Teachers and Learners

This activity considers links between teachers and learners as they co-participate in lifespan faith development. This exercise is based on the work of Andrea Lerner, who found that when asked to list "what works" for children and teachers in a religious education setting, groups often come up with lists for adults and children that look quite similar. Ask participants to divide into smaller working groups. Give them the following three pairs of questions and ask them to brainstorm answers and represent them on paper. They can do simple lists, "comic strip" graphic representations, or other illustrations.

Question Pair One

- What makes children happy in a lifespan faith development program?
- What makes those who teach happy in a lifespan faith development program?

Question Pair Two

- What makes children feel like what they are experiencing is uniquely a part of church or faith development (although children don't usually identify faith development for themselves, of course!)?
- What makes teachers feel like what they are doing (when they teach in a faith development program) is part of church or part of lifespan faith development?

Question Pair Three

- What makes church (or the UU meetinghouse) special for children?
- What makes church (or the UU meetinghouse) special for adults?

Share representations and group work (it can be conceptually easier for first look at "child" answers and then look at adult/teacher answers) together. Look for similarities between groups' work and between the answers for adults/teacher and children. Where is there common ground? Where are there differences? What does this mean for teachers?

All Learners Matter - Mobile-Making Project

This is a quick and effective project. Prepare the number of paper bags (grocery sacks) as you plan to have small groups. Each bag will have equipment to create a mobile. Bags should be highly uneven: one group gets a hanger and index cards; another gets a myriad of art materials and ribbon; etc. All groups get access of scissors and string.

Give small groups each a bag of materials. Their task is to create a mobile. They are given just ten minutes-overtly timed-to work. Each group must then share their results. The facilitator should be very non-judgmental and accepting. Groups often reflect on the experience of feeling like the playing field is not even. Sometimes groups find it very aggravating that the facilitator is not remarking on disparities, but only talking about the strengths of each mobile.

When sharing is completed invite participants to think about how this exercise translates or stimulates children's experiences. Even the act of sitting in a circle can feel like trying to create a mobile without having the right skills and materials to some children. Biological dispositions, cultural knowledge, "school" knowledge, social skills, temperament, cognitive level, physical development and skills all enter into a child's "bag" when that child enters our lifespan faith development setting.

Child and Youth Development: Typical progressions

Invite participants to picture children and youth in their congregation. You might say, "Take just a moment and picture a scene – a happy scene or a typical scene.

- Where are the children?
- What are they doing?
- Where are you in relation to that scene?

Share briefly the "scenes" with each other. Often participants reveal how important and moving children's and youth's presence can be in congregational settings. This sets the stage firmly for thinking more about why we need to consider children's development and learning. Welcoming children doesn't just serve the children; it serves entire congregations, since congregational life is so enriched by their presence."

Have participants review the child development chart and notes about faith development and learning in this packet or in the book *Nurturing Children and Youth: a Developmental Guidebook* by Tracey L. Hurd, using the Faith Development sheet as the primary reference and the chart to supplement it. Point out that faith development is based on the overall development of the child. Break participants into small groups and assign each small group the task of representing one age group, and then presenting that age group to the larger group of participants.

What to Do about Challenging Behavior?

Invite participant to brainstorm challenging behavior situations that they have faced in their lifespan faith development settings. Brainstorm challenges, recording group ideas on newsprint, as you are able. As a group, decide on a manageable amount (four will usually be just enough) for further discussion.

Divide participants into small groups, no more than 5 to a group.

The group should do the following tasks:

- Describe the challenge situation, including example and age group
- Use the Packet materials "Classroom Management," Discipline in Sunday School: What Would a UU Do?" as resources and as a group decide (and record on newsprint):
    - How to alter/create the environment to meet the needs of the participants in the lifespan faith development program
    - What teachers need to know in order to address the challenge
    - What support the teacher would need
    - What some strategies might be to address the challenge
- When all groups are done, begin a "send-a-strategy." During this process, the newsprint pages are passed from group to group (or groups move around the room to each group's newsprint page). Each group reads the issue and strategies and then adds one or two more strategies. When all the strategies get back to the group that wrote the original scenario, they review the suggestions and react to them as a group. Then each group shares its insights (not a recap of all the strategies) briefly with the large group. Participants may want copies of the final lists to take with them.
- Engage the large group in discussion. Share the challenges, similarities between strategies across the groups' challenge situations, etc.

From Left Field….Unexpected Questions

Every Sunday, religious educators address questions about some aspect of Unitarian Universalism from parents, teachers, visitors and children. Between Sundays, religious questions that related to the very essence of being and life keep popping up. Why is it that the questions that I am asked – or even the ones that I ask – are so often not the ones that I had planned and prepared to address that day?

Have each participant write a question that they would like to ask on a 3x5 card and place the cards in a basket or container. Have enough cards so that each dyad can pull 3 cards. Add the following questions, and others that the workshop leaders might want to be sure get addressed, on cards.

- How do you answer questions about God?
- How do you answer questions about the Bible?
- How do you include families that are different, through adoption, gay/lesbian parents or children with differing racial and ethnic backgrounds?

Invite participants to work in pairs or in triads. Have each group draw three cards. One person responds to a question. Give the age and role of the person to whom the response is directed. After a minute or so, the other partner reacts to the response that was given. Then switch. If the group is a triad, rotate roles, with one participant acting as an observer selecting the questions. Repeat the process.

Have participants return to the large group. Allow time for participants to process and reflect.

From Left Field…Unexpected Events

Have participants generate a list of things that can "throw a wrench into a Sunday" or create a need to alter the original plan. Some examples might be an event in the congregation or community, weather, or visitors that require special attention.

Brainstorm solutions: What would you do? How would teachers need to be supported in this situation? (The focus is on being flexible)

Create drama! Invite participants to come forward to create impromptu dramatizations of good practices.

Reflect: Lead participants in generating a list of "things to remember" in times of unexpected events. Some items might include: remember that this is a faith community; allow for imperfections; focus on happiness, health and safety over curriculum; etc.

Table Talk Topic: Nuts & Bolts of Volunteer Management

LEVELS OF TEACHING

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Strong

Description of roles for teachers, aides and co-teachers in a religious education program
By the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth M. Strong, Minister of Religious Education

TEACHER is responsible for the development and preparation of weekly session plans and:

is expected to be present every week of the term for which they have volunteered to teach.

reports on the Evaluation Sheet each week.

is in contact with the R.E. Council/Committee coordinator for the class.

is expected to be in the classroom 15 minutes early to greet the children/youth and to be prepared to teach when sessions begin.

stays until children may be taken to supervised care or until parents arrive.

coordinators parent helper sign-up and tasks, and signs up, or asks the Aide to sign up, snack volunteers and parent helpers.

is responsible for arranging for substitutes when needed.

CO-TEACHER assists in the planning of the weekly sessions. This can be divided up on a shared planning of every session or a split responsibility of every other week or even for a block of weeks. The Co-teacher:

shares in the responsibilities of being in the classroom 15 mines early and staying until all children are safely with parents or in supervised care.

shares in reporting on the evaluation sheets each week, or when they have responsibility for the session.

is in contact with the R.E. Council/Committee Coordinator with the co-teacher.

coordinates parent helper and snack volunteer sign-ups and tasks with the co-teacher.

shares the responsibility of arranging for substitutes when needed.

TEACHER AIDE assists the teacher/co-teachers in the implementation of the lesson plans and:

is in the room to do what needs to be done to facilitate the smooth running of the teacher's session plans.

may be the one-on-one contact with a distressed child/youth so the teacher can continue the session plan.

if agreed, may serve as the teacher when a substitute is needed for the teacher.

arranges for own substitute when they are going to be away.

PARENT HELPER helps the teacher and aide with various tasks and projects and:

assists in clean up at the end of the morning.

is available to give TLC to children/youth who needs special attention, or a careful listener on a given morning.

can give added assistance for major or particularly messy projects.

SUBSTITUTE assumes responsibility for carrying out the lesson plan prepared by the teacher, or assisting the teacher if substituting for the aide or co-teacher and is

the person to whom the teacher or aide has spoken about the session and the class dynamics so as to insure a smooth running and enjoyable class for everyone.

the person who will be there 15 minutes early, and stays until the end of the session if substituting for the teacher.

the person who assists in set-up and clean-up if substituting for the aide.

RATIONALE: The teaching experience for individuals will be enhanced if their teaching is grounded in the supportive environment of the whole teaching community. By building up to the full responsibility of solo or lead teaching, and being surrounded in a community of ongoing discourse that encourages their engagement with their spiritual and faith development, teachers will more fully understand their role in the faith development of the children, youth and/or adults as well as for themselves. Volunteers begin as an aide or parent helper to gain an understanding of the environment, the children/youth/adults, and the content of the sessions. Then they move into the responsibilities of assistant teacher to co-teacher to teacher or lead teacher. This provides experiences of teacher development with master teachers and of personal spiritual development grounded in the Unitarian Universalist faith community that is then connected to the specific curricula and children, youth, or adults being taught.

Religious Education Teacher Contract

I understand that I am a teacher for the _____ (grade) class in the church school. I agree to coordinate with the other members of my teaching team, to be sure that each Sunday is covered and planned for.

I understand that if I have been convicted of a crime involving a minor, I will notify the Director/Minister of Religious Education of this fact and/or will resign from my church school responsibilities.

Two people (not from the same household) who can be contacted by the DRE/MRE as references are:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

I understand that the teacher is not responsible for Sundays when Intergenerational Worship services are scheduled during the full church school period.

When I am scheduled to be teaching/assisting on Sundays, I will arrive at the church 30 minutes early to prepare the classroom area. I understand that the time for class lessons/activities is from 9:30 - 10:45 or 11:15 - 12:30, and that my class will attend the age-appropriate worship service at 9:35 or 11:20.

I understand that my teaching duties do not extend beyond 10:48am or 12:32pm, and that any child still in my care at that time is to be handed over to their parents or to the church school office staff.

I will leave my classroom in order so that the next class will have a clean room in which to meet. I will make sure that all doors are locked and the lights are turned off.

I have read the Health and Safety guidelines (enclosed) for our program and will follow them.

While I am responsible to check ahead of time to be sure necessary supplies are available for future class crafts/projects, I understand that I may request those supplies be obtained for me by staff by filling out a Resource Request Form at least one week in advance. Otherwise, I will obtain the materials myself, obtaining reimbursement where necessary (providing that I have a proper receipt and submit to the church school office).

If I am unable to teach on one of the Sundays I have agreed upon, then (as soon as possible) I will contact my team members first to arrange a substitute. If, after contacting my team, I am unable to arrange for a substitute then I will contact a substitute from the list provided. As a lat resort, I will contact the Religious Education Committee member who is a liaison to my class.

SIGNED:
I have read and understand the above contract, have provided the necessary information, and agree to the above terms.

_____

Date

_____

Printed Name

_____

Printed Name

UNIVERSITY UNITARIAN CHURCH: CHURCH SCHOOL PROGRAM
TEACHER'S WEEKLY REPORT FORM

Class_____ Session_____ Date: _____

Leader(s)_____

Parent-Helper_____

1. This week's theme?

2. What did the children like best? Least?

3. What would you like to have subtracted or added?

4. Overall: Great___ Good___ Fair___ Poor___
comments:

5. Did you have what you needed for today (supplies and/or support)?

6. What materials do you need next week? Amount needed_____

7. What equipment do you need in your classroom next week?

8. Chapel service comments for upstairs or downstairs worship:

9. Are you having a problem in your classroom? _____ Related to:

10. Do you want to talk with the DRE? _____ When can she reach you? _____

11. Do you know anyone who needs a call or contact with one of the ministers?

An Alternative Church School Teacher Check-In Form

Sierra-Marie Gerfao, DRE
Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation,
Olympia, Washington
With thanks and attribution to
Annie Scott, DRE
Atkinson Memorial Church, Oregon City

Please take a few quiet moments and answer the following four questions.

Please reflect, comment, and rate your experience so far this year as a religious education leader. Use a scale of 1-10 (1=Not one bit…this didn't happen at all! 10=Extremely…this happened a lot!)

