



Religious Education Manual

2017-2018 Edition

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# Religious Education Manual 201718

The 2017-2018 Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady Religious Education Manual is a collaborative work that is written by the Director of Lifespan Religious Education with the assistance of the Religious Education Team and is affirmed by the congregation's Board of Trustees. There is an intention to issue an updated version of this Handbook at least once each year in either June or September.

Suggestions for the Handbook are welcomed by contacting the Director or any member of the Religious Education Team.

*Edition: June 2017*

## Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady Religious Education Program! This RE Manual is here to help you navigate through our religious education program. In this manual, you'll find information about our programs for children, youth, and adults, our philosophy, what to expect in your children's classrooms, and safety policies, as well as something as simple as where to park!

With this manual, we hope to help everyone in our program- the families, teachers, and other volunteers- learn about our excellent program for lifespan religious education. This guide outlines the expectations on how to maintain a safe and nurturing program for learning and growth for all participants.

We are excited to have you join our religious education program whether it is for one class or a lifetime of learning. All of who you are is welcome here.

***All of who you are is sacred. All of who you are is welcome.***



# Philosophy of Religious Education

## *A note from the Director of Religious Education*

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven Principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. We live out these Principles within a “living tradition” of wisdom and spirituality, drawn from sources as diverse as science, poetry, scripture, and personal experience. As Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove explains, “The Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a guide for those of us who choose to join and participate in Unitarian Universalist religious communities.”

The fourth Principle is the “free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” The word “responsible” is what challenges us in this principle. Our search is not secular or something we do as a hobby. We are active in a search that is sacred, that is a continuing practice expressed in many ways, and that belongs to each of us, individually. It is a core mission of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady to support that search.

For children, we need to make sure we fuel their minds and nurture their hearts while respecting their developmental limits. Younger kids need a safe, nurturing, and playful environment, and religious education with rituals, traditions, stories, experiences and communal responsibilities. When those children move into adolescence, they are trying on new roles to establish a sense of identity and security, and to gain autonomy explore new paths. Our religious education program and our congregation supports and validates this individual journey while providing tools for making life-enhancing choices and a beloved community in which to grow.

When this is done successfully, congregational life is rewarded with an active high school youth group of independent thinkers who crave the opportunity for leadership. We support our high-school aged youth in becoming compassionate, spiritual young adults with a strong Unitarian Universalist identity by creating a space for our youth to lead while still supported by adult volunteers. Our youth and adult advisors often grow into a close relationship as they support each other, work together, and empower the youth to be their authentic selves.

Throughout the childhood religious education program, we use age appropriate religious education curricula that create paths for continuing growth. To provide a foundation in aspects of Unitarian Universalist identity with our younger grades, we focus on themes of love, compassion, justice, gratitude, service and more. As children move into adolescence, we begin to offer curricula that give them space to question and see things from different perspectives. Once in the high school years, those same

children who learned about love, compassion, and justice are empowered to create their own curriculum based on those same values.

Religious education really boils down to finding your Unitarian Universalist identity. If you can have confidence in your faith, you can accomplish anything. Children growing up UU know their religion is different, that it places them in a minority religious context within the Capital District, and they quickly learn how often they will have to hear, "What's that?" or even worse, "That's not a real religion." By giving children the knowledge and courage to be confident in their "weird" religion, they gain the confidence needed to be their authentic selves in other aspects of life. Likewise, those who come to Unitarian Universalism after they reach adulthood need the opportunity to create their UU identity. Providing a safe, loving environment with open-minded, spiritually and intellectually curious people, of all ages, allows them to open themselves up to shimmering moments of revelation and growth.

- Julie Rigano, *Director of Lifespan Religious Education*



# Julie Rigano

## Director of Lifespan Religious Education



Julie Rigano is the Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE) as of July 2015. She served at the Religious Education Intern at the First Unitarian Society of Westchester in Hastings-on-Hudson, NY before beginning at UU Schenectady. She is a professional storyteller with a B.A. in English with a concentration in Drama from the University of Delaware.

Julie has completed six Renaissance Modules, trainings for religious educators created by the Unitarian Universalist Association and numerous other professional continuing education courses and

religious education training classes on anti-racism work, mental health, and faith formation.

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# A Vision for Lifespan Religious Education Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady Religious Education Team August 3, 2014

## **Intentionality**

Our mission-based curriculum uses clear communication and information-sharing with a network of committed teachers and facilitators, who receive supportive training so that they understand the expectations of their role within the program and feel accountable to it.

## **Community**

Our curriculum and activities reinforce the concept of an inclusive and non-judgmental community that encompasses, among other things, intergenerational interactions.

## **Spiritual Growth**

We facilitate spiritual growth in the congregation by providing structure and materials that create opportunities to explore in a safe environment, building on each individual's unique potential, in a way that engages participants and facilitators with acceptance, flexibility and faith in the possibility for each individual to grow in their own way.

## Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady Mission and Vision

Established 2014

### **Mission**

Connecting in spiritual community, we celebrate  
life with joy  
grow in compassion create  
justice

### **Vision**

We will boldly live our Unitarian Universalist values, within our church  
and in service to the larger community

We will nurture mind and spirit through lifelong learning, engagement  
and growth

We will create a community that welcomes, embraces,  
and supports all

We will worship in ways that comfort,  
inspire, and challenge

## Overview of Religious Education Team and Sub Team

The Religious Education Team, or RE Team, is a body of volunteers dedicated to the work of the religious education program and the fulfillment of our vision for religious education.

**Religious Education Team**

Carol Conyers, *Chair*  
Danielle Regan, *Secretary*  
Ed Kautz, *Website*  
Abby Winters-Bona, *Aninger*  
Donna Newsome, *Finance Rep*  
Mati Hackett, *Summer RE Coordinator*  
Erin Piotrowski  
Glen D’Arcy

Supporting the RE Team and our lifespan religious education program are our Sub Teams. These Sub Teams focus on specific parts of the program to help them develop and grow. Members of the Sub Teams include but are not limited to members of the RE Team. These Sub Teams are:

**Adult Faith Development Sub Team**

Donna Newsome  
Allison Lee  
Melinda Perrin  
Fred Boreali  
Shadi Sandvik  
Kristin Cleveland, *Congregational Life Coordinator (Staff)*

**Religious Education Liaison Sub Team**

Danielle Regan, *Team Leader*  
Mati Grieco-Hackett  
Ed Kautz  
Donna Newsome

**Our Whole Lives Coordination Sub Team**

Jenn D’Arcy, *OWL Coordinator*  
Sarah Tyo  
Joel Best

**Religious Education Policy Sub Team**

Carol Conyers, *Chair*  
Danielle Regan  
Glenn D’Arcy

**Sunday Supervisor Sub Team**

Danielle Regan  
Glen D’Arcy  
Carol Conyers  
Ed Kautz  
Kristin Cleveland, *Congregational Life Coordinator (Staff)*

**Our Director of Lifespan Religious Education serves as staff support for all the teams listed on this page.**

**Religious Education Curricula for Children and Youth 2017-2018**

These curricula were chosen by the Director of Lifespan Religious Education to grow and support UU identity in our children and youth. “Love Surrounds Us” and “Faithful Journey” are

both Tapestry of Faith curricula from the Unitarian Universalist Association and available free online. All other curricula, while not available electronically, are also well used and known curricula in our UU world.

**Nursery: *Rainbow Children***  
**Up to PreK age**

Our trained nursery staff create a welcoming, inviting place for children in PreK and below. In the nursery, children are introduced to our values of love and kindness through modeled behavior, sharing, and fun activities.