1. To what extent has this teaching experience deepened your relationship with one or more child/youth?

2. To what extent has this teaching experience deepened your relationship with one or more other adult?

3. To what extent has this teaching experience deepened your sense of belonging to this community?

4. To what extent has this teaching experience given you new knowledge or insights about your faith?

Table Talk Topic: Child & Youth Development

Faith Development: An Outline

By Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D.

Based on the work of James Fowler.

Held in the Love of Others: The Basis for Later Faith

Infants and Toddlers: Undifferentiated Faith

- Infants are born with potential but without the ability to act on it.
- Experiences of trust become the basis for emerging notions of faith.
- Trust plants the seeds of hope.
- *Pre-Images* of others, images formed without language and labels envelope the infant in care. These early relationships are imbued with spirituality.

Faith by Imitation

Preschool Children: Intuitive-Projective Faith

- Faith development is linked to cognitive and social development.
- Knowing what we do as people of faith, nurtures a sense of belonging.
- Imitating routines or rituals of religion, the child learns them first as things to do and later as part of a more complex picture.
- Child sees spirituality in everyday life; s/he is open to "big questions."
- Experiences of love with others, gets projected more broadly to the faith community.

Young School Age Children: Intuitive-Projective Faith

- Interest in big questions becomes tempered by beginning knowledge of the literal world.
- Participating in religious activities becomes another building block of "knowing" or authority.
- Children "do" religion as a way of owning religion.
- Jean Grasso Fitzpatrick says the seven year old, spiritually speaking, is like a person from Missouri, "Show me," she demands.
- Inviting young school age children into the life of the faith community lets them know what it is like to have faith.

Joining in Faith

School Age Children: Mythic-Literal Faith

- Concrete operational thinking—logic of action and an ability to hold actions as mental representations—influences faith development.
- Literal understandings of faith prevail.
- Children develop "myths" or story-like ideas based on logic about big questions.
- Holidays, rituals, community service all become satisfying ways to both "do faith" and "claim faith."

Discernment

Young Adolescent: Synthetic Conventional Faith

- Belongingness—as an individual-- becomes important to a sense of faith.
- Many young adolescents are drawn to religion as they try to make sense and meaning of their lives with newly developed capacities to think about thinking.
- Young adolescents want to find coherence, to put together pictures or concepts of how things work. Some may be drawn to the clarity of creed-based religions.
- Sustained involvement in a congregation can provide comfort and coherence that answers a yearning to matter, to feel unique, and to feel a part of something bigger.
- Engaging adolescents in the life of the congregation and marking their presence (through recognitions, coming of age ceremonies, and involvement) may help make faith alive for youth.

Middle Adolescents: Synthetic Conventional Faith

- Interest in faith can often increase or decrease during these years.
- If faith offers them a sense of coherence, purpose, and meaning then they will be more drawn towards it.
- Faith becomes a base for synthesizing values.
- Religion, however, is still often seen as holding outside authority.
- Questioning of faith can lead an adolescent to hold tighter or to abandon faith during these years.
- Providing meaningful faith-based activities nurtures adolescents spiritual agency and may draw them deeper into faith.

Deeper Understanding, Reflection

Older Adolescent/ Young Adults: Individuative Reflective Faith

- Existential thinking and the promise and pressures of becoming adults can help late adolescents explore faith more deeply or abandon their faith.
- No longer trying to belong to faith, the young adult seeks to construct her/his own understanding of it, through crucial reflection, questioning and participating.
- Young adults are supported by knowing that faith offers more than psychological reasoning, but a way of being spiritually connected beyond words and thinking
- Engaging young adults in spiritually satisfying service, worship and spiritual practice can help them deepen their sense of faith.

Abbreviated Summary: Child Development

Adapted from *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* written by Dr. Tracey L. Hurd published by the UUA

	Preschool Child	Early School Age Child	School Age Child
Physical Development	• Body is acquiring gross and fine motor skills • Learns through physical experiences • Needs sensory and tactile experiences • Doesn't have link between thinking and action refined	• Starts coordinating motor skills (rides bike, games) • Uses tools for drawing, writing • Very active; needs physical challenges • Learns through doing • Needs to play	• Fine and gross motor skills almost fully developed • Central nervous system primarily fully developed • Needs food, rest, exercise • May enter puberty • Is a top consumer of media images of bodies, ideals, wellness
Cognitive, Intellectual Development	• Self is primary reference point: "egocentric" • Obtains Object Permanence • Categorizes & classifies • Dichotomizes • Appearance = reality • Fluid between fantasy & reality • Needs to problem solve	• Starts to understand the notion of "Conservation" • Interested in numbers, letters, words, facts • Self is still primary reference point • Enjoys being "correct" • Learns best in the "zone of proximal development"	• Engages in logical thinking • Develops hierarchical reasoning • Concrete Operational thinking—based on non-abstract "pieces" • Develops specific learning styles; learning disabilities may become more clear
Social, Affective Development	• Social circle of family is primary reference points • Has not acquired race or gender constancy • Starting to learn notion of "friend" • Empathic, but centered on self	• Learns through social interaction • Enjoys peers and working together • Has beginning "true" friendships • Often rigid is thinking about gender, race, roles	• Peers and friendships are important • Identities navigated through social relationships • Takes perspectives of others • May segregate based on gender, racial, ethnic identities
Moral Development	• Categorizes right and wrong- sometimes too rigidly • Needs support linking words to actions & moral issues	• Attends to order and authority; uses rules • Develops a sense of industriousness • Starts to understand motive	• Uses "Golden Rule • Interested in fairness, justice and care • Aware of moral issues & interesting in helping
Spiritual, Religious, Faith Development	• Learns about religion and faith through experience • Receptive to spirituality • Not afraid of "big questions"—full of wonder • Fowler's Intuitive Projective stage of faith development	• Does religion to know religion • Latter part of Fowler's Intuitive Project stage of faith development • Needs to have rigidities, and "correct" answers gently challenged	• Enjoys membership in faith or denominational communities • "Does" religion & spirituality • Enters Fowler's Mythical Literal stage of faith

Abbreviated Summary: Adolescent Development

Adapted from Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook written by Dr. Tracey L. Hurd, published by the UUA

	Early Adolescence	Middle Adolescence	Late Adolescence
Physical Development	• Transitions into adult body • Eats and sleeps more • Demonstrates or does not demonstrate behaviors that may indicate risk for eating disorders or depression • Seeks support for self-esteem and body image	• Develops sexuality more fully; feelings of gendered attraction and sexual orientation are often central • Navigates greater risks relating to alcohol, drug use, sexual activity • Peak physical growth stage for male youth	• Achieves full physical development • Gains more assurance about body image • Engages in sexual activity; more likely to be partnered • Learns to manage stress and maintain health
Cognitive, Intellectual Development	• Concentrates on self and other's perceptions of self • Engages an "imaginary audience," a mental idea of others watching • Particular intelligence strengths become evident (linguistic, mathematical, interpersonal, musical, etc.)	• Has the ability to think deductively, inductively, conceptually, hypothetically • Engage in practices to celebrate new mindfulness about self (journal writing, re-reading emails, etc.) • Become more critical of the world around them	• Particularly open to learning; a time ripe for formal / informal education • Expresses ideas with more linguistic skill • Sees many points of view and may claim multiple realities as the truth
Social, Affective Development	• Social relationships with peers are very important • Learns social scripts (embedded in the contexts of race, ethnicity, and class) about what it means to be a sexual person • Expresses criticism of self and others	• Tries to claim an identity/ies • Needs to belong and have a sense of self-worth • Struggles with gender and sexual identity – often a time of increased stress for GLBTQ and questioning youth	• Increases self-reliance • Develops sense of identity and intimacy • Expresses interest in vocational and personal life choices • Brings to realization sexual identity of self
Moral Development	• Demonstrates interest in ethics of care and justice • Respects social order, although sometimes challenges it as well	• Thinks conceptually and enjoys moral reasoning • Engages in "principled morality" – principles are more important than laws	• Wrestles with personal morality and life choices • Expresses interest in moral and philosophical thinking, for self and wider world
Spiritual, Religious, Faith Development	• Enjoys presence or absence of religious creed • Expresses interest in religion that embodies one's values • Sustains faith development by engaging with a community that allows questioning	• Conceptualizes religion as an outside authority that can be questioned • Questions faith, leading to deeper ownership or disenfranchising • Deepens religious or spiritual identity	• Claims authority around issues of faith • Further develops spirituality as an important part of self • Engages in "faith" beyond traditional organized religion

Children Remember

20% of what they hear

30% of what they see

50% of what they hear and see

70% of what they say

90% of what they do

Table Talk Topic: Different Ways of Knowing

MUSICAL-RHYTHYMIC Responds to acoustic patterns, sounds, rhythms and tempos. *How can I bring in music or environmental sounds, or set information in a rhythmic or melodic framework*?	NATURALIST Deals with intuitive relationships among nature and the world of physical and life force species. *How can I meaningfully highlight connections with the larger universe and previous learnings?*	VERBAL-LINGUISTIC Focuses thinking on language, both aural and symbolic. *How can I use the spoken or written word?*
BODILY KINESTHETIC Involves physical movement and knowledge of the body; usually large-muscle activity; coordination. *How can I involve body movement and the use of hands-on experiences?*	**WAYS OF LEARNING, THINKING, AND PROCESSING THE WORLD AROUND US**	VISUAL/SPATIAL Depends on visual and proximity thinking; thinks in images; imaginative *How can I use visual aids, visualization, and color?*
LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL Oriented toward thinking; inductive and deductive logic, numeration, abstract patterns; contemplative problem solver. *How can I use problem-solving, numbers, calculations, logic, or productive thinking skills?*	INTRAPERSONAL Identifies with intuition and introspection; self-knowledge (not introverted!) *How can I evoke personal feelings or memories, or give participants choices?*	INTERPERSONAL Oriented toward social or group relationships; affectively communicative; cooperative. *How can I engage participants in small groups, cooperative groups?*

Table Talk Topic: Support & Appreciation of Teachers

Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers

Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D.

One of the best ways to affirm our ministry with children and youth is to illuminate the complex and wonderful ways that teaching in a religious education program, is a faith development experience for those teaching. Working with children and youth, teacher-leader-facilitators grow in faith and in community. While some find teaching to be a spiritually moving and nourishing practice, others need tools to frame this view.

How can we help shape the process of working in our UU religious education programs, with a lens of lifespan faith development? There are many ways. The UUA survey of religious educators, conducted in the fall of 2004, revealed that congregations are using many innovative methods to support and sustain teachers, by nurturing the ministry of working with children and youth. Many religious educators feel torn between needing to provide pragmatic assistance (curriculum, supplies, information about programs) and wanting to provide prophetic program leadership that highlights teaching as a rewarding faith development experience. In the survey, some religious educators said that they simply didn't do enough. But the many small and sure steps being taken, present a firm foundation our future. In our ministry with children and youth, we grow in faith as individuals and as a community.

We can provide tools that illuminate teaching as a nourishing practice of faith development. Here are some things we can do:

Frame the experience of teaching or leading as a faith development experience.

- Make teaching mission centered. What do we want our children and youth to know by heart? What is the mission of this program? These are big questions for any faith development program. And they are linked to the congregational question of, "Why do we gather here?" If we approach teaching/leading our children and youth from a mission-centered perspective, we are more likely to stay true to the premise that all participants, teacher/leaders and children/youth, are learning, growing, connecting, and exploring together. We are more likely to think first about what makes being together in a religious setting unique. And we are more likely to lead with our hearts.

- Claim religious hospitality as an important aspect of faith development programs. Hospitality includes welcoming the stranger, in any form. The stranger can be a person new to the congregation. But the "stranger" can also be within—it can be an aspect or a new part of us that we have yet to realize. As we learn and grow, whether we are old or young, we can use the skills of hospitality to welcome the stranger within. We can replace fear with love and stand more ready to transform and nurture our souls. We practice hospitality with others, and become more ready to summon that lens to others, including ourselves.

- Intentionally include teacher faith development into the plans for religious education. State the premise that teaching is a means of spiritual and faith development in orientation meetings and/or materials. Emphasize growing together in faith as a shared goal for teacher/leaders and the children/youth participating in the program.