**PreK-K: *Love Surrounds Us***

At the core of our Unitarian Universalist community are our seven Principles. The Principles encompass all the ingredients of a good and faith-filled life based on equality, freedom, peace, acceptance, truth, care, and love. This program explores all the Principles in the context of Beloved Community of family/home, school, neighborhood. Participants engage in activities that emphasize the love they feel in community.

**1st-2nd Grade: *Keepers of the Earth***

This environmental curriculum teaches children respect and stewardship of the Earth and all living things. Beginning with Native American stories, this curriculum provides our children with an abundance of hands-on activities that will inspire them to understand and appreciate Native American cultures and the Earth.

**3rd Grade: *Faithful Journey***

Participants embark on a pilgrimage of faith, exploring how Unitarian Universalism translates into life choices and everyday actions. In each session, they hear historic or contemporary examples of Unitarian Universalist faith in action. Stories about real people model how participants can activate their own personal agency – their capacity to act faithfully as Unitarian Universalists – in their own lives, and children have regular opportunities to share and affirm their own stories of faithful action. Through sessions structured around the Unitarian Universalist Principles, Faithful Journeys demonstrates that our Principles are not a dogma, but a credo that individuals can affirm with many kinds of action. Over the course of the program, children discover a unity of faith in the many different ways Unitarian Universalists, including themselves, can act on our beliefs.

**4th-5th Grade: *Bibleodeon***

This curriculum introduces biblical scriptures by presenting the best-known Hebrew and Christian stories with fun and interactive games, such as investigating the Cain and Abel crime scene and solving the “Mystery of the Day.” The children explore connections between biblical events and UU principles, between biblical ideas and their own lives. **6th-7th**

**Grade: *Neighboring Faiths***

This is world religions program deepens our children’s understanding of the dynamic, fascinating, and varied world in which they live. The youth will have field trips to nearby religious communities to attend worship services and will invite guests in for better context of the religions they will study.

### **8th-9th Grade: *Coming of Age***

Our Coming of Age (COA) program offers eighth and ninth graders a modern Rite of Passage experience, grounded in Unitarian Universalist values in an engaging and structured atmosphere. COA also offers parents an opportunity to connect for support in small group meetings. The COA class will meet twice a month on Sundays for two hour sessions alternating between the morning at 10am and the afternoon at 12pm. Workshops actively explore topics such as community building, UU values, justice, leading a worship, and UU theology and history! COA youth will also be a part of our worship services in the morning by attending and volunteering in the service.

### **10th-12th Grade: *Senior Youth Group***

We promote youth empowerment as our youth choose their own curriculum based on social justice, worship, fellowship, learning, and leadership opportunities. This group also meets at other times and has weekend events with other UU youth groups for spiritual reflection and communal living.

## **Family Commitment Expectation**

Here at UU Schenectady, we view faith formation as a full week endeavor, not just on Sunday mornings. As parents, you are your child's primary religious educator and the work we do with our children and youth on Sunday morning supports this role. To help your child grow up with a strong Unitarian Universalist identity, including our values, morals, open-mindedness, justice seeking attitudes, and love, consider the following:

- **Recognize your (the parent's/guardian's) role as your child's primary religious educator.** You will get e-mails weekly from the teaching teams and the RE program on your child's class, how to take the learning home and on upcoming family events at UU Schenectady. Discuss your child's RE class and UU values around the dinner table, in the car, and during other family gathering times.
- **Commit to regular attendance.** Arrive on time and come regularly. By regular attendance our children get the most out of the curricula, develop trust in their teachers and peers, and benefit from the growing sense of community and friendship. Our curricula is serial, not episodic. Regular attendance helps children and youth get invested in the curricula as well as bond with the community in their classroom. Discuss with your child how showing up is a weekly spiritual practice, and see if you can each name a daily spiritual practice- even something as simple as saying 'thank you'!
- **Commit to open communication.** E-mails from the teaching teams and the weekly RE Newsletter are provided to help you stay up to date and in contact with your child's

teaching teams, the RE Team and the DLRE. When you can pause long enough to read them, we all move forward together. If you have questions, concerns, or ideas about religious education, don't hesitate to reach out and let us know.

- **Commit to volunteer.** Our program is volunteer run, from teachers to the Sunday Supervisor double checking attendance on Sunday morning to the RE Team meeting monthly to discuss long term planning. Reach out to the DLRE for more ways to get involved or to suggest a new project that you think would benefit the program.
  
- **Covenant to uphold our Discipline Policy.** Our Discipline Policy is part of our mutual covenant between teachers, parents and guardians, children and youth, the Director, and the RE Team. See page XXX for more information on this policy and how it supports each child and facilitates our RE program.
  
- **Try to understand your child's point of view.** Be a good listener for your children, even if you do not agree with them.
  
- **Share your point of view.** Let your children and youth know your thoughts, opinions and values. Let them know how important Unitarian Universalism and our congregation are to you.
  
- **Please leave electronic and other toys and game cards out of the classroom.** While we like to have fun while we learn, these kinds of distractions can hinder our learning environment. Many classes will have a basket they put electronics in during class time to remove the temptation.

# Sunday Morning Routine

There is religious education every Sunday morning but it can take different forms:

- religious education classes, similar to Sunday school
- a multigenerational worship service with everyone in the Great Hall
- a split multigenerational service where everyone starts in the Great Hall then younger children leave partway through the worship service for a multi-age RE activity in the RE Hallway
- and a half multigenerational service where all children and youth start in worship and then all leave the worship service to for classes in the RE Hallway and Waters House

Each Sunday's religious education offering is announced in the weekly Circuits Newsletter and the weekly RE Newsletter as well as on the UUSS website. Here's what the morning routine looks like for each of these options:

## Religious Education Classes on Sundays:

**10:00am:** Nursery opens in the RE Hallway off the Great Hall

**10:00-10:15am:** Volunteer teachers prep their classrooms in Waters House and the RE Hallway.

**10:15am:** Sunday Supervisor arrives and children can begin being dropped off in their classrooms in Waters House and RE Hallway.

**10:30am:** Religious education classes begin in Waters House and in the RE Hallway. Worship begins in the Great Hall.

\*On the first Sunday of each month, we hold a Children's Chapel in Waters House for the youngest grades in that building. On these days, those religious education classes will begin at 10:50am after Children's Chapel.

**11:00am:** Sunday Supervisor checks in on each classroom and gets a headcount of the number of children, adults, and guests in the room.

**11:45am:** Religious Education classes end.

**11:50am:** Children must be picked up from their RE classroom by this time.



## Multigenerational Service:

**10:00am:** Nursery opens in the RE Hallway off the Great Hall.

**10:00-10:15am:** Children volunteering as Junior Worship Associates in the worship meet with the Junior Worship Associate Coordinator in Great Hall to review their roles and responsibilities.

**10:30am:** Worship service begins in Great Hall for all ages

- At any time, nursery age children can be brought to the nursery.
- The Fireplace Room is also a place where you can go to soothe a crying baby or allow your child to walk around while still being able to hear the sermon being piped in via a PA system.

**11:30am:** Worship service ends and coffee hour begins.

## Split Multigenerational Service:

**10:00am:** Nursery opens in the RE Hallway off the Great Hall.

**10:00-10:15am:** Children volunteering as Junior Worship Associates in the worship meet with the Junior Worship Associate Coordinator in the Great Hall to review their roles and responsibilities.

**10:30am:** Worship service begins for all ages.

- At any time, nursery age children can be brought to the nursery.
- The Fireplace Room is also a place where you can go to soothe a crying baby or allow your child to walk around while still being able to hear the sermon being piped in via a PA system.

**During the service:** Children in 1st-5th grade are ushered to a multi-age activity in the RE Hallway while older children and youth are encouraged to stay in the worship service. All children are always welcome to stay in service.