- Provide a simple rubric that leads volunteer teachers to deepen their experience. Help them see how the connections made to each other in a religious setting are a critical part of the "curriculum" and mission of the faith development program. One religious educator poses the following questions, to both frame and evaluate the program/session, for those teaching in her religious education program:
    - To what extent has this teaching experience deepened your relationship with one or more child/youth?
    - To what extent has this teaching experience deepened your relationship with one or more other adult?
    - To what extent has this teaching experience deepened your sense of belonging to this community?
    - To what extent has this teaching experience given you new knowledge or insights about your faith?

Support volunteers by providing tools through which they can illuminate their teaching as a faith development experience.

- Provide experiences that affirm that teachers in religious education programs engage in "doing faith" with participants including training on classroom tools such as chalice lightings, the sharing of joys and concerns, meditation, and for some congregations, prayer. Teachers who feel prepared to lead children/youth with these tools of our faith, will be more likely to "own" them, make personal meaning of them, and explore them with children/youth.

- Engage volunteer teachers more fully in ministry by providing additional materials and/or sources they can access to prepare for teaching. One religious educator provides three centering questions for teachers for each session. These questions point out the "big picture" of the session, both for the children and leaders participating.

- Some religious educators send letters to parent/guardians that apprise them of what's happening in religious education. This helps create community connections for volunteer teachers with the parents of the children/youth in their care.

- Offer forums that nurture connections between teachers, where they can reflect together on their teaching/leading in relationship to their faith development. Many religious educators follow up with individual teachers via email. Others engage teachers in Small Group Ministry, just for teachers, where growing in faith through ministry to children/youth are a focus. Still other religious educators provide monthly breakfasts, where volunteers connect to each other. All of these forums are opportunities to support and illuminate teaching as a venue for adult faith development.

- Provision teachers (materials, programs, information about child and youth development, health and safety procedures, group management advice) so that they feel prepared to focus on the process of being in relationship with the children/youth they teach over "coverage."

Sustain teachers by enfolding them as integral members in the ministry of lifespan faith development.

- Claim and emphasize teaching children and youth as a central part of congregational ministry and congregational life.

- Provide ways for experienced teachers to nurture less experienced teachers. Pat Ellenwood, DRE, Wellesley Hills Unitarian Society, engages experienced teachers to be "Team Support" for newer volunteer teachers. This process of mutually enriching to new and seasoned teacher/leaders.

- Provide ways for volunteer teachers/leaders to influence programming. Layne Richard-Hammock, DRE, Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church provides an on-line form for ongoing teacher evaluation of programs. Other religious educators solicit feedback from teachers weekly or monthly. Making teachers' experiences and reflections part of the cycle of lifespan faith programming decisions, affirms their centrality to the relational process of growing in faith.

- Reflect together, during planned and informal venues, on what we learn spiritually, ethically, morally, and religiously in our work with children and youth. Together we grow in faith.

A Few Thoughts about Recognition and Support of Teachers

Or, Some Loose Ends of the Macramé

By Ann Fields

Children's Sunday at the end of the year provides a natural time and place to honor and thank our children's leaders. Their names can be read out loud (I did this once with the Star Wars throne room music playing softly in the background; it was fun and effective). I have also given them small gifts: paperback book, a meditation manual, a flowering plant, a poster, a rainbow pin, etc. One church had all the people who had in any way helped with the children's program during the year make a circle around the room, surrounding the congregation. It made visible, at once, the wonderful network of RE folks.

How about a *teacher's dinner* sometime during the spring, with teachers and spouses invited to a candlelight buffet ... or possibly dessert and coffee ... could be potluck, or catered, or assembled by RE committee from contributions from non-teaching parents - followed by a special program: guest speaker, film or entertainment.

Scholarships to RE conferences and institutes.

One church gave *play tickets* to staff.

Coffee in the RE office on Sunday morning before class.

Parent Helpers assigned to cleanup time and end of class.

Teaching teams to provide *rotation* so teachers can get to adult service sometimes.

Tape of *sermon available*, or printed text.

Family services which include everyone and give teachers a Sunday "off."

Coffee hour displays of a single class's project, attended by the class members and adult leaders ... who collect lots of strokes from admiring parents and parishioners.

We had an *RE Open House* one Sunday morning in the fall. During the last 15 minutes of church (the sermon was earlier in the service) parents of kids came downstairs and joined the classes.

Frequent reportage in the *church newsletter* keeps everyone advised of who's doing what in the RE program ... and how and why. The newsletter is my pulpit and it permits me to do constant educating of the church community. I do lots of name-dropping!

Include children's staff members in *visible roles in family services* when possible for the danger is that they come to feel invisible and unrecognized in the adult community.

Bulletin boards can display children's creations, captioned to interpret the spirit and purpose of the curriculum, and list children and leaders.

Photographers can take pictures of the groups in action, for adult bulletin boards. Or for a slide show about the church and its people. Or for articles in the local newspaper. With names and appreciations included…And you will think of more!

HOMECOMING SUNDAY

TEACHER DEDICATION

by Carol MacFarlane
adapted from one by Carol Greve

DRE: This morning we'd like to recognize those members of the parish who have volunteered to be our church schoolteachers this year. I'd like to begin with a reading from Minot Savage, a turn-of-the-century Unitarian minister who wrote about the qualities he wanted to see in his church school teachers. I apologize for his exclusive language, but he was not a product of the 1980's!

> "And remember that I do not want anybody for a teacher in my Sunday school who thinks he is very wise. I certainly do not want anybody who is possessed with the idea he is very good, and I really do not want anybody who has nothing else to do. I want just human people, who appreciate that here is something that is worth their doing, and are willing to do the best they can.
>
> I do not care so much whether you teach theology, or how much religious history and biography you teach, or whether you are up concerning the missionary journeys of St. Paul. These are matters of interest and importance. But the principle thing, after all, is that you should bring the children with whom you come in contact close to a warm heart, that you surround them with an atmosphere of devotion.
>
> Teach them that they may become a part of this great effort of humanity to lift up the world."

DRE or **R.E. CHAIR:** At this time, we entrust to our teachers and advisors a most important task: the nurturing of our children's spiritual growth. It is a high calling and we are grateful to those who are willing to assume this responsibility. We would now like to recognize those people of the parish who have made this commitment to the Religious Education program.

(Teachers come forward as their names are read.
Pins are handed out to them to wear.)

TEACHERS: We recognize and accept our teaching responsibility and pledge, as best we are able, to give ourselves for the spiritual well being of our children and youth. We shall aim not to impose our ideas upon them, but to open and stimulate their minds.

PARISH: We recognize that we, too, are partners in this important endeavor—by the examples of the meaningful and good lives we model, by the relationships we establish with the children and youth of our church, and by the resources we provide to the Church School.

Sudbury, Massachusetts

Care and Feeding of Volunteers

Adapted from materials prepared by the UU Church of Ventura, CA

Increasing the Likelihood of Success

The primary pay for a volunteer is the satisfaction s/he gets from seeing that the institution and/or event s/he cares for does well. In a profound way, that institution/event is part of the volunteer's identity. Frustration comes when s/he is asked to work without enough time, or support, or recognition, or when the task is poorly organized so that failure is more likely than success. No volunteer should be asked to do something that is likely to be unsuccessful or too demanding. The frustration may not only doom this task, but also lead the volunteer to refuse the next time s/he is asked to do something.

The leader's task is to be sure the *task* is sized correctly, and is a good match for the volunteer, and to see that *volunteers* are in the right places, doing tasks for which they are being rewarded. The leader needs to know what s/he is asking, in order to tell the volunteer:

- what the task entails,
- how long it will take,
- what support will be available,
- what results are expected,
- why the task is important, and
- why the volunteer is the person being asked.

No one should be asked to do a task without this information, and no one should be told that the task is less than it is. *Credibility is all-important.*

Volunteers <u>always</u> do better when they have precise and complete information on what is expected of them. The primary responsibility of a leader of volunteers is the organization of the environment and of support systems, which are crucial to success.

Rewards are usually in the form of pats on the back and "thank you's." Volunteers should receive these rewards frequently and publicly. Calling volunteers periodically to thank them is critical—the more specific the thanks, the better.

When a volunteer doesn't function as expected, the leader needs to call to see if more support is needed. Sometimes people take on tasks they can't accomplish, at least not in the time frame provided. If deadlines can be pushed back a little, leaving time for the work to be done, the payoff is greater than if a task is removed from a volunteer.

Removing a Volunteer from a Task, or a Task from a Volunteer

If the volunteer and the task are mismatched, it may be necessary to remove a task from a volunteer. This is often difficult for the leader and for the volunteer. Honesty is usually the best approach. The volunteer knows whether s/he is getting the work done, and is not likely to be fooled by flowery language or misinformation. The need is to be sensitive to the volunteer's feelings, and to listen to her/his solution to the problem. If s/he comes up with a plan that can be monitored and gives promise of success, stay with that person. If s/he can be helped to see that it would be better for someone else to do the job, encourage the volunteer to say so, and see if there is something else that would work out better for this volunteer.

Table Talk Topic: Bullying

All About Bullying (adapted)

Stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
United States Department of Health and Human Services

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself.

Children who are bullied.

There are many signs that a child is being bullied. Some signs to look for:

- The child comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books or other belongings;
- The child has unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- The child seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus or taking part in organized activities with peers;
- The child appears sad, moody, teary or depressed when he or she comes home;
- The child frequently appears anxious and/or suffers from low self-esteem.

If you suspect your child is being bullied, remember to support your child, inform others and take action.

- First, focus on your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying. Tell your child you are concerned about him or her and ask questions.
- Contact your child's teacher and/or principal. He or she will probably be in the best position to understand the relationships between your child and other peers at school. Ask the teacher to talk to other adults who interact with your child at school to see if they have observed students bullying your child.
- If you know your child is being bullied, take quick action. There is nothing worse than doing nothing, and bullying can have serious effects.

If, after talking with your child and staff at his or her school, you don't believe your child is being bullied, be alert to other possible problems your child may be having. Share your concerns with a counselor at your child's school.

Children who bully

Many children engage in bullying everyday. Although each child is different, those who bully other young people do share some common characteristics. Here are some things to look for:

Common Characteristics of Children Who Bully

- Impulsive, hot-headed, dominant;
- Easily frustrated;
- Lack empathy;
- Have difficulty following rules; and
- View violence in a positive way.

- Boys who bully tend to be physically stronger than other children.

There is no single cause of bullying among children. A host of different factors can place a child at risk for bullying his or her peers. However, it has been found that children who bully are more likely than their non-bullying peers to come from homes with certain characteristics.

Family Risk Factors for Bullying

- A lack of warmth and involvement on the part of parents;
- Overly permissive parenting (including a lack of limits for children's behavior);
- A lack of supervision by parents;
- Harsh, physical discipline; and
- Bullying incidences at home.

Bullying and Other Violent and/or Antisocial Behaviors
Research shows that bullying can be a sign of other serious antisocial and/or violent behavior. Children who frequently bully their peers are more likely than others to:

- Get into frequent fights;
- Be injured in a fight;
- Vandalize or steal property;
- Drink alcohol;
- Smoke;
- Be truant from school;
- Drop out of school; and
- Carry a weapon

Why Should Adults Care about Bullying?

There are a number of reasons why adults should be concerned about bullying among children and youth. These reasons range from the prevalence of the problem to the impact on children who bully.

There are a number of reasons why adults should be concerned about bullying among children and youth.