**11:30am:** Worship service ends and coffee hour begins.

**11:45am:** Multi-age RE activity ends in RE Hallway.

**11:50am:** Children must be picked up from the multi-age activity in the RE Hallway by this time.

## Half Multigenerational Service:

**10:00am:** Nursery opens in the RE Hallway off the Great Hall.

**10:00-10:15am:** Children volunteering as Junior Worship Associates in the worship meet with the Junior Worship Associate Coordinator in the Great Hall to review their roles and responsibilities.

**10:30am:** Worship service begins for all ages

- At any time, nursery age children can be brought to the nursery.
- The Fireplace Room is also a place where you can go to soothe a crying baby or allow your child to walk around while still being able to hear the sermon being piped in via a PA system.

**During the service:** All children and youth proceed to their RE classes in Waters House and in the RE Hallway with their teachers.

**11:30am:** Worship service ends and coffee hour begins.

**11:50am:** Children must be picked up from their RE classroom by this time.

## Summer RE

UU Schenectady is proud to offer religious education classes all year round! In July and August, we offer a multi-age class for children in 1st-5th grades. Join us in the summer for religious education classes and multigenerational worship! Children are also always welcome in the worship service in the summer.

While our facilities do not have air conditioning, our summer RE classroom does not get warm easily. On particularly hot days, we may dip our feet in the fountains outside our building!

You can register for summer RE through our member database registration portal or drop in when you and your family can make it!

### Summer RE 2017: Passions of our Community

This summer, we will explore the passions the members of our community by inviting them into the RE Classroom to share them with our youngest children. This workshop model will focus on intergenerational relationships and creating a stronger multigenerational community.

Some of the topics we will focus on are yoga, meteorology, drumming, nature, and crafts!

## Multigenerational Sundays and Services

Multigenerational services are when everyone in our community is in worship together, all ages gathering for worship. For more information on the different types of services we have, check out the "Sunday Morning Routine" section. Below are a list and description of some of our beloved multigenerational services that are held each year. We hope to see you and your family there!

### Ingathering and Water Communion- September

The first Sunday after Labor Day, our congregation comes back to formally begin our worship year. Everyone is welcome to bring some water with them from their travels or local adventures over the summer. As our water joins together, so does our community in celebration of being together once again. This service is usually followed by a picnic and some games for children.

### Bread Communion- November

The Sunday before Thanksgiving, approximately a dozen members of this congregation bake bread and share it in the worship service with the community. They have a chance to present their bread and tell a quick story of why they made it or why it is special to them. All dietary limitations are considered so there is bread for everyone to enjoy.

### Revels- every other December

Every other year, our Great Hall transforms to a medieval castle as we tell in story and song the tale of Sir George and the Dragon. Led by our music director, members of our congregation perform Revels on a Friday night and a Sunday morning in December as part of our winter celebrations. The next Revels will be in December 2019.

### Light of Life- December

A new tradition to UU Schenectady, the youngest members of our community educate our congregation on the different holidays of light in December from Advent to Divali to our own Unitarian Universalist holiday, Chalice. The children rehearse this mini-pageant in their religious education classes before presenting it to the full congregation.

### Christmas Eve-December

Every Christmas Eve, our congregation reflects the cycle of life and the love through our rituals of story, song, and candle lighting.

### Poetry Sunday- January

The first Sunday in January is always our Poetry Sunday. This lay-led service features members of all ages sharing their favorite poem, a poem they wrote, or another type of creative expression such as music or dance.

### 30 Days of Love and Sundae Sunday- January and February

The 30 Days of Love is a campaign led and organized by Standing on the Side of Love each year to focus on a specific social justice causes. This takes place during the month between the Sunday before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to the Sunday before Valentine's Day. Previous social justice causes include marriage equality, Black Lives Matter, immigration reform, and intersectionality. Sundae Sunday closes our 30 Days of Love with a multigenerational ice cream party after church.

### Hudson Mohawk Service- Spring

Each year in the spring, we have a worship service with our neighboring congregations in the Hudson Mohawk cluster. Our choirs sings together and a guest speaker preaches to all gathered there. Afterwards, we have a chance to mingle during coffee hour.

### Easter

Each Easter, we reflect on the regenerative nature of the holiday and of spring. Each year, we have flowers for the children to take home with them.

### Coming of Age Service- every other spring

Our Coming of Age program is a rite of passage for our 8th and 9th graders. Their year concludes with a worship service they prepare and led for the congregation to share what they've discussed and discovered in the past year about theology, morality, spirituality, and more. This service happens every other year when we run our Coming of Age program. Our next Coming of Age class will be in 2017-18 and the service will be in the spring of 2018.

### Youth Service- Spring

Each spring, we give our youth a platform to speak to our congregation. Our youth are insightful, their reflections are moving, their musical offerings are impressive, and their service is always a favorite among our members for these reasons. After this service, we typically hold our Annual Congregational Meeting.

### Flower Communion- June

The first Sunday in June is typically our Flower Communion. The Flower Communion is an annual ritual that celebrates beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and community. Originally created in 1923 by Unitarian minister Norbert Capek of Prague, Czechoslovakia, the Flower Ceremony was introduced to the United States by Rev. Maya Capek, Norbert's widow.

In this ceremony, everyone in the congregation brings a flower. Each person places a flower on the altar or in a shared vase. The congregation and minister bless the flowers, and they're redistributed. Each person brings home a different flower than the one they brought.

## Special Religious Education Programs and Classes

### Coming of Age (COA)

The Coming of Age program at Unitarian Universalist Society Schenectady offers eighth and ninth graders an engaging and structured atmosphere in which to explore significant issues at this transitional stage of life. It is comparable to a confirmation or bar/bat mitzvah.

Coming of Age provides a modern Rite of Passage experience that welcomes and affirms youth as they embark on their new journey towards young adulthood. The youth are supported on this journey not only by the class's volunteer facilitators, but also with volunteer mentors from the congregation. This mentoring program helps foster multigenerational relationships in the community as well as give the youth another venue to discuss and explore their personal belief. This curriculum is offered every other year and will be offered again in 2017-2018.

Because of the nature of the class and additional outside trips, there is a fee associated with it. The fee is sliding scale (\$150-\$350) in an effort to make it accessible to everyone. No youth will be turned away because of an inability to pay. This fee does not cover the Boston Heritage trip. The youth will fundraise during the year for this trip through facilitated efforts at the church. It is not the parents' responsibility but the youths' responsibility to raise the money as a group.

At the end of the Coming of Age year together, the youth present a worship service to the whole congregation to discuss what they've learned over the year and how they have grown. These "credo" statements can be present as a sermon, a poem, a visual representation, or anything that feels authentic to the youth. After COA, the youth bridge into the Senior Youth Group, where they are then empowered to create their own curriculum.

**Some highlights of the program include: -**

- Community building time- movie nights, overnights, etc
- Development of a personal belief statement
- Learning about UU history
- Working with a mentor
- Community service project
- End of the year celebration/party for the youth and their friends
- Boston heritage trip in the spring including a trip to the UUA headquarters and Walden Pond

**There are three components to the Coming of Age program:**

**Our Whole Lives (OWL)**

- Mentored learning that acknowledges and engages multiple learning styles - Values clarification through hypotheticals and expansion of thought process
- Ritual for both group and individual celebration

**Coming of Age offers parents/guardians of youth participant:**

- Support, with small group ministry- style gatherings throughout the year. - Respected members of our community as mentors and role models for your children
- Safe, compassionate, loving religious community

Honest, accurate, developmentally appropriate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, we are proud to offer Our Whole Lives, a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula in our congregation. This program has been developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association and is continually updated to include new information and cultural shifts.