1. Many children are involved in bullying, and most are extremely concerned about it.

    • Studies show that between 15-25% of U.S. students are bullied with some frequency ("sometimes or more often") while 15-20% admit that they bully others with some frequency.
    • Not only is bullying prevalent, but children and youth report being extremely concerned about it. In a 2003 Harris poll of 8-17 year-old girls, commissioned by the Girl Scouts of the USA, bullying topped girls' list of concerns regarding their safety. When asked what they worried about the most, the most common response was being socially ostracized-being teased or made fun of. [Feeling Safe: *What Girls Say by Judy Schoenberg, Ed.M., Toija Riggins, Ph.D., and Kimberlee Salmond, M.P.P. (New York, N.Y.: Girl Scouts of the USA, 2003). 114 pp. (Executive Summary, 23 pp.)*]

2. Bullying can seriously affect the mental health, academic work, and physical health of children who are targeted.

• Children who are bullied are more likely than other children to have lower self-esteem; higher rates of depression, loneliness, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Recent studies indicate that there may be reason to be concerned about the school attendance and academic work of children involved in bullying
• Research on the health-related effects of bullying indicates that victims of frequent bullying are more likely to experience a variety of health problems, including headaches, sleeping problems, and stomach ailments.
• Some emotional scars can be long-lasting. Research suggests that adults who were bullied as children are more likely than their non-bullied peers to be depressed and have low self-esteem as adults.

3. Children who bully are more likely than other children to be engaged in other antisocial, violent, or troubling behavior.

Findings from research in the U.S. and abroad indicate that children who bully are more likely to:

• get into frequent fights;
• be injured in a fight;
• steal, vandalize property;
• drink alcohol;
• smoke;
• be truant, drop out of school;
• report poorer academic achievement;
• perceive a negative climate at school; and
• carry a weapon.

4. Bullying can negatively affect children who observe bullying going on around them–even if they aren't targeted themselves.

• Children who are bystanders to bullying can feel fearful ("Maybe I'll be targeted next!"), guilty ("I should do something to stop this, but I'm afraid to."), and distracted from school work.
• Bullying can contribute to a negative social climate at school.

5. Bullying is a form of victimization or abuse, and it is wrong. Children should be able to attend school or take part in community activities without fear of being harassed, assaulted, belittled, or excluded.

Best Practice in Bullying Prevention & Intervention

A review of bullying prevention programs and feedback from educators in the field led us to suggest 10 strategies that represent "best practice" in bullying prevention and intervention.

A review of bullying prevention programs and feedback from educators in the field led us to suggest 10 strategies that represent "best practice" in bullying prevention and intervention.

1. Focus on the social environment of the school. In order to reduce bullying, it is important to change the social climate of the school and the social norms with regards to bullying. This requires the efforts of everyone in the

school environment—teachers, administrators, counselors school nurses other non-teaching staff (such as bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and/or school librarians), parents, and students.

2. Assess bullying at your school. Adults are not always very good at estimating the nature and prevalence of bullying at their school. As a result, it can be quite useful to administer an anonymous questionnaire to students about bullying. A number of bullying prevention programs listed in the Resource Kit include these measures.

3. Obtain staff and parent buy-in and support for bullying prevention. Bullying prevention should not be the sole responsibility of any single individual at a school. To be most effective, bullying prevention efforts require buy-in from the majority of the staff and from parents. However, bullying prevention efforts should still begin even if immediate buy-in from all isn't achievable. Usually, more and more supporters will join the effort once they see what it's accomplishing.

4. Form a group to coordinate the school's bullying prevention activities. Bullying prevention efforts seem to work best if they are coordinated by a representative group from the school. This coordinating team might include:

an administrator,
a teacher from each grade,
a member of the non-teaching staff,
a school counselor or other school-based mental health professional, and
a parent.

The team should meet regularly to review findings from the school's survey; plan specific bullying prevention activities; motivate staff, students, and parents; and ensure that the efforts continue over time.

5. Provide training for school staff in bullying prevention. All administrators, faculty and staff at a school should be trained in bullying prevention and intervention. In-service training can help staff members to better understand the nature of bullying and its effects, how to respond if they observe bullying, and how to work with others at the school to help prevent bullying.

6. Establish and enforce school rules and policies related to bullying. Developing simple, clear rules about bullying can help to ensure that students are aware of adults' expectations that they not bully others and that they help students who are bullied. School rules and policies should be posted and discussed with students and parents. Appropriate positive and negative consequences should be developed.

7. Increase adult supervision in "hot spots" for bullying. Bullying tends to thrive in locations where adults are not present or are not watchful. Adults should look for creative ways to increase adult presence in locations that students identify as "hot spots."

8. Intervene consistently and appropriately when you see bullying. Observed or suspected bullying should never be ignored by adults. All school staff should learn effective strategies to intervene on-the-spot to stop bullying. Staff members also should be designated to hold sensitive follow-up meetings with students who are bullied and (separately) with students who bully. Staff members should involve parents whenever possible.

9. Devote some class time to bullying prevention. Students can benefit if teachers set aside a regular period of time (e.g., 20–30 minutes each week or every other week) to discuss bullying and improving peer relations.

These meetings can help teachers to keep their fingers on the pulse of students' concerns, allow time for discussions about bullying and the harms that it can cause, and provide tools for students to address bullying problems. Anti-bullying messages also can be incorporated throughout the school curriculum.

10. Continue these efforts. There should be no "end date" for bullying prevention activities. Bullying prevention should be continued over time and woven into the fabric of the school environment.

*This information is based, in part on: Limber, S. P. (2004, Winter). What works—and doesn't work-in bullying prevention and intervention. Student Assistance Journal. 16–19.

Bullying can take many forms such as:

- Physical bullying, such as hitting or punching;
- Verbal bullying, such as teasing or name-calling;
- Nonverbal or emotional bullying, such as intimidating someone through gestures or social exclusion; and

Children and youth also may be involved in cyber bullying, which occurs when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology. This can include:

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Usually, it is repeated over time. Traditionally, bullying has involved actions such as: hitting or punching (physical bullying), teasing or name-calling (verbal bullying), or intimidation through gestures or social exclusion. In recent years, technology has given children and youth a new means of bullying each other.

Cyber bullying, which is sometimes referred to as online social cruelty or electronic bullying, can involve:

- Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images;
- Posting sensitive, private information about another person;
- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad;
- Intentionally excluding someone from an online group (Willard, 2005).

Children and youth can cyberbully each other through:

- E-mails,
- Instant messaging,
- Text or digital imaging messages sent on cell phones,
- Web pages,
- Web logs (blogs),
- Chat rooms or discussion groups, and
- Other information communication technologies.

How common is cyber bullying?

Although little research has been conducted on cyber bullying, recent studies have found that:

- 18% of students in grades 6-8 said they had been cyberbullied at least once in the last couple of months; and 6% said it had happened to them 2 or more times (Kowalski et al., 2005).
- 11% of students in grades 6-8 said they had cyberbullied another person at least once in the last couple of months, and 2% said they had done it two or more times (Kowalski et al., 2005).
- 19% of regular Internet users between the ages of 10 and 17 reported being involved in online aggression; 15% had been aggressors, and 7% had been targets (3% were both aggressors and targets) (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).
- 17% of 6-11 year-olds and 36% of 12-17-year-olds reported that someone said threatening or embarrassing things about them through e-mail, instant messages, web sites, chat rooms, or text messages (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006).
- Cyber bullying has increased in recent years. In nationally representative surveys of 10-17 year-olds, twice as many children and youth indicated that they had been victims and perpetrators of online harassment in 2005 compared with 1999/2000 (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006).

Who are the victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying?

In a study of students in grades 6-8 (Kowalski et al., 2005):

- Girls were about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying.
- Of those students who had been cyberbullied relatively frequently (at least twice in the last couple of months):
    - 62% said that they had been cyberbullied by another student at school, and 46% had been cyberbullied by a friend.
    - 55% didn't know who had cyberbullied them.
- Of those students who admitted cyber bullying others relatively frequently:
    - 60% had cyberbullied another student at school, and 56% had cyberbullied a friend.

What are the most common methods of cyber bullying?

In recent studies of middle and high school students, (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006; Kowalski et al., 2005; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006) the most common way that children and youth reported being cyberbullied was through instant messaging. Somewhat less common ways involved the use of chat rooms, e-mails, and messages posted on web sites. A study of younger children (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006) showed that they were most often bullied through e-mail, comments on a web site, or in a chat room.

Where are children and youth cyber bullied?

In a telephone survey of preteens (6-11 year-olds) and teens (12-17 year-olds) (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006):

- 45% of preteens and 30% of teens who had been cyber bullied received the messages while at school;

- 44% of preteens and 70% of teens who had been cyber bullied received the messages at home; and
- 34% of preteens and 25% of teens who had been cyber bullied received the messages while at a friend's house.

Do children tell others if they are cyber bullied?

According to one telephone survey of preteens and teens (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006):

- 51% of preteens but only 35% of teens who had been cyber bullied had told their parents about their experience;
- 27% of preteens and only 9% of teens who had been cyber bullied had told a teacher;
- 44% of preteens and 72% of teens who had been cyber bullied had told a friend;
- 31% of preteens and 35% of teens who had been cyber bullied had told a brother or sister; and
- 16% of preteens and teens who had been cyber bullied had told no one.

How does cyber bullying differ from other traditional forms of bullying?

Although there is little research yet on cyber bullying among children and youth, available research and experience suggest that cyber bullying may differ from more "traditional" forms of bullying in a number of ways (Willard, 2005), including:

- Cyber bullying can occur any time of the day or night;
- Cyber bullying messages and images can be distributed quickly to a very wide audience;
- Children and youth can be anonymous when cyber bullying, which makes it difficult (and sometimes impossible) to trace them;

What can adults do to prevent and address cyber bullying?

Adults seldom are present in the online environments frequented by children and youth. Therefore, it is extremely important that adults pay close attention to the cyber bullying and the activities of children and youth when using these new technologies.

*Suggestions for parents**

Tips to help prevent cyber bullying:

- Keep your home computer(s) in easily viewable places , such as a family room or kitchen.
- Talk regularly with your child about on-line activities he or she is involved in.
- Talk specifically about cyber bullying and encourage your child to tell you immediately if he or she is the victim of cyber bullying, cyberstalking, or other illegal or troublesome on-line behavior. View the Campaign's webisodes with your child and discuss in particular webisode #5 that addresses cyber bullying.
- Encourage your child to tell you if he or she is aware of others who may be the victims of such behavior.
- Explain that cyber bullying is harmful and unacceptable behavior. Outline your expectations for responsible online behavior and make it clear that there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior.

- Although adults must respect the privacy of children and youth, concerns for your child's safety may sometimes override these privacy concerns. Tell your child that you may review his or her on-line communications if you think there is reason for concern.
- Consider installing parental control filtering software and/or tracking programs, but don't rely solely on these tools.

Tips for dealing with cyber bullying that your child has experienced:

Because cyber bullying can range from rude comments to lies, impersonations, and threats, your responses may depend on the nature and severity of the cyber bullying. Here are some actions that you may want to take after-the-fact.

- Strongly encourage your child not to respond to the cyber bullying.
- Do not erase the messages or pictures. Save these as evidence.
- Try to identify the individual doing the cyber bullying. Even if the cyberbully is anonymous (e.g., is using a fake name or someone else's identity) there may be a way to track them through your Internet Service Provider. If the cyber bullying is criminal (or if you suspect that it may be), contact the police and ask them to do the tracking.
- Sending inappropriate language may violate the "Terms and Conditions" of e-mail services, Internet Service Providers, web sites, and cell phone companies. Consider contacting these providers and filing a complaint.
- If the cyber bullying is coming through e-mail or a cell phone, it may be possible to block future contact from the cyberbully. Of course, the cyberbully may assume a different identity and continue the bullying.
- Contact your school. If the cyber bullying is occurring through your school district's Internet system, school administrators have an obligation to intervene. Even if the cyber bullying is occurring off campus, make your school administrators aware of the problem. They may be able to help you resolve the cyber bullying or be watchful for face-to-face bullying.
- Consider contacting the cyberbully's parents. These parents may be very concerned to learn that their child has been cyber bullying others, and they may effectively put a stop to the bullying. On the other hand, these parents may react very badly to your contacting them. So, proceed cautiously. If you decide to contact a cyberbully's parents, communicate with them in writing — not face-to-face. Present proof of the cyber bullying (e.g., copies of an e-mail message) and ask them to make sure the cyber bullying stops.
- Consider contacting an attorney in cases of serious cyber bullying. In some circumstances, civil law permits victims to sue a bully or his or her parents in order to recover damages.
- Contact the police if cyber bullying involves acts such as:
    - Threats of violence
    - Extortion
    - Obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages
    - Harassment, stalking, or hate crimes
    - Child pornography

If you are uncertain if cyber bullying violates your jurisdiction's criminal laws, contact your local police, who will advise you.

Suggestions for educators

- Educate your students, teachers, and other staff members about cyber bullying, its dangers, and what to do if someone is cyberbullied.
- Be sure that your school's anti-bullying rules and policies address cyber bullying.
- Closely monitor students' use of computers at school.
- Use filtering and tracking software on all computers, but don't rely solely on this software to screen out cyber bullying and other problematic on-line behavior.
- Investigate reports of cyber bullying immediately. If cyber bullying occurs through the school district's Internet system, you are obligated to take action. If the cyber bullying occurs off-campus, *consider what actions you might take* to help address the bullying:
    - Notify parents of victims and parents of cyberbullies of known or suspected cyber bullying.
    - Notify the police if the known or suspected cyber bullying involves a threat.
    - Closely monitor the behavior of the affected students at school for possible bullying.
    - Talk with all students about the harms caused by cyber bullying. Remember — cyber bullying that occurs off-campus can travel like wildfire among your students and can affect how they behave and relate to each other at school.
    - Investigate to see if the victim(s) of cyber bullying could use some support from a school counselor or school-based mental health professional.
- Contact the police immediately if known or suspected cyber bullying involves acts such as:
    - Threats of violence
    - Extortion
    - Obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages
    - Harassment, stalking, or hate crimes
    - Child pornography

Kowalski, R. et al (August, 2005). Electronic Bullying Among School-Aged Children and Youth. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association. Washington, DC.

Opinion Research Corporation (2006). Cyber bully pre-teen. Available at: www.fightcrime.org/cyberbullying/cyberbullyingpreteen.pdf.

Opinion Research Corporation (2006). Cyber bully teen. Available at: www.fightcrime.org/cyberbullying/cyberbullyingteen.pdf.

Wolak, J., Mitchell, K., & Finkelhor, D. (2006). Online victimization of youth: Five years later. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

Ybarra, M. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2004). Youth engaging in online harassment: Associations with caregiver-child relationships, Internet use, and personal characteristics. Journal of Adolescence, 27, 319-336.

- Sending mean text, e-mail, or instant messages;
- Posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Web sites;
- Using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone.

Who is bullied?
Studies show that between 15-25% of U.S. students are bullied with some frequency ("sometimes or more often") while 15-20% report that they bully others with some frequency.
(Melton et al, 1998; Nansel et al, 2001)

Boys are more likely than girls to bully others.

Girls frequently report being bullied by both boys and girls, but boys are most often bullied only by other boys.

What are the consequences of bullying? Children and youth who are bullied are more likely than other children to be depressed, lonely, anxious; have low self-esteem, feel unwell, and think about suicide.

How aware of bullying are adults? Adults are often unaware of bullying problems. In one study, 70% of teachers believed they intervene "almost always" in bullying situations; only 25% of students agreed with this assessment. (Charach et al, 1995)

Can Adults Bully Children?

It is important to remember that not only do children bully each other, but adults can bully children, too. For example, a study of urban elementary school teachers in the U.S. (Twemlow et al., 2006) found that 40% admitted that they had bullied a student, and 3% said they did so "frequently." A Norwegian study of 2,400 students in grades 6-9 found that 2% of students had been victims of teacher bullying (Olweus, 2005). Adults must not only be watchful for signs of bullying among the children and youth that they work with, but they should also be sensitive to possible bullying of children by adults, as well.

References for Articles Cited Above:

McEvoy, A. (September, 2005). Teachers who bully students: Patterns and policy implications. Paper presented at the Hamilton Fish Institute's Persistently Safe Schools Conference. Philadelphia, PA, September 11-14, 2005.

Olweus, D. (1996). *Bullying of students by teachers.* Bergen, Norway.

Twemlow, S. W., Fonagy, P. ., Sacco, F. C., & Brethour, J. R., Jr. (2006). Teachers who bully students: A hidden trauma. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 52, 187-198.

Additional websites:
www.stopbullyingnow.com
www.safeyouth.org
www.cyberbullying.org
www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org

Appendix One: Small Group Ministry

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AND LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT
Rev. Helen Zidowecki, September 2006

Small Group Ministry changes my approach to religious education!

The focus of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education is **spiritual development rather than gaining information,** on how participants relate to stories rather than on how much they 'learn'. The 'learning' is from the impact of the story and the dialog, rather than on information gained. As Unitarian Universalist, we have the challenge and opportunity to focus on spiritual development and spiritual practices for a lifetime.

The **language** used in religious education changes from an instructional model to a community, connection, and relational model -- Relational Religious Education. The emphasis changes from religion education to an educational ministry.

The leader's **focus is the group rather than the content**. This is part of the 'ministry' and the essence of bringing a topic alive. The leader can go deeper with a topic, more 'engagement'.

There is **greater latitude in grouping participants**. We tend to group participants by age. Groups that cover several years allow for variations in maturation and development of participants, more latitude in arriving at gender balance, and wisdom shared over several years. The model can be used with very small groups --even the leader and a participant in a mentoring situation, small congregations and families.

Arts, crafts and activities enhance the dialog rather than illustrate the learning. Using activities allows various methods of expression and reacting. The outcome is increased interaction rather than a product related to the information.

Myths, Wisdom Stories become a major methodology. Understanding of the importance of mythology in our tradition -- mythology that surrounds our 'elders' -- gives clues to how their values and stories also come from the participants themselves.

In educational programs, we give tools for the spiritual journey, such as information, traditions, and spiritual practices. However, it is in expressing and sharing spiritual journeys that we integrate the learning. Small Group Ministry connects people as a ministry that enhances spiritual journeys and church connections.

This description of Small Group Ministry, and the session plans that have been included, directly relate to content of the Teacher Development Renaissance Module.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY IN THE CONGREGATION

Community worship or celebration. People feel more comfortable with the larger gathering and with the celebration itself when they have a sense of connection with at least some of the participants on a more personal level.

Community connections and caring. Small groups provide opportunity for deeper connection with a smaller group of people than is possible with a larger group.

Personal spiritual growth. Small Group Ministry encourages individual spiritual journeys that are enhanced by sharing in the group.

Service. Small Group Ministry provides a way to live out the meaning of the caring and spiritual journeys beyond the immediate group itself. Service to the congregation or larger community helps keep the small group from becoming self-absorbed and disconnected and is part of a growing spiritual life. The service activities can include ongoing elements of church life as well as projects in the larger community.

All of these apply to using Small Group Ministry in Religious Education for Lifespan Faith Development.

What makes a small group a "ministry group"? The answer lies in the name itself.

- "Small" means a group with a maximum of 8-10 people, so that even smaller congregations could probably have more than one group. Groups of this size provide an opportunity to relate on a more intentional level.
- "Group" is a gathering of individuals, sometimes selected at random, sometimes selected for a specific interest or characteristic. What separates these groups from others in the congregation is the focus on "ministry."
- "Ministry" is the process or act of caring for another. This relates to the spiritual as well as the physical and emotional well-being of the group participants.

The concepts underlying Small Group Ministry can make the educational ministry of the church more relational, even if the content of the curricula does not change. Consider these suggestions.

<>*Change in terminology* sets the stage:

- From “class” to “group”
- From “lesson” to “session” or a time together
- From “Sunday School” to “Religious Education” or “educational ministry” or “religious exploration”; and
- From “teacher” to “leader” or “facilitator” or “co-discoverer.” Leaders set the stage for the session, providing resources and structure, but are not responsible for the learning itself. Leaders also learn in the process!

<>*Prepare for a ses*sion, or time together, rather than a “lesson” that is to be followed or something that is to be accomplished. Keep the members of the group in mind, with their special considerations and special interests or perspectives. Asking teachers to reflect on the meaning of the theme for them becomes a primary part of preparation.

Curriculum For an example of a curriculum that is written in Small Group Ministry Format, see *Dr. Seuss and UUs* (www.hzmre.com/seuss) or *Unitarian Universalist Principles and Parenting* (www.hzmre.com/uuppsgm/) Other curricula using the format are planned.

Teacher and Religious Education Committee Small Group Ministry is also a tool for ongoing teacher and religious education committee development. The focus is allowing – and taking – time for reflection and dialog around topics in a way that encourages participants to “go deeper” as they implement the religious education/lifespan faith development program.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY RESOURCES

1. General
Small Group Ministry Network, www.smallgroupministry.net
Membership $40 for individual, $100 for congregation

Tapestry of Faith program Sharing the Journey: Small Group Ministry with Youth:
http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/sharingjourney/index.shtml
Youth and Young Adult Ministries: http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/youth/index.shtml
Campus Ministry: http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/campusministry/index.shtml

UUA Bookstore
Updated Small Group Ministry Resource Book 2001, Augusta, ME
Small Group Ministry Session Book 2003, Augusta, ME
Small Group Ministry, Robert Hill

2. Religious Education
Small Group Ministry and Lifespan Faith Development, Oct. 2004
Helen Zidowecki www.hzmre.com/sgm/ and e-mail at hzmre@hzmre.com

Adapting Small Group Ministry for Children's Religious Education: An Implementation Plan
Volume 1 has 31 session plans, and
Volume 2 (2006) has 27 additional session plans.
Gail Forsyth-Vail, Adult Programs Director, UUA, Ministries and Faith Development
Temporarily out of print. A revised version will soon be available on the UUA website as a Tapestry of Faith resource.

Small Group Ministry for Youth, June 2005, Helen Zidowecki, Small Group Ministry Network

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY IN VARIOUS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SETTINGS

Following is a description of how Small Group Ministry can be used in various settings. This description of use is ever expanding. For ongoing updates and session plans, see www.hzmre.com/sgm

In the description, the section on Adults is the usual description for programs in congregations. This is adapted for children and youth. However, in the Small Group Ministry process can be used preparing teachers/leaders/facilitators for applying Small Group Ministry as Relational Religious Education, as noted in the section on Teachers/Committees (Religious Education program committee).

The description gives the Components of Small Group Ministry as well as the Session Format.

COMPONENTS OF SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

ADULTS/GENERAL NOTES	CHILDREN (School age)	YOUTH (Gr. 6-12)	TEACHERS/COMMITTEE
Group size is preferably 5-10, including facilitators. Participants are placed in groups through the minister or coordinator to match the needs of the individual and the group, in consultation with the facilitators. When the size of the group reaches 8, starting a new group is considered, frequently by have people interested in joining become the core of the new group. Some groups develop for a specific time, such as a year at a time.	***Group size.*** When the total number of participants and teachers increases to 8-10, consider creating another group rather than adding a leader to assist with the group size. While this has implications for space, the comfort and calmness and learning ability will increase with smaller groups. Consider consistency rather than consolidating groups if the attendance is low. If one child attends, there is an opportunity for a mentoring session. The focus changes from the number of participants to the interactions. Group by age ranges rather than grades (such as K-grade 2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8), allows sharing wisdom and modeling that helps to carry on	***Group Size*** Youth suggest 8 being the maximum size, including advisors. Adults may or may not be part of the group, depending on the structure set up by the congregation. Small groups are also used at youth conferences.	***Size*** of the group works better with 3-5 people, partially because the time allowed is usually shorter. (see Meeting Time). The group may be a team of teachers, or a Religious Education Committee – or a mixture.