Interactive workshops and lessons engage participants, while step-by-step instructions for program planners and facilitators help ensure success. All OWL facilitators have been trained and certified to teach their level of OWL by the UUA.

Our Whole Lives helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. With a holistic approach, Our Whole Lives provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality.

The OWL program begins the conversation with children and youth while supporting parents to be the primary sexual educators. We know it can be hard to approach these topics with your children and youth. The OWL program helps to break the ice so you and your child can have open, healthy conversations about this complex topic as they grow into puberty and beyond.

Here at UU Schenectady we offer OWL for all ages for our children and youth:

The **K-1 OWL** class meets on Sunday morning. The K-1 curriculum supports parents in educating children about birth, babies, bodies and families. Following a Parent Meeting and Parent/Child Orientation, the 8 sessions engage children with stories, songs and activities and include a weekly HomeLink - a homework project for parents and children to do together. This promotes dialogue between parent and child.

The **5-6 OWL** class meets on Sunday mornings. This 8-session program is for learning about and discussing the physical and emotional changes of puberty. Participants will read *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris, and examine topics such as values and sexuality, communication and decision making. Each session includes a HomeLink - a homework activity for parents and children to complete together.

The **7-8 OWL** class meets on a weekday evening for a full year to ensure the youth still have a spiritual religious education class on Sunday. Unlike many other sexuality curricula currently available, this program is comprehensive and progressive. The class learns the many interweaving circles of sexuality: sexual identity, sexual health and reproduction, intimacy, sensuality, and sexualization. In an inclusive and developmentally appropriate manner, it addresses sensitive topics that are typically excluded. Topics include body image, social media/internet, bullying/bystander responsibilities, and consent education.

The **11-12 OWL** Class meets on a weekday evening. Using a comprehensive approach, this program helps senior-high youth gain the knowledge, life principles and skills they need to express their sexuality in life-enhancing ways. Includes a parent orientation and 12 sessions.



## Family-Friendly Events

We have many events here at UU Schenectady for your whole family to enjoy together. These are also great opportunities to meet other members and families in the community.

### Camp Out- a camping trip

In August each year, our congregation typically takes a camping trip together. Recently, we have gone to Thompson Lake for a weekend of friendship, crafts, and outdoor fun. We make sure to get multiple sites clustered together. There is a registration process. You can come for an afternoon, an overnight, or the whole weekend!

### Beginning of the Year Picnic

After our Ingathering and Water Communion service on the first Sunday after Labor Day, we hold a Beginning of the Year Picnic to welcome those returning to UU Schenectady for the worship year. Lunch is provided by our “grill masters” and there are games for all ages. Sometimes, we even play water games in our fountains in front of our building!

### Family Promise

Family Promise is a volunteer opportunity for the whole family. Throughout the year, we host families who are homeless in Waters House for a week. During this week, there are opportunities to make breakfast or dinner, spend time with the families, or stay overnight. We generally host families in the fall and spring. Adults and youth over 16 need to be trained; children under 16 can accompany their family without training, though a discussion about how to behave and treat our guests is required.

### Holiday Party

In early December, we begin our holiday celebrations with our Holiday Party. Often a weekend evening, this party includes activities for all ages, including board games and a holiday movie for children and youth. Childcare is available for infants and toddlers.

### Homemade Holidays

A favorite tradition here at UU Schenectady is Homemade Holidays. Early in December, we host this arts and crafts events for children, youth, and adults to be able to make gifts to give for the holidays. Crafts include wreath making, beeswax candlestick making, water colors, ornament decorating and more.

### Revels

This multigenerational medieval Yuletide and solstice celebration is a beloved holiday tradition here at UU Schenectady. With two performances, this is the biggest fundraising event of the year. Each cycle has a new retelling of the story of St. George and the Dragon. With over 100 volunteers involved, dramatic costumes, juggling, and laughter, this is an event not to be missed. The next Revels will be in December 2018.

### Camp In

In January, when it's too cold to camp outside, we camp in our Great Hall! A day filled with hiking, knitting, crafts ends with storytelling by the fire as we make s'mores. Come for the day or bring your sleeping bag to sleep by our fireplaces.

### Sundae Sunday

The Sunday before Valentine's Day is our Sundae Sunday! As we close our 30 Days of Love, we celebrate love and justice with a multigenerational ice cream party. The adults in our congregation are encouraged to sit with children and their families to get to know each other better.

### Cupid's Cabaret

Every other year, opposite Revels, our Music Team and Music Director organize and present a fundraising talent show around Valentine's Day. Along with performances from children, youth, adults- and yes, even staff- there is a bake sale auction happening during the show! Come see the beautiful and creative treats made by members of our congregation. The next Cupid's Cabaret will be in February 2018.

### Chili Cook-off

What better way to spend St. Patrick's Day weekend than with chili and board games? Each year in March, we hold a chili contest to see who makes the best dish. Board games and trivia are available for fun for all ages!

### End of Year Picnic

The second Sunday in June is our "End of the Year Picnic" as we close out our worship year and prepare for our summer programs. Our "grill masters" provide delicious food and there are games for our children, youth, and adults to play in the backyard.

# General Information and Policies for Religious Education at UU Schenectady

## Registration for Children and Youth in RE

Registration is critically important to participate in the RE Program. The registration form collects vital information, such as allergies, any special needs, permission to take pictures of your child(ren), and more. Also, accurate registration helps us prepare for fun multigenerational events all year long.

Registration in religious education is FREE! We believe that all children and youth should have access to lessons and discussions of love, compassion, and justice.

*The Coming of Age class does have a fee on a sliding scale of \$150-\$350 to offset some of the big trips and events. A waiver is available and no youth will be turned away from COA due to an inability to pay. More information can be found on the Coming of Age page under "Special Programs."*

If you are visiting us for the first time, you will receive a "Guest Information Form" for you child before they go into their RE class. After three visits as a guest, we require a full registration.

For all returning families, please use the Returning Family Form, link here:  
<https://uuschenectady.breezechms.com/form/returningfamilyreg17-18>

For all new families, please use the New Family Form, link here.  
<https://uuschenectady.breezechms.com/form/newfamilyreg17-18>

*Adult religious education classes also require registration on an individual basis. If registration is required, it will be announced in Circuits, our weekly electronic newsletter and in our weekly Order of Service for Sunday's worship.*

## Attendance

Attendance is taken at the beginning of every RE class or activity. The Sunday Supervisor, one of our RE volunteers, will double check the number of children and adults in the room in the middle of class time.

A commitment to regular attendance is part of the mutual covenant between the volunteer teachers and the families of the children and youth participants. Our curricula for each class is serial, not episodic. Missed curriculum is not revisited. Your children will connect more deeply

to the curriculum, their classmates, the congregation, and Unitarian Universalism overall with regular attendance. Sunday morning RE classes are a weekly spiritual practice.

Your child's class is a community within our community. One of the ways we implicitly teach Unitarian Universalist values is through our time together in our communities. Regular attendance does more than teach our children UU history or wisdom from world religions. Children will learn how to be a respectful, kind, and thoughtful person by participating in their communities in their classrooms regularly. And they will take the anchoring benefits of deepened friendships and shared memories with them for life.

## Check In and Out Procedure for the Nursery

If you attend the nursery regularly, please register for the nursery through our registration forms, either a New Family Form or a Returning Family Form.

If you are new to the nursery, please ask one of our child care providers in the nursery for a Guest Information Sheet. This short form gives our staff vital information, such as parent contact numbers and allergies.

There will be a sheet to fill out on your left in the entrance after the baby gate. Everyone leaving children in the nursery needs to fill out this form fully for each child. On this form, please fill out -  
Your child's full name

- Your full name
- Where you will be while your child is in the nursery (worship, office, etc)
- What time you are dropping off your child
- Your phone number,
- Any information the nursery staff needs to know, such as allergies, potty training status, etc.