	our faith traditions. This also allows flexibility in group composition around separating siblings, gender balance, or personalities.		
Meeting time is preferable at least twice a month, in a quiet, private, comfortable setting. Sessions usually last for 2 hours.	***Meeting time:*** North Andover, MA, used small group ministry session during their usual programming time of about an hour.	***Meeting time*** can be part of religious education time or youth group held at a different time. Suggest having small group ministry twice a month, and social justice project/other activities the alternate weeks. Length of session is 45-60 minutes.	***Meeting time*** can be part of a team or committee meeting. Schedule a meeting for 90-120 minutes, and have small group ministry for 30-45 minutes, followed by the 'business.
Empty chair is for someone who has not yet joined the group or who are absent for some reason. This presents the concept of outreach and openness to change—consistent but not closed and not static. The concept is welcoming and caring. Discuss the process for making people feel welcome, and develop a process when people leave so that the person and the group are honored.	***Empty chair*** indicates that we can invite people to join us. (A stuffed animal may occupy the chair as a 'greeter'.) ***Be attentive*** to each other. " Be present" for each other, sensing where you are (how you are feeling, etc.) and where the group is. Take attendance, a necessary task for program planning, to celebrate and be attentive to each person present, acknowledging people who are absent, and possibly connecting with them after the session. A suggestion is to have cards available so that notes from the group ("we miss you," or "thinking about you") can be sent to people who are not present.	***Empty chair*** symbolizes transitions. It is for someone who has not yet joined the group or who are absent for some reason. This presents the concept of outreach and inclusivity. The concept is welcoming and caring. Discuss the process for making people feel welcome, and develop a process when people leave so that the person and the group are honored.	***Empty chair*** is an invitation for others to join in the educational ministry of the congregation.
A Covenant is a sacred promise that defines how the group participants will talk, work, and be together. A covenant is reviewed at least annually, when there are new members, and when there are difficulties or	***Develop a covenant or "Guidelines for Being Together"*** so that the participants input and expectations are stated in the language of the group. Have the covenant visible in the meeting space. This moves from avoiding disruption and conflict to a	***Develop a covenant or "Guidelines for Being Together"*** as a sacred promise that defines how the group participants will talk, work, and be together. Review the covenant is at least annually, when there are new members, and when there are difficulties or tensions within the	***A covenant*** is a sacred promise that defines how the group participants will talk, work, and be together. Review the covenant is at least annually, when there are new members, and

tensions within the group. This allows the group as a whole and the members individually to reconsider and to reaffirm the covenant. Include expectations related to participation, starting and ending on time, and confidentiality.	way of caring. In addressing a potential conflict, focus is on the topic being addressed by the group, with a suggestion that there will be time to address the conflict outside of the group -- and follow-through with making time to address the conflict after the session.	group. This allows the group as a whole and the members individually to reconsider and to reaffirm the covenant. Include expectations related to participation, starting and ending on time, and confidentiality.	when there are difficulties or tensions within the group. Include expectations related to participation, starting and ending on time, confidentiality, and working together as religious education leaders.
The ***facilitator*** does not need to be a "content expert." The facilitator models good group process and listening skills and helps the group adhere to the group covenant. It is vital that facilitators don't 'lead' too much. They are to be present, to help keep things on track. They may have to move discussions along, but the members have the primary responsibility for its functioning. The role of the facilitator is to ♦ Make sure that each person is included, heard, and valued ♦ Help participants bring their own experiences to the living tradition we share. ♦ Provide a variety of ways to "process" the message or topic The facilitator also participates in the dialog. Facilitators meet together regularly with a designated	***Role of the Teacher*** (G. Forsyth-Vail) ◊Mentor, guide, facilitator. ◊Representative of the congregation in companioning youth and children on their spiritual journey. ◊Primary pastoral caregiver for children/participants. Skills/personal qualities that enhance teaching ◊Personal spiritual practice and the ability to reflect on life's journey. ◊Understanding that spiritual journey is not a ladder, but rather a process. ◊Confidence to "go with the flow" and draw out the thoughts of the children. ◊Willingness to be silly, adventurous, etc, in order to encourage children to try out new experiences and ideas. ◊Classroom management skills Benefits to the Teacher ◊Monthly small group ministry session with a chance to reflect regularly on his/her spiritual journey with other adults.	***Facilitators*** are selected by the youth or with youth advisors, and are usually youth. Facilitators are chosen for their interpersonal skills and commitment to the program. Facilitators meet with a designated person, such as a youth advisor, Director of Religious Education, or minister, to discuss how the group is going and to continue learning developing facilitation skills. The role of the facilitator is to ♦ Make sure that each person is included, heard, and valued ♦ Help participants bring their own experiences to the living tradition we share. ♦ Ensures maintenance of the group covenant. ♦ Guide the group through the session outline. ♦ Ensure that the tone and feeling of the session is comfortable and inclusive The facilitator participates in the dialog, but the first consideration of the facilitator is the group process. It is vital	***Facilitators*** are selected by the group and may rotate or be the team leader. Facilitators meet with a designated person, such as the Director of Religious Education, to discuss how the group is going and to continue developing facilitation skills. The role of facilitator is to ♦ Make sure that each person is included, heard, and valued ♦ Help participants bring their own experiences to the shared religious education experience. ♦ Ensure maintenance of the group covenant. ♦ Ensure that the tone and feeling of the session is comfortable/inclusive The facilitator participates in the dialog, but the first consideration of the

person, such as the minister, who functions as a "coach." The focus is to strengthen the process, to give ideas for sessions, and to share successes and issues. Facilitators' meetings follow the pattern of the small group meetings, with personal check-in, groups' status as the content/theme, closing reading, and likes and wishes.	◊Support of others in figuring out how to handle sticky situations. ◊Feels competent to lead a class, and comfortable with sharing "processed" parts of their own journey with children. ◊Own spiritual journey would become a gift to the children.	that facilitators don't 'lead' too much. They are to be present, to help keep things on track. They may have to move discussions along, but it is the members who "own" the group and have the primary responsibility for its success or failure.	facilitator is the group process. It is vital that facilitators don't 'lead' too much. They may have to move discussions along, but the members have the primary responsibility for its functioning.
Specific Comments:	*Adults move toward mentor and role model to empower children and youth as they participate.*: ◊During check-in, children have an opportunity to say something or to pass in a way that allows the child to determine what he or she wants to share. Children that passes may be ready to speak after others have shared. ◊The adults participate without giving the impression that they have 'the answers'. An exciting dynamic of Small Group Ministry is the wisdom that children can impart to adults! Additional activities may be needed, depending on the ages/developmental stages of participants. Have paper and crayons or markers, pens or pencils, clay and active games available for use at any session *to assist the participants in being more present in the group*, rather than as an end in themselves.	Religious education for youth differs from religious education for children in several critical ways: ▪ Youth have more say in their program. Decisions are made jointly by the youth and advisors. ▪ Youth take a more responsibility for making their time together meaningful for the participants. ▪ The focus of the sessions is on recognizing and examining their internal knowledge/understanding in a faith community setting. The "information" or "knowledge" comes more from the participants. Small Group Ministry provides a format with some structure and a great deal of latitude. Some youth groups use a "cookie jar" approach, putting topics into a jar and drawing them out at random. This approach can be developed around the format of Small Group Ministry. The adult advisors are resources and participants in the dialogue.	The focus of either teacher meetings or meetings of the Religious Education Committee is on spiritual nurturing of the participants while addressing the specific needs of a group and the overall religious education program. In preparing for a session, focus on being together, rather than a "lesson" that is to be followed or something that is to be accomplished. Keep the members of the group in mind. Are there special considerations? Special interests or perspectives? How do you relate to the topic personally and in your spiritual life?

SESSION FORMAT

The simple format provides a structure. The format helps participants to see what happens overall, keeps the focus on the group as a whole, and defers side conversations to outside of the session time. The format allows each participant to be part of the group as he/she is comfortable.

ADULTS	CHILDREN	YOUTH (Prepared session or impromptu)	TEACHERS/COMMITTEE
A chalice lighting/opening words sets the time as special and may be: • Generic, focused on calling the group together or • Specific related to the topic of the meeting	***A chalice lighting/opening words*** sets the time as special and may be: • Generic, focused on calling the group together or • Specific related to the topic of the meeting	***A chalice lighting/opening words*** can be selected from *Singing The Living Tradition (SLT)* and other resources. Readings or notation of their locations are put onto pieces of paper and into an envelope, and pulled out for a session. Participants are also encouraged to also write their own openings.	***A chalice lighting/opening words*** Chalice Lighting /reading from a Unitarian Universalist source, or developed by a participant.
Check-in/Sharing is an opportunity for participants to speak, without interruption. (It may be helpful to set a time for this, such as 5 minutes, with the option of extending the time if needed and if agreed by the group.) Passing or asking to speak later is acceptable. Check-in can focus on • Accomplishments/concerns • Sharing highlights in your life since the last session	***Check-in/Sharing*** is an opportunity for children to say something or to pass, without adults suggesting that they tell about something specific. A children that passes may be ready to speak after others have shared.	***Check-in/Sharing*** is an opportunity for participants to speak, without interruption. (It may be helpful to set a time for this, such as 5 minutes, with the option of extending the time if needed and if agreed by the group.) Passing or asking to speak later is acceptable. Check-in can focus on • Accomplishments/concerns • Sharing highlights in your life since the last session	***Check-in/Sharing*** is an opportunity for participants to speak, without interruption. (It may be helpful to set a time for this, such as 5 minutes, with the option of extending the time if needed and if agreed by the group.) Passing or asking to speak later is acceptable. Check-in can focus on • Accomplishment/concerns • Sharing highlights in your life since the last session
Topic/Dialogue In using dialogue participants:	***Topic/Dialogue*** The phrasing of questions is important. Questions	***Topic/Dialogue*** Use prepared session plans or participants write religious questions that they would	***Topic/Dialogue*** Topics can be developed for issues related to specific curriculum or the to address

Session plans may be developed by the minister, by a group with a designated person to coordinate format and consistency, or may rise from a group. The critical part is the manner in which the questions are asked to engage the individual from their spiritual base is *ministry*. Some standard questions might be: *What stories or thoughts do I have to share with the group? What can I learn from others? *How does this topic relate to me spiritually and why? *What am I bringing to the session? *How does my perspective influence my living and my actions?	phrased to obtain information have an *educational focus*, and questions phrased to elicit personal insight have a *spiritual growth or ministry focus*. "What did the story mean?" is didactic: "Where did you find yourself in the story?" is reflective.	like to have answered or would help on them on their spiritual journeys on slips of paper. These are put into an envelope and drawn out at the beginning of the session-or youth may bring their own topics to the session.	the topic that needs program discussion. The session allows for personal and spiritual reflection. Notes are not taken during the session, but reflections influence 'business' discussions. Some standard questions might be: *What stories or thoughts do I have to share with the group? What can I learn from others? *How does this topic relate to me spiritually and why? *What am I bringing to the session? *How does my perspective influence my living and actions?
Closing words may be • Generic, or used for each session • Related to the topic.	*Closing words* may be • Generic, or used for each session • Related to the topic.	*Closing words* may be • Generic, or used for each session • Related to the topic.	*Closing words* may be • Generic, or used for each session • Related to the topic.
Likes/Wishes. Note what participants liked about the session and suggestions for the future use.	*Likes/Wishes*. Note what participants liked about the session and suggestions for the future use.	*Likes/Wishes*. Note what participants liked about the session and suggestions for the future use.	*Likes/Wishes*. Note what participants liked about the session and suggestions for the future use.

Guidelines for Facilitators

Background: Small Group Ministry is a methodology that allows teachers to take time to consider their spiritual development as part of teaching in a lifespan faith development program. Several sessions are included throughout the module as a way to experience the methodology, using some of the module content as themes or topics for the sessions.

Participants will be divided into groups of 5-8 people. These groups are expected to remain the same throughout the module so that a sense of community can develop.

There will be a designated **facilitator** for each group, but a group may decide to rotate facilitation. The role of the facilitator is to:

- Ensure that the group begins and ends on time.
- Guides the group through the session outline.
- Makes sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate
- Makes sure that the tone and feeling of the session is comfortable, inclusive

The facilitator may participate in the discussion, but has the added responsibility to group process. There no reports to bring back from the Small Group Session, but the facilitator will connect with the designated Module leader and other facilitators at the next break to discuss how the session went for you and your group.

Review of the parts of the session:

Opening Words: Sets the stage for the session, but are not an expected part of the dialogue.

Check-in: Time for each participant to briefly react to a specific thought or question, and to briefly state how they are doing in the module at that time. Other participants listen without responding or giving advice.

Topic/Activity: Focused dialogue around specific questions or ideas. Dialogue provides opportunity for participants to express their thoughts and to gain insight through the thoughts of others. There are no expected outcomes, except personal wisdom.

Closing Words: Brings the session to a conclusion, but is not really a summary.

Likes and Wishes: Participants briefly say how the session was for them, and suggestions to make sessions more comfortable, inclusive, and meaningful.

Following is the session plan for the first session. Other session plans will be distributed during the respective sessions, and this section will be a reference for all sessions.

Time: The time allowed for a session will be noted at the beginning of a session.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
VISION FOR LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Chalice Lighting/Opening: Lifespan Faith Development Curriculum
*We envision children, youth, and adults who**:***
***know** that they are lovable beings of infinite worth, imbued with powers of the soul, and obligated to use their gifts, talents, and potentials in the service of life;*

***affirm** that they are part of a Unitarian Universalist religious heritage and community of faith that has value and provides resources for living;*

***accept** that they are responsible for the stewardship and creative transformation of their religious heritage and community of faith;*

***realize** that they are moral agents, capable of making a difference in the lives of other people, challenging structures of social and political oppression, promoting the health and well-being of the planet, acting in the service of diversity, justice and compassion;*

***recognize** the need for community, affirming the importance of families, relationships and connections between and among the generations;*

***appreciate** the value of spiritual practice as a means of deepening faith and integrating beliefs and values with everyday life;*

***experience** hope, joy, mystery, healing, and personal transformation in the midst of life's challenges.*

Check-in: How did you arrive at your church?

Topic:
What is needed for religious education to be a transformative power in your life? In your congregation?
What do you have to offer for the transformation to occur?
What commitment can you realistically make?

Closing: *The paradigm shifts from the information to personal spiritual engagement, from Religious Education to Lifespan Faith Development.*

Likes and Wishes: How did the session go?

Zidowecki, 9.2006

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

LOOKING FOR TEACHERS

Chalice Lighting/Opening Words

I do not want just anybody for a teacher. I certainly do not want people who think that they are very wise or very good or have the answers, and certainly not anybody who has nothing else to do. I want people who appreciate that here is something that is worth their doing, and are willing to do the best they can. I want people who are willing to engage with children, youth, or adults in the spiritual quest that is the core of our faith tradition.

Check in: How are you today?

Topic/Activity: Guided meditation

Read slowly, pausing between sentences for at least as long as it took to read the sentence(s).

Get into a comfortable position and begin to relax. Breathe easily, close your eyes if you choose, and let your mind take you to a place of remembering.

In that place, remember a teacher who stands out from the rest of the teachers you have had, one you would call an 'ideal' teacher. Think of your experience with this teacher.

What is happening? What are you doing?

How is the teacher interacting with you?

What did you learn from this teacher?

How did this teacher make you feel?

Gradually, leave the place of remembering, possibly saying 'good-bye' to the teacher. Slowly move back toward this place, and open you eyes or look up when you have returned.

What did this teacher do that made you think of her or him at this time? What were the specific qualities of this teacher that you responded to?

Think about people that you know who have these qualities.

Who would you recruit to be a teacher? What would they look like?

How do they relate to people? What are their gifts for relating to specific age groups?

How would you recruit for honest diversity?

Share a success story in recruiting for a religious education program (specific session or other contribution). How was it done? Who was involved?

Closing:

We ask them to share their gifts, their passions and their lives.

We ask them to enrich the lives of those they teach, and to strengthen our community of faith.

We ask they to consider teaching as spiritual practice.

We give them our support, our gratitude.

We promise to walk with them as they undertake the educational ministry of this congregation.

Likes and Wishes: How did this session go for you?

Zidowecki, 9.2006

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY: Teachers/Leaders/Facilitators

CALL TO TEACHING

Chalice lighting/Opening Words:
We have been called to minister through teaching!
Some of us we felt spiritually led to teach.
Some of us were recruited to fill a need – and we accepted!
Some of us volunteered when we saw a place to contribute.
Some of us stumbled into teaching.
Some of us feel responsible to the community.
The call to teach comes in various ways – we are here because we have answered the call! Welcome.

Check-in: How are you today?

Topic/Activity:
How and why did you become a teacher (assistant) in a Unitarian Universalist religious education program?
When did you begin – 'officially' or informally?
What difference does it make to think of yourself as being 'called' to teach?
How can teaching deepen your spiritual development?

Closing words:
The response to the invitation to teach becomes an expression of commitment to the continuation of our faith tradition.

Likes and Wishes: How did the session go for you?

Zidowecki 9.2006

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY: Leaders
FOCUS ON LEARNERS

Chalice Lighting/Opening Words: "What Do Children Need on Sunday Morning" by Rev. Lowell Brook

They need to light a candle, and have a quiet moment to enjoy its mystery.
They need to sing a song, to hear their own voice and other voices joined together, and to feel the feelings that are stirred by music.
They need to hear a story and have a chance to share their own, remembering that we are each different and also very alike.
They need to create something, realizing that by expressing themselves, whether using words or materials, helps to bind the different parts of ourselves and life together. That's what religion is.
They need to be with an adult who is interested in the world and who feels the privilege and responsibility of their trust—one who is glad to be with them, and regards them positively.
Into this safe and encouraging context, we may weave the content of our religious traditions. The history and common threads of our identity are important to be sure, but without loving embrace the education will not be religious.

Check-in: What is your primary way of learning?

Topic:
Share something that you have learned. How did you learn it?
What is needed for you to remember?
What would you need in order to provide a balanced learning environment? (various ways of learning, "multiple intelligences")
How would you help teachers to understand and seek the balance?

Closing words
We sing, we dance, we move to tempo and to sound.
We find the rhythms and connections with nature's life forces.
We communicate in words, body language and symbols.
We walk, we run, we are physically involved with our world.
We see, we hear, we think in images and dreams and visions.
We contemplate, solve mysteries, and feel the mystery in the order.
We try to know ourselves that we might better interact with others.
We are similar in many ways, yet mysteriously different.
We have multiple ways of being in the world, similar traits in varying amounts.
This we celebrate!

Likes and Wishes: How did the session go for you?

Zidowecki 9.2006

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

CURRICULUM AS A PROCESS

Chalice Lighting/Opening Words

Praxis is the purposeful, intentional and reflectively chosen ethical reflection and action. It becomes shared by an individual within a faith community. The result is that people
--Turn to look at and express their lives in the world -- what is there, what are they up to, and what is going on around them.
--Reflect on their life in the world -- contemplate it, question it, imagine new possibilities for it, and even probe their own reflections of it all, discerning why they think or feel or perceive the way they do. (Groome, 1998, p.161, adapted)

Check-in: Name a passion that you have.

Topic/Activity:

Thomas Groome, a Catholic Religious Educator, presented a "shared praxis" model for religious education *Christian Religious Education* in 1980. The model takes the individual in the present, helps examine the basis and impact of that present understanding, moves the person into dialogue with the faith community so that both are enriched, and leads to decision for action on the part of both the community and the individual. In his later writing, *Educating for Life* (1998), Groome focuses on the spiritual life of the educator (including a focus on parents as religious educators) as absolutely critical to the educational process. He continues the theme of praxis throughout this book.

Naming the knowing—this has been done by sharing the passions during check-in.

Critical Reflection: Why do you have the passion that you shared? Where did it come from?

Story:
What place does this passion have in your life? How does this passion relate to you spiritually?
Where do you find support in order to live out your passion?

The Story or Dialectic: Are there common threads between your story of your passion and the stories of others in the group? What have you found in your faith tradition that you can relate to your passion?

Vision:
What impact does sharing your passion in this community have on how you live out that passion? What are you going to do about or with your passion?

Closing:

I brought myself to the group, and was asked to think about why things are as they are. You brought yourselves to the group, and we shared.

Together we experienced the sense of community, a sense of our common yet differing selves.
We leave to go our separate ways, having been changed and having changed the group itself, by having been here.
Go forth into life, deepen your passion by sharing your passion

Likes and Wishes: How did the session go for you? Zidowecki, 9.2006

Appendix Two: Spiritual Practices to Use with Children

Meditation with Children: A Guide

A Moment or Two of Silence: Integrating Meditation into Unitarian Universalist Practices with Children

By Susan Freudenthal
Ethics and Religious Educator
Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces
Las Cruces, NM

***Reprinted from UU Faith Works, February 2006,* www.uua.org/re/faithworks**

"We will now enter into a moment of silent contemplation, meditation, and prayer," or so we're told each time we gather in community to worship. It is a piece of the fabric of our worship. To hold a sacred moment within and sometimes to let it sail forth is a gift we can give to our children and youth. It can have meaning for our children and youth when made relevant and when practiced consistently.

Why should we do it at all? Our children are increasingly programmed from playgroups, parents' working schedules, school, music, sports, after-school clubs, nature clubs, and religious education. Information is presented to all of us in sound bites, commercial jingles, and headline-only news. Children and youth are overstimulated. If you are finding it difficult to keep their attention, you are clearly in the majority.

I believe our children need time and the tools with which they can slow down their world. Giving our children and youth the ability to focus inward for a brief period introduces them to a lifelong spiritual practice in an increasingly stressful world. Committing ourselves to meditation practices with children and youth affirms our Unitarian Universalist values.

To nurture the practice of meditation with children and youth, you will need to be consistent. This element should be included in children's, intergenerational, and youth worship either weekly or biweekly. It is helpful to set a consistent tone and mood or ritual. I use a "worship bag" of consistent props, such as scarves and candles, and low lighting. We sit on the floor. I add music that fits the mood and tone of the meditation.

There are many different types of meditation. I will concentrate on three that work well with children and youth: Loving Kindness meditations, sitting meditations, and walking meditations. All three are practiced throughout the world and are rooted in the Buddhist tradition.

Loving Kindness Meditation

> What is Loving Kindness meditation? Some call it "metta" meditation. As Unitarian Universalists, we embrace many ideas from a variety of sacred sources. The Loving Kindness meditation comes to us from the Mahayana branch of Buddhism. His holiness the Dali Llama of Tibet and Thich Nach

Han, the Vietnamese Buddhist priest, are but two of the people whose influence on Western culture have helped popularize Loving Kindness.

Loving Kindness meditation begins with the idea of self-care. The Buddha described the spiritual path as the "uprooting of our personal mythologies." Through meditation we can find, beneath our concepts as individuals, our connections to both all beings and ourselves. The first piece of a Loving Kindness meditation is to focus inward. This meditation practice uses four phrases repeated over and over:

> May I be free from danger (May I be safe)
> May I have mental happiness (May I be happy)
> May I have physical happiness (May I be well)
> May I have ease of wellbeing (May I live in peace)

The next piece of this practice is to extend the Loving Kindness to someone to whom we feel gratitude or respect, such as a parent or a teacher. Next the meditation is extended to a loved one, to beings we feel neither like nor dislike toward, and finally toward someone we may be in conflict with or someone who scares us.

Beginning the Practice

Set the mood; use a bell to signal the beginning and end of the meditation. Introduce the meditation by asking the children or youth if they know what meditation is; their responses will help you fill in the blanks. Remind them that meditation is not sitting still and being quiet. Tell them that today you are going to begin a different kind of meditation—a speaking meditation. Invite the group to choose a comfortable way to sit or lie down. They should be as comfortable as the space allows while remaining respectfully in the shared sacred space. Tell them you will ring a bell soon and they should repeat the words you speak after the bell rings. Let them know you will do this four times.

- (Ring bell) (Pause)
- May I be safe
- May I be happy
- May I be well
- May I live in peace
- (Repeat three more times and pause)
- (Ring bell)

Ask the group what the words meant to them. Tell them this is the beginning of a meditation practice called Loving Kindness. Ask them why they think this is the name of the meditation. You may say something like this: "Some people think if we do this meditation often, we will remember it. If we remember it, we will know that we deserve to be safe, happy,

well, and peacemakers.” Offer this meditation for several weeks before moving to the next piece.

Next Steps

Once you've determined that your group understands the inward meditation and has practiced it a few times, explain the next piece. They will begin sending the meditation out to someone they want to thank—someone they respect or someone who has helped them recently. Remind them that this meditation is called Loving Kindness. Explain that the same words they've said for themselves, they will now say with someone else in mind. Ask them to think of one person for now.