When you come to pick up your child from the nursery, please fill out the time your child leaves.

# Bathroom Policy

## Waters House

There are six bathrooms in Waters House. Two on the first floor, three on the second floor, and one on the third floor. All of these bathrooms are gender neutral. The bathroom on the first floor next to the DLRE's office is ADA compliant and has a selection of menstrual hygiene products always available.

## Main Building

The two central bathrooms in the main building are gender specific. Feel free to choose the bathroom that matches your gender identity. The bathroom labeled "women" has a selection of menstrual hygiene products always available. Other bathrooms in the main building can be found in the nursery, the K-1 classroom, and the dining room. These three are all gender neutral bathrooms. The bathroom in the dining room is ADA compliant. While available to anyone, the bathrooms in the nursery and K-1 classroom are scaled down in size for children. A diaper changing station can also be found in the nursery.

## Inclement weather Policy

For Sunday classes - If church services are cancelled then RE classes will also be cancelled.

For youth classes on other days - the facilitator of the class will notify the parents/guardian and/or students of a cancellation

Adult Faith Development classes will be cancelled at the discretion of the facilitator. It is the responsibility of the facilitators to contact the participants.

### Inclement weather additional information

If school and/or after school programs are cancelled due to a weather event and the school was scheduled for a full day for any of the following districts:

- Schenectady
- Mohonasen
- Niskayuna
- Scotia-Glenville
- Burnt Hills
- Shenendehowa
- Bethlehem
- Guilderland

**Note** that a second/third/etc... school cancellation does not guarantee that RE classes will be cancelled.

## Sick/Illness Policy

Students should generally stay home if there is:

- Fever (temperature over 100 degrees F).
- Often following an illness, children will wake up in the morning without a fever, only to have it return by noontime. For that reason, it is recommended that students remain at home until they are fever-free without medication for 24 hours.
- Vomiting
- Children should remain at home until they are no longer vomiting and are able to tolerate a regular diet (perhaps with some minor modifications.)
- Eye infection (conjunctivitis) with thick drainage/crusting.
- Children should remain at home until condition has been treated for 24 hours with medication prescribed by the doctor or the drainage is gone.
- Chicken Pox
- Children should remain at home until all lesions are scabbed or for 1 week.
- Strep Throat

If a child exhibits any of these symptoms during RE class - the teacher will bring the student to the Sunday Supervisor, who will try to contact the parent/guardian or bring them to service to find the parent/guardian.



## Teacher and Classroom Information and Policies

### Introduction

At the heart of our program is the relationship in the classroom between and among the participants and teachers. All of our teachers are volunteers from our congregation. We support our teachers with annual trainings, regular meetings with the Director, and at least monthly contact with their RE Team's Classroom Liaison, a member of the RE Team assigned to communicate directly with teaching teams.

In this section, you'll find the main policies and techniques we offer to support our children, youth, adults, teachers and families in important covenanted relationships that lead to learning and connection while providing respect, care and healthy boundaries for all involved.

# Teacher and Volunteer Background Check

If you are working with our children and/or youth in any capacity, you must be background checked. The DLRE will send you a link to fill out an online background check form. The church will cover the cost.

Below are volunteer positions that require background checks:

RE Teacher  
Chaperone  
Youth Advisor  
Substitute Teacher  
Summer RE Teacher

To be a youth advisor or drive a car with children or youth, you must be 25 years of age or older.

# Teacher Training

Our religious education teachers for children and youth receive an annual training each year led by the Director of Lifespan Religious Education. In this section, you'll get an overview of what is covered at the training.

## General Training and Team Trainings

Each year, all the teachers gather for a general RE teacher training to go over program wide policies, upcoming events, and any changes in the program as well as a hands-on activity to help teachers explore their own UU identity. As RE teachers, our volunteers are helping our children and youth grow their identity as a Unitarian Universalist. We offer them this time in the general training to help them on their path as they help our children and youth.

After the general training, the Director of Lifespan Religious Education meet with each teaching team to talk specifically about that team's class, curriculum, and classroom space. The teaching team's RE Team Liaison is also present at this meeting so the RE teachers can get to know and bond with their support system.

## Suggested schedule for planning

The general training is on the Saturday after Labor Day. New teachers will start at 9am to cover policy that is new to them and experienced teachers arrive at 10am to cover what is new for everyone. The following week the DLRE and RE Team Liaisons meet with the teaching teams for their individual meetings.

## Policies Covered

In our teacher trainings, we provide each volunteer with a hardcopy of the our RE policies listed in this manual, including our Snack Policy, Discipline Policy, and Transportation Policy. Additionally, each teacher is given a Code of Conduct from our Safe Congregations Policy and a form to sign verifying that they have read the Code of Conduct. We also cover the following topics:

### Use of Arts and Crafts Supply Room/ Closet

On the second floor of Waters House, we have an Arts and Crafts Supply Room and an Arts and Crafts Supply Closet. In the Arts and Crafts room are common craft supplies- crayons, markers, scissors, paper, etc. Teachers are free to grab what supplies they need before class on Sunday and return it to the Arts and Crafts Room after class. In the closet are the less common supplies- paint, hot glue, craypas, and more.

### Clean Up

If your class has an arts and crafts project, be sure to save room in class time for the children/youth to help clean up. As part of the community in the class, everyone should be a part of the cleaning process. After class, teachers should put matches used to light the chalice away in a closet.

### Classroom Dynamics/ Behavioral Challenges

In the first class of each year, the class created a covenant of how the community in the classroom will treat one another and the space they are occupying. It is important to remind the children and youth that a covenant is a promise we hold with one another. These are not “the rules.” This is the promise everyone in the community agrees to- teachers as well! It is important that the children/youth create most of the covenant so that they have ownership of it. Some suggestions of what should be on the covenant are:

- Be respectful (*For older children and youth, be more specific. “How do we show respect? What does it look like to be respectful?”*)
- Listen
- One person talks at a time (Other phrases are “no crosstalk” or “one diva, one mic”)
- Be kind (*For older children and youth, be more specific.*)
- Be present

When approaching difficult classroom dynamic or behavioral challenges, first refer the class back to the covenant. Remember, the covenant is a living document! If a situation arises, take the time in class to revisit and possibly edit your covenant. For more information on this topic, look to the Discipline Policy.

### Special Equipment

Each RE class has a tablet available to them to take attendance in our church Breeze database. How to take attendance using the tablets and our database is covered in our teacher trainings.

If you need additional equipment for your class, such as a laptop or projector, email the Congregational Life Coordinator and the Director of Lifespan Religious Education by Thursday before your class to arrange it.

### Sunday Supervisor

Each week, our volunteer Sunday Supervisor is available in Waters House to support the teachers if they need an extra pair of hands for a few minutes or if a child needs to be sent out of the room as outlined in our discipline policy. The Sunday Supervisor also double checks attendance at approximately 11am.

### RE Team Classroom Liaison

Each teaching team is connected directly to the RE Team through their Classroom Liaison. Each month, the RE Team Classroom Liaison checks in with the teaching team via e-mail asking the teaching team how the class is going and sending

updates from the RE Team. This is a way for the RE Team to be aware of the classroom dynamics and needs of each class.

## Discipline Policy, as part of our Covenant

This discipline policy is guided by our Unitarian Universalist Principles. Everyone is welcome here, but not all behaviors are. As part of our religious education program, we have a responsibility to set boundaries about what behavior is and is not acceptable in our sacred space. The common welfare of the group comes first, because a healthy group provides a safe place for each person to learn and grow. It is not okay for one person or a few people to disrupt an entire group. It is important for each person to be responsible for his or her own behavior and to find a way to be a part of the group. As adults, we are responsible for helping children and youth learn how to choose positive behaviors and suggesting possible strategies for being involved in positive ways. In the first class, we work with the children to write a Covenant for our behavior in class. This serves as a reminder when an agreement is broken. If necessary, we will revise the Covenant.

We welcome all children into our program. Some need more attention, personal space, or understanding because of special circumstances. Specific support may be needed to make their RE experience successful. The RE program at UU Schenectady will make every effort to accommodate children in their classes. **Please let us know your child's special needs so that we can help them have a successful experience in our program.** It is our intention to support each child/youth as a part of our church family.

For those children/youth who find it challenging to behave in a manner conducive to the program, the following steps will be taken (steps may be skipped or taken in a different order at the discretion of the Director of Lifespan Religious Education and Religious Education Team):

- If a child/youth is disruptive during RE, a teacher or assistant will first attempt to redirect the child/youth's attention.
- If this does not have the desired behavioral impact, the teacher will issue a direct warning to stop the behavior.
- If this does not have the desired behavioral impact, the child/youth will be removed from the classroom/activity and he/she will be brought to the Sunday Supervisor to participate in a quiet alternative activity for the rest of the RE programming time. During pickup time the parent will be asked to speak to the teacher / teachers. Teachers will describe the behavior that led to classroom removal, and ask for suggestions to deal with it in the future.
- In the event the disruptive behavior continues the child/youth will be brought to their parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will have the option of keeping their child/youth with them for the remainder of the service/event or the parent and child/youth may return to the classroom/activity together for the remainder of the program time as appropriate.
- The next time the child/youth is in RE, the parent will be asked to be accessible in case he/she is needed.

- If an issue arises more than once with any particular child, the DLRE will meet with the child, the child's parents or guardians, and the class liaison or teachers as appropriate to develop a plan for how to continue to include the child while preserving a safe and sacred learning environment for the rest of the group and teachers.
- Each plan will be reviewed after an agreed-upon amount of time to determine if it is working for everyone concerned. If not, further solutions will be sought, including advice and support from the Minister and/or appropriate counseling, educational, and developmental professionals.

It is the goal of the UU Schenectady RE that every child/youth feels welcome and respected. If a child/youth has difficulty meeting the behavioral policy of the congregation we welcome any input from parents regarding ways we can assist the child/youth in reaching these goals.

## Electronics Policy

Approved May 11, 2017 by RE Policy Sub Team

**Please leave electronic and other toys and game cards out of the classroom.** While we like to have fun while we learn, these kinds of distractions can hinder our learning environment. Many classes will have a basket they put electronics in during class time to remove the temptation.

## Special Needs Policy

A new team is forming to help create our special needs policy. We recognize that sometimes disruptive behavior is not a discipline issue, but a matter of making our classes a more welcoming learning experience for children and youth with special needs. If you would like to be involved in this process, please contact the Director of Lifespan Religious Education at [dlre@uuschenectady.org](mailto:dlre@uuschenectady.org) or (518) 374-4446 Ext. 6.

## Safe Congregations Policy

In 2007, UU Schenectady created their Safe Congregations policy to create environments that are safe and prepared should any safety issue arise. This policy encompasses all aspects of our church community.

For a quick overview as it pertains to religious education, the Safe Congregations Policy mandates:

- Two adults must be in the classroom at all times for the safety of the children, youth, and adults regardless of the number of children or youth in the room.
- The ratio of adults to youth needed to go offsite is 1:7.
- All teachers and volunteers working with our children and youth are background checked at the cost of the church.
- All teachers attend a teacher training in the beginning of the year.
- All teachers read and agree to follow the Code of Conduct outlined in the Safe Congregations Policy.
- As stated in the Code of Conduct, teachers are forbidden to use their status or authority as a teacher to cause any kind of harm to children and youth.

To view the full Safe Congregations Policy, check our website or contact the DLRE to view a hardcopy.

## Nursery Specific Policies

### Check-In and Check-Out

If you attend the nursery regularly, please register for the nursery through our registration forms, either a New Family Form or a Returning Family Form.

If you are new to the nursery, please ask one of our child care providers in the nursery for a Guest Information Sheet. This short form gives our staff vital information, such as parent contact numbers and allergies.

There will be a sheet to fill out on your left in the entrance after the baby gate. Everyone leaving children in the nursery needs to fill out this form fully for each child. On this form, please fill out -  
Your child's full name

- Your full name
- Where you will be while your child is in the nursery (worship, office, etc)
- What time you are dropping off your child
- Your phone number,
- Any information the nursery staff needs to know, such as allergies, potty training status, etc.

When you come to pick up your child from the nursery, please fill out the time your child leaves

### Spare Clothing

Please either bring and take home each week or else leave behind with child care providers in the nursery a bag with your child's name on it that contains a full set of seasonally appropriate and name-labeled clothing for your child.

### "On Call" List

If there are more than 10 children in the nursery, our staff needs assistance. In fall of 2017, we are starting a new "On Call" program for parents of the nursery. Each parent will have a few Sundays during the year where they commit to being available to join the nursery if staff needs help. An "On Call" parent needs to be in the service and easily accessible for the nursery. It is likely that a parent will not need to go into the nursery and can stay in worship. Having that system in place supports our nursery staff and helps to assure safety in our nursery.

### Emergency Exit and Fire Drill Procedure



There is an emergency exit in the nursery. During a drill or an emergency, the nursery will exit through this emergency door and wait in the parking lot. Parents are asked to wait to join their children until after everyone has evacuated and the nursery has had a chance to do a headcount to ensure that everyone left the building safely. The nursery has an evacuation crib to help evacuate children who are less mobile.

# Volunteering

Our religious education program relies and thrives on the time, energy, and dedication of volunteers. Here are some ways you can get involved in the RE program:

**Substitute Teacher:** We maintain a list of background checked substitutes that our teachers can call on in the event that they are unavailable on a given Sunday. We require two adults in the classroom with children at all times. If only one person on a teaching team is available on Sunday morning to be in class, they can contact a substitute teacher during the week before to step in on Sunday. The substitute teacher does not need to learn the curriculum; they are there for classroom management and to fulfill our Safe Congregations requirement of two adults in the classroom.

**Assistant in the RE classroom:** Some of our larger classes benefit from having an assistant in the room to help with activities and classroom management. The assistant be extra hands in the classroom without the expectation that they would help lead the class.

**Crossing Guard after RE classes:** Wendell Avenue can be a busy street and we want to make sure our children and youth can cross safely. At the end of worship, our crossing guard would come across the street to Waters House, grab the orange vest and stop sign, and help with street crossing.

**RE Greeter:** The RE Greeter arrives to the Great Hall by 10am and is on duty at the Welcome Table until service begins at 10:30am. Detailed instructions are provided; the main duties involve talking with new families about the RE Program, answering questions, and having parents fill out Guest Information Forms if their children will be attending classes. Training is available. RE Greeters are present throughout September and on big attendance Sundays, such as Bread Communion in the fall or Easter in the spring.

**Help with Special Events:** Throughout the year, we have special group RE activities that deepen our collective bonds, provide opportunities to socialize, and mark significant spiritual milestones. Participate at the level that works for you; join the Events Team, volunteer to organize just one specific event, or help with food prep, set up, or clean up for various events.

**Supplies & Spaces Organizer:** Pitch in to help sort, organize, and keep inventory of our RE supplies; assist with getting materials ready for teachers and classrooms; organize bulletin board displays around Waters House and the RE Hallway; help organize the library.