- (Ring bell) (Pause)
- May you be safe
- May you be happy
- May you be well
- May you live in peace
- (Repeat three more times and pause)
- (Ring bell)

Allow time for the group to understand what you've done. Ask them if this meditation felt different and if so, how. Once again, make sure they leave knowing that their words do make a difference. The person they thought of might not know this meditation was meant for them, but that doesn't matter. The words they spoke are meant to bless those people to whom they feel grateful. Allow at least two sessions using this meditation. By the second week, add the first piece (May I be safe, etc.), spoken before this gratitude piece, so that they will extend loving kindness to themselves and to another.

By the third week, introduce the third blessing to those we don't know but wish well. Repeat the process of learning the new blessing one week and then adding the other blessings the next.

Introduce the final piece by saying something like this: “We all have someone in our lives that annoys us or makes us angry or frustrated, and it's normal to feel this way. There is something we can do to help us get over these feelings. We do not need to like everyone, but we do need to respect them as beings with whom we share our world. They, too, deserve happiness and good health. When we think about others this way, it can change the way we treat each other. If we think and say kind words to those we don't like, we find ourselves treating them with the same kindness. The trick is, we have to do this regularly, not just once or twice.”

Using the now-familiar beginning setup for the meditation, tell the group that you are going to add that piece today. Ask them to think of a being

(human or otherwise) they don't like–perhaps someone who hurt their feelings, someone they argue with, or someone who blamed them for something they didn't do. Tell them that when you begin the third round of the meditation, they are to name that person in their heads as they say, “May (name) be safe,” and so on.

(Ring bell)

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be well
May I live in peace

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be well
May you live in peace

May (name) be safe
May (name) be happy
May (name) be well
May (name) live in peace

When the meditation is complete, allow a moment of silence and then process the experience with the participants. How did that feel? What felt uncomfortable? What felt good and assuring? If they would like to repeat saying the meditation, allow time to do so.
Set aside time to speak with the group after several weeks about the possibility of changes in their feelings, whether toward themselves or others. It may not happen for anyone in your group. But by consistently offering this meditation, you have planted the idea of dignity and respect for all in an explicit, experiential way.

Zazen Meditation

Seated meditations, called “zazen” in the Buddhist tradition, are the most familiar in our culture. For many this means a quiet moment, a brief time to focus inward, often closed by the saying of words or music. Zazen can mean sitting in silence for twenty minutes, an hour, or even for whole days.

This type of meditation is often practiced with yoga. Kripalu yoga came into practice as a balance for meditation. It comes to us from the yogis of India. Yoga is a means by which our bodies can stretch and engage in a physical practice that allows the body to sit again in meditation. Many children and adults can benefit from a few simple yoga postures before sitting in meditation. Yoga postures are a type of body prayer and very helpful with children and other high-energy folks, since it incorporates movement into meditation. There are many resources available for using

yoga with children. Within your own congregation there are probably several people who practice yoga. Start there.

Beginning the Practice

Invite children or youth to engage in the practice of Zazen meditation, which is centuries old. Ask them to find a comfortable position to sit in; let them know they will be sitting this way for a few minutes. If the group has difficulty settling down, offer a few yoga postures, deep breathing, and stretching to ready them. Tell them about this practice of meditation. You might explain: "People use it to help clear their minds and to find a quietness within themselves. It allows us to listen to our hearts beating and feel our lungs expand and contract with air. It helps us remember that we are alive; our bodies need attention as well as our brains. Some people think that after meditation, they are better able to think and solve problems."

Light a candle. Invite the group to look into the flame to help them focus inward. Dim the lighting if possible. Tell them that you will soon ring a bell or chime, and when it is silent the meditation time will begin.

- Ring bell/chime to begin.
- Ask them to breathe in and out (slowly) several times. Say something like: "Can you hear your breath? Can you feel how your tummy rises and falls as you breathe? Listen, breathe—in and out, in and out. Listen very carefully; try to keep your brain free from thoughts."
- "If you cannot keep from thinking, look into the candle flame. Concentrate by looking at the flame. Do you see the different colors of the flame? Keep breathing, in and out. Close your eyes and breathe."
- Say something like "I am going to stop talking now, so that we can listen more carefully to our breath. Please stay still and breath until you hear the bell/chime ring."
- Ring bell/chime.
- Ask the group to stretch out their legs and their arms, roll their heads, and open their eyes.
- Bring the group to a standing position.
- Tell them to clasp hands over the heart and bow from the waist to the group.

- Invite the children or youth to offer a word that describes how they now feel.

Walking Meditation

Walking meditations are probably the most challenging to practice with children. Trying to teach a group to walk mindfully without incident will take time. Give yourself and your group the gift of patience. Walking meditations are practiced most often in silence. They are often used as a bridge between two Zazen sessions to refocus the body and mind after sitting for a long time. The walking meditation often lasts for ten minutes. Use your judgment—ten minutes is a long time for a group of young children.

Beginning the Practice

- Ask the participants to remove their shoes.
- Tell them you will ring the chime/bell three times; when the third chime fades away, they should all turn facing the same direction (left), and begin walking.
- Say: "Walk as slowly as you can. Notice how each step feels in your feet. Notice how your heel lifts off the floor. Are your feet cold? Warm?" Keep talking quietly as the participants walk, reminding them to pay attention to what their feet feel.
- Ring a bell/chime to signal the end of this session.
- Direct the participants to return to their original spots and sit.
- Tell the participants to stretch out their legs, flex their feet, wiggle their toes, and come to standing.
- Release the group by asking them to bow. Ask them to place their folded hands over their hearts and bend from the waist toward the entire group.
- Invite participants to reflect on the experience.

Walking meditations are best done without readings; however soft music may help the group to move freely. Send them on their way with kindness and blessings. Walking meditation should be included as a regular practice in order for the participants to benefit from it and to understand that meditation is not simply sitting still as a stone.

Meditation: A Tool for All Ages

Expand your options; there are many other ways to meditate. Make room for your ideas and take suggestions from your participants to keep the

practice of meditation alive in your group. Communicate with others about why you think these practices are important.

The practice of meditation is a useful tool for all ages. Knowing how to be mindful of one's physical being, finding the space within to truly listen to your heart's songs, listening to your breath, and slowing down just for a few moments are priceless tools for young and old alike. Remember to set aside the time to practice. But be kind to yourself when time does not allow for meditation practices. Simply keep trying. Expect the best from your groups and as time passes, they will expect no less for themselves. So may it be.

Writing Prayers
By Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D.

Introduction & Materials.
It can be very powerful to write prayers with children and youth. The following method, described with permission from and attribution to Rev. Gary Smith, is very simple and works well. You will need newsprint and markers to record idea. It can be helpful to have the "Five Elements of a Prayer," prerecorded on an extra sheet of newsprint as well.

Step One.
Introduce this activity by explaining, "One way that people express thoughts is through prayers. Prayers have some predictable elements that facilitate graceful expression. We're going to try this kind of writing now." Invite questions, and be open. Although one manner of writing prayers is suggested here, participants may choose not to follow the format.

Step Two.
Share the prewritten typography of a prayer below on newsprint or read the elements and have a participant list them on newsprint. Go over the elements of a prayer.

Five Elements of a Prayer

By the Reverend Gary Smith, who acknowledges with thanks, Professor Walter Cook.

1. **Salutation**: To whom is the prayer addressed—Spirit of Life, God, Goddess, Love, etc.
2. **Condition**: I'm (or We're) feeling sad, happy, humble, angry, etc.
3. **Please give me**: Hope, patience, someone to love, etc.
4. **Please give us**: Out to the world, to other, it's about more than me
5. **Thank you**: Gratitude and thanks

Step Three.
Invite participants to write a prayer that is somehow related to a project or a theme with which they have been engaged. Brainstorm each section, writing down ideas and then finally picking the one that "sticks" for the group. Step by step, the group will create a prayer.

Step Four.
Read the prayer aloud. Try reading it together. Enjoy. Share.

Appendix Three

Teaching in Faith:
Some Recommended Resources
Renaissance Teacher Development Module

These resources are both about teaching adults and for adults teaching children/youth. Essex Conversations, Parker Palmer and Sharon Daloz Parks provide great foundations for thinking about teaching in the fullest sense in religious educations settings. There are very important messages, incredibly accessibly presented in Kate Erslev's book. *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* provides a comprehensive overview of typical child and youth development. Sally Patton's book gives good background about welcoming children and youth, typical and atypical. And the Adams et al, Derman-Sparks and colleagues, Tatum, and Teaching Tolerance resources are helpful to ensuring that our pedagogy aligns with our UU values and principles, by being actively anti-racist. Two ends of the lifespan continuum, early childhood and older adulthood are beautifully addressed in the Nieuwejaar and the Schachter-Shalom books, respectively. Also included, in separate small lists, are recommended resources for stories and recommended resources for active spiritual practices appropriate for UU lifespan faith development programs

Some Suggested Resources:

Adams, Maurianne, Bell Lee Anne, and Griffin, Pat. (Eds.) (1997). *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

Beaudoin, Thomas. (1998). *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey, Patricia G. (2006). *What if All the Kids are White? Anti-Bias Multicultural Education with Young Children and Families.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Derman-Sparks, Louise & Phillips, Carol Brunson. (1997). *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: A Developmental Approach*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Essex Conversations Coordinating Committee (2001). *Essex Conversations: Visions for Lifespan Religious Education*. Boston: Skinner House.

Erslev, Kate Tweedie (2004). *Full Circle: Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UUs*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association.

Fitzpatrick, Jean Grasso (1991). *Something More: Nurturing Your Child's Spiritual Growth*. New York: The Penguin Group, USA.

Fowler, James W. (1995) *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper.

Gardner, Howard (1993). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* New York: Basic Books.

Garland, Diana R. (1999). *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Hurd, Tracey L. (2005). *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook.* Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association.

Jenkins, Peggy J. (1995). *Nurturing Spirituality in Children*. Hillsboro, OR: Beyond Words Publishing.

Moore, Mary Elizabeth (1998). *Teaching From the Heart*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press.

Myers, Barbara Kimes and Myers, William (1992). *Engaging in Transcendence: The Church's Ministry and Covenant with Young Children*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press.

Nieuwejaar, Jean (1999). *The Gift of Faith*. Boston: Skinner House.

Palmer, Parker (1997). *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Parks, Sharon Daloz (2001) *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in their Search for Meaning, Purpose and Faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, Sally (2004). *Welcoming Children with Special Needs: A Guidebook for Faith Communities*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association.

Schachter-Shalom, Zalman and Miller, Ron (1999) *From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Profound new vision for Growing Older*. New York: Warner Books.
www.spiritualeldering.org

Tain, Shell (2003). *The Youth Group Advisor's Handbook*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel (1997). *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations about Race*. New York: Basic Books.

Teaching Tolerance Project. (1997). *Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and Early Grades*. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center.
www.tolerance.org

Top Picks for Teachers: http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/teachers/index.shtml

Teaching Resources: Excellent Story Sources for UU Settings

Buice, Christopher (1995). *Bucketful of Dreams: Contemporary Parables for All Ages*. Boston: Skinner House.

Grohsmeyer, Janeen K. (2004). *A Lamp in Every Corner: Our Unitarian Universalist Storybook*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association.

McDonald, Colleen M. (Ed.) (2003). *What if Nobody Forgave and Other Stories*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association.

Moore, Mary Ann (1994). *Hide and Seek with God.* Boston: Skinner House

Pearmain, Elisa Davy (1998). *Doorways to the Soul: Fifty-two Wisdom Tales from Around the World.* Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.

Stafford, Anika (2005). *Aisha's Moonlit Walk: Stories and Celebrations for the Pagan Year*. Boston: Skinner House.

Williams, Betsy Hill (Ed.) (2003). *UU and Me: Collected Stories*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association

Teaching Resources: Spiritual Practices with Children and Youth

Alexander, Scott W. (1999). *Everyday Spiritual Practice: Simple Pathways for Enriching Your Life*. Boston: Skinner House.

Darian, Shea. (2001). *Seven Times the Sun: Guiding Your Child through the Rhythms of the Day*. Gilead Press. www.gileadpress.net

Tapestry of Faith Programs and Resources:

http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/abouttapestry/130209.shtm