**Religious Education Teacher:** Our volunteer RE teachers work on a team of three or four people who rotate Sundays in the classroom. This ensures that RE teachers still have opportunities to be in the worship service. Teachers are trained and given a curriculum to follow. Teachers are expected to arrive by 10:15am on Sunday mornings and stay in class until all the children or youth have left. Some teaching teams meet in person to plan lessons; other

communicate by e-mail. Teachers are given a calendar from the DLRE with the calendar for the year.

**Adult Faith Development Facilitator:** Whether you would like to facilitate a long beloved adult faith class such as World Religions or start a new learning opportunity, we are always looking for more ways we can expand our adult faith development program. Adult classes are usually on a weekday evening or on Sunday after worship.

*The following teams are sub teams of the Religious Education Team and meet multiple times throughout the year.*

**Sunday Supervisor Sub Team:** The Sunday Supervisor arrives to Waters House by 10am and stays through dismissal of classes around 11:50am. Detailed instructions are provided; the main duties involve checking in with teachers, double checking attendance numbers, and being on site to ensure everything goes smoothly with RE classes. Training is required.

**Adult Faith Development Sub Team:** As part of our lifespan religious education program, we offer opportunities for spiritual growth and learning for adults in our community. The team is working on broadening and deepening the adult offerings. If you are interested in teaching or supporting adult learning opportunities, contact the DLRE about this team.

**Our Whole Lives Coordination Sub Team:** This team helps organize and run the Our Whole Lives, or OWL, program here at UU Schenectady as well recruiting facilitators to be trained and thinking of the long term goals of the program, such as offering Adult and Young Adult OWL.

**RE Liaison Sub Team:** The members of this team are liaisons to the RE teaching teams. Each month, a liaison checks in with their assigned teaching team to see how things are going in the classroom, how well the teachers are working together, if there is anything the RE Team needs to be aware of, and offer general support to our volunteer teachers. Liaisons may also communicate policy changes or other news from the RE Team.

# Safety Policies and Procedures

In this section, you can review the various safety policies and procedures. Some of these policies were created by the RE Team while other were created by the Safety Team.

## **RE Dismal and Crossing Wendell Ave (RE Team Policy)**

- Youth are welcome to cross the street on their own without a parent or guardian to pick them up.
- 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grader need a permission slip (see Appendix) to be released from RE class and cross Wendell Avenue without a parent or guardian to pick them up.
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade and below must be picked up by a parent or guardian from their RE class. If your child needs to be picked up from RE by someone else, you must notify your child's RE teacher in person.

## **First Aid Kits and Fire Extinguishers**

First Aid kits and fire extinguishers are available on every floor in Waters House. There is a fire extinguisher in the RE Hallway and first kits are available in each RE classroom in the main building.

## **Fire Evacuation Plan (Safety Team)**

We hold fire drills annually in both buildings in the fall.

### **Nursery Staff**

Responsibilities:

1. Make sure nursery emergency exit door and fire exit paths are not blocked.
2. Evacuate babies (using rolling crib) and walk children through the nursery emergency exit door, across the patio, and into the parking lot.
3. Count the children against attendance record to make sure all are accounted for, before releasing children to their parents.

### **RE Teachers in Pre-K/K or K/1 (depending on the year) Responsibilities:**

1. Instruct children to follow you in case of a fire, and familiarize them with the exits that could be used.
2. Make sure fire exit paths are not blocked.
3. Open the accordion wall to the nursery, and evacuate children through the nursery emergency exit door, across the patio, and into the parking lot.
4. Count the children against attendance record to make sure all are accounted for, before releasing children to their parents.

## **EVACUATION OF WATERS HOUSE**

1. **Anyone**: If you smell smoke or a fire alarm goes off, warn others and immediately exit the building through the exit plan posted in your room (also listed below). If possible, pull the fire alarm to alert others in the building. However, **do not attempt to pull a fire alarm if it puts you in danger**.
2. **Teachers**: Evacuate the children in your class through the appropriate exit.
  - a. **Children**: Follow your teacher.
  - b. **All**: The order of preference for exiting is Primary, then Secondary, but may change depending on the location of the fire.
  - c. **All**: Do not attempt to collect your belongings - exit immediately.
  - d. **All**: Assist those with disabilities as needed.
3. **All**: Meet on the asphalt driveway next to Waters House
4. **One teacher**: Call the fire department.
5. **All teachers**: Perform head count to ensure everyone has evacuated the building.
6. **Any teachers**: As safe, sweep each floor of the building to ensure no one is unaccounted for.

Room	Floor	Primary Exit	Secondary Exit
DLRE Office	1st	Kitchen door	WH front door
Kitchen	1st	Kitchen door	WH front door
Library	1st	Kitchen door	Library back door
Piano Room	1st	Piano Room door	Front Door
Youth Group Room	1st	Youth Group Room French door	WH front door
Art Supply Room	2nd	Children's Chapel fire escape	WH front door
Sophia Lyons Fahs Room	2nd	Children's Chapel fire escape	WH front door
Dorthea Dix Room	2nd	Children's Chapel fire escape	WH front door
Eugene Navias Room	2nd	WH front door	Children's Chapel fire escape
Frances Harper Room	3rd	Third floor fire escape	WH front door
Don Speed Smith Goodloe Room	3rd	Third floor fire escape	WH front door



# Religious Education Budget

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Math and notes</b>	<b>2017-18 Budget</b>
OWL	Training: $\$375 \times 3 = \$1,125$ Travel and expenses: $\$375$ <hr/> <i>Adult and Young Adult OWL: \$500</i>	\$2,000.00
Camp Out Expenses	2015-16 cost: $\$517.94$ 2016-17 cost: $\$391$	\$500.00
Curricula	2015-16 cost: $\$127.00$ 2016-17 cost: $\$360.92$ Potential cost for new curricula	\$500.00
Teacher Trainings	2015-16 cost: $\$9.19$ 2016-17 cost: $\$49.02$ Plan to expand resources given at orientation	\$150.00
Ceremonies	2015-16 Flowers for Easter: $\$279.30$ Anticipating more children for flowers this next year 28 RE teachers+ approx 15 Adult teachers: $43 \times \$10 = \$430$	\$1,000.00
Supplies	2015-16 cost: $\$229.15$ 2016-17 cost: $\$536.93$ New supply costs from the Nursery as of Dec 2016 New costs for adult programming	\$1,000.00
Homemade Holidays	2015-16 cost: Spent $\$132.94$ , generated income of $\$91.00$	\$150.00
Bridging	2015-16 costs with 7 seniors: $\$165.64$ 10 seniors approx $\$24$ ea= $\$240$	\$250.00
Coming of Age	19 youth Three overnights, Boston Trip, and gifts Mentor program Fee and fundraising income	\$600
Background Checks and Certifications	2015-16 cost: $\$164.25$	\$200.00
RE Adult Faith Development Subteam	Resources and training for new team	\$150.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$6,500.00</b>





# Field Trip Permission Slip Template



**Permission Slip**  
Event \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give my youth,  
\_\_\_\_\_ permission to attend  
\_\_\_\_\_ at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady  
**starting at (time) on (Day, Date) and ending at (time) on (Day, Date).** I  
understand that this event includes \_\_\_\_\_ **(be explicit  
about transportation, activities and conditions at the event site)**

The granting of this permission (i) is limited to the time and activities mentioned above, (ii) is voluntary, and (iii) it means that I (parent/guardian) have chosen to accept full responsibility for my child while participating in the activities on and off campus and to waive any rights I may have against the UUSS Religious Education Program for any harm or injury suffered or caused by (child) during the duration of this event.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/guardian signature Date

Parent/guardian best means of contact in case of emergency  
during the event \_\_\_\_\_

Youth special needs, medications, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF SCHENECTADY

CHILD CARE PROVIDER

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Child Care Provider

POSITION TYPE: Part-time, hourly, 12 months/year

EXEMPTION STATUS: Non-exempt

POSITION PURPOSE: Provide a safe, welcoming, developmentally appropriate care for infants and toddlers (up to age 4) during Sunday morning services, and supervision/care for children of various ages during other church activities including but not limited to meetings, classes, and special all-church events during day, evening, or weekend hours. Ensure a safe environment for children and allow parents to participate fully in church life.

REPORTS TO: Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE)

HOURS, COMPENSATION, BENEFITS:

- This position requires two hours a week on Sunday morning (10am-12pm) all year round, plus longer hours on some Sundays and other times as arranged with supervisor, sometimes in consultation with Staff, Committees or Teams who require child care to support a church event.
- This position is non-exempt.
- Pay and benefits are determined on a yearly basis according to church personnel policies.
- In support of the Americans with Disabilities Act, this job description lists only those responsibilities and qualifications deemed essential to the position.

DUTIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES: The following statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by people assigned to this job. However, these statements are not exhaustive and cannot anticipate all possible duties and requirements which may arise.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

Infant/Toddler Care and Various Age Child Care

- Provide care for infants and toddlers in the church nursery during Sunday morning services

- Take attendance and ensure that parents sign children in and out of the nursery and complete visitor forms or (after three visits) Religious Education registration forms. Consult with parents regarding the child's health history, allergies, and any other concerns regarding the child's well-being while in the care of the nursery.
- With regard to safety and discipline, caregivers will:
  - Use positive language to direct or redirect children.
  - Refrain from physical discipline or punishment.
  - Maintain a space that is physically and emotionally safe for all children and caregivers.
  - Ensure that children in diapers or in process of potty-training remain clean and dry through the use of frequent diaper checks and potty breaks.
  - Communicate concerns, if any, to parents upon pick-up.
  - Report concerns, problems, accidents, or suggestions to the DLRE immediately.
  - Pick-up toys and clean nursery space prior to departing; report any concerns to the DLRE
  - Conduct classroom inventory checks and inform DLRE when supplies/equipment are needed or are in disrepair.
  - Provide supervision and care for children of various ages during church activities by arrangement
  - Ensure that parents sign children in and out of the provided child care
  - Ensure children have appropriate and safe toys and activities
    - Facilitate and participate in age-appropriate activities with the children, such as games, roleplaying, reading and storytelling, songs and finger plays, or simple crafts.
    - Assist children in attaining age-appropriate skills, such as self-care, care of belongings, manners, cooperation, and engaging in community.
  - Collaborate with church staff and volunteers in designing and implementing child care and activities

#### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

##### Education:

- High school diploma; some college preferred (child development, education, or a related field)
- CPR and First Aid certification is recommended

##### Experience:

- Experience caring for and leading activities with infants, toddlers, and children
- Familiarity and comfort with Unitarian Universalism is recommended.

#### Skills:

- Physical strength and agility to provide care for children
- Understanding of child development and age appropriate activities
- Knowledge of basics of child safety and welfare
- Well organized and reliable
- Ability to work effectively with other staff and volunteers o Tactful and mature with a good sense of humor
- General understanding of and openness to Unitarian Universalist principles and philosophies

#### Other Requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years old
- This is a responsible position, requiring the ability and willingness to maintain a regular work schedule and notify your supervisor in a timely manner if unable to work as scheduled.
- This position requires work on Sunday and occasional work at other times by arrangement.
- The successful candidate will complete required background check which, if complete in conduction with this employment, will be covered financially by the church.

#### Physical and Mental Requirements:

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to do the following; reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions:

- Coordinate multiple tasks simultaneously
- Utilize hand and finger dexterity.
- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear. The employee is frequently required to walk; sit and use hands to finger, handle, or feel. The employee is occasionally required to stand; reach with hands and arms; stoop, kneel, crouch, and crawl. Employee must be able to see.
- Ability to lift a minimum of 25 pounds independently; ability to lift a minimum of 50 pounds with assistance

#### Supervisory Relationships:

- The Child Care Provider is supervised by the Director of Lifespan Religious Education.
- The Child Care Provider works closely with volunteers providing child care.

*Effective December 1, 2016*



# Sunday Supervisor Instructions

## Sunday Supervisor Information Sheet

*Thank you for taking on this important role! Please review the detailed instructions below as the job description may have changed since the last time you served as Sunday Supervisor.*

**The Sunday Supervisor should arrive to Waters House no later than 10:15am.**

- 1) First, stop into Julie's office for any updates. On the bulletin board there, you will find the Sunday Supervisor clipboard, which holds copies of the attendance form you will be filling out later. Also on the bulletin board you will find a large, red "Ask Me" button. We ask that you wear this button during your shift so that people can identify you as the Sunday Supervisor. Finally, there will be copies of the Teacher List and Substitute Teacher List on the bulletin board in case you need them.
  
- 2) Next, please locate the plastic caution figure and small orange flag in the closet next to the front doors of Waters House. Attach the orange flag to the plastic form and set it outside on the sidewalk next to the crosswalk. Then find the blue Earth flag also in the same closet, and stick it into one of the planters in front of Waters House. This flag signals to our RE families that classes will be held in Waters House today. **[It is possible the flag and caution figure will have been placed before your arrival, in which case, skip to the next step.]**
  
- 3) The next step, before classes begin, is to make sure that each and every RE classroom has (or will have) at least two adults. First go across the street to the RE Hallway off the Great Hall to check on the Nursery and the Chalice Children classrooms. Then return to Waters House to check on the Senior Youth, Keepers of the Earth, Sing to the Power, and Neighboring Faiths classes. Some Sundays, the Coming of Age class will also be meeting on the third floor. **If teachers are absent and did not fulfill their commitment to secure substitutes, you will need to help find replacements by asking parents to step in.** The copy of the substitute list posted in Julie's office will help aid your search.
  
- 4) Once worship begins, aside from the time when you are taking attendance (explained below) you should remain around the Waters House library so that you are available to help out in case a child needs to leave the classroom or there is an emergency, etc.
  
- 5) About 15-20 minutes after worship begins (10:45-10:50) is a good time to **take attendance**. This allows latecomers to arrive and classes to get settled before you do a headcount. Using the provided form, visit each RE classroom again, including those across the street, and record their numbers. The teachers are expecting your visit and will usually have the attendance numbers ready to give you.
  
- 6) At the conclusion of worship, ensure RE teachers in Waters House have dismissed all the children to adults. Be aware that some members of Neighboring Faiths have written permission to leave without an adult, and those in Coming of Age and Senior Youth may also leave independently. Once all the children have safely left Waters House, please leave the completed Sunday Supervisor form in the mailbox labeled Susan Marino- Church Administrator. The mailboxes are located in the Great Hall right next to the office.

**In the event of a question or concern, please call Julie Rigano, DLRE at 518-504-0684. If she is not available, you can find backup contacts posted on the bulletin board in Julie's office.**



## RE Greeter Position Description

The RE Greeter is a volunteer role that is needed on certain high-volume Sundays throughout the year. The RE Greeter arrives to the Great Hall by 10am and is on duty at the Welcome Table until service begins at 10:30am. The main duties of this important role are talking with new families about the RE Program, answering questions, and having new parents fill out Guest Information Forms if their children will be attending classes. The RE Greeter is not alone at the Welcome Table, but instead works together with a representative from the Membership Team and the Congregational Life Coordinator. Detailed instructions are provided for the RE Greeter, and training is available.

## Substitute Teacher Position Description

We require two adults in the classroom with children at all times. If only one person on a teaching team is available on Sunday morning to be in class, they can contact a substitute teacher during the week before to step in on Sunday. The substitute teacher does not need to learn the curriculum; they are there for classroom management and to fulfill our Safe Congregations requirement of two adults in the classroom.