

*Our Unitarian Universalist Rainbow Promises
(as learned in our Spirit Play classroom)*

Respect all people (Red Promise)

Offer fair and kind treatment to all (Orange Promise)

Yearn to accept and learn about ourselves, others, and the
Mystery of Life (Yellow Promise)

Grow by exploring what is true and right in life (Green Promise)

Believe in our ideas and act on them (Blue Promise)

Insist on freedom, justice, & peace for all beings (Indigo Promise)

Value our home, Earth, that we share with all living things
(Violet Promise)



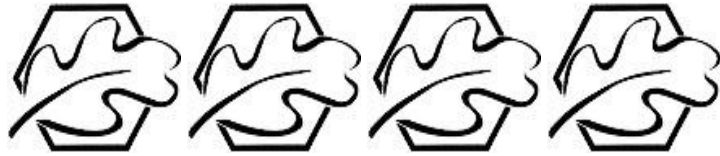
*Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento
2425 Sierra Boulevard Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 483-9283
www/uuss.org/re*

Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento

Religious Education for Children & Youth Family & Volunteer Guide



2015-2016



Our Congregational Mission

*We come together to deepen our lives
and be a force for healing in the world.*

Our values

*We value the goodness in everyone,
the openness and curiosity that illuminate that goodness
and the love and courage that sustain us.*

Our Covenant

*We, an intergenerational community, travel together
with open minds, open hearts, and helping hands.
We value justice, compassion, integrity and acceptance.
We seek spiritual growth, learning together,
caring and laughter.
To these ends we pledge our time, talents and support.*

Rev. Roger Jones
Senior Minister
roger@uuss.org
(916) 483-9283, ext. 203

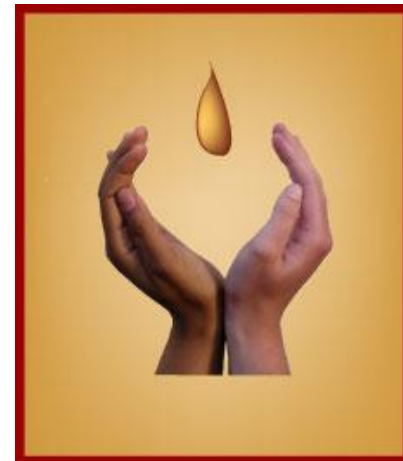


Miranda Massa
Religious Education Coordinator
re@uuss.org
(916) 483-9283, ext. 207



Religious Education Committee

The RE Committee participates in curriculum planning and setting education policies, and provides assistance to staff and volunteers. For more information, contact the Religious Education Coordinator.



Family and Volunteer Involvement

As a community, we gather to support the religious, spiritual and ethical growth of our children and youth. Many volunteers of all ages contribute their time, talents, energy and money to make our shared RE program one of quality and vision.

Volunteer Support: We ask for the involvement not only of the families among us, but of everyone who has the ability to learn, grow, show up, and help out. This makes us a true community across the generations.

Our program thrives because parents, grandparents, guardians & other members & friends of this congregation serve as volunteer leaders, teachers, advisors, mentors, cooks, hosts, and carpool drivers. When you serve, you help to embody what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

Financial Support: The whole congregation supports the RE program financially through the operating budget. Members and friends of UUSS make a yearly financial pledge commitment to the operating budget to sustain the church's programs, facilities, staff, ministries and outreach.

We encourage non-members who attend UUSS or whose children participate in church programs to make a financial pledge. The ministers can provide materials to help you decide on a pledge commitment that's right for you. You can also find the proper forms in the church office or at www.uuss.org. Pledges are made on a yearly basis and usually paid in monthly or quarterly payments.

For special programs like Youth Group Lock-in Retreats, Youth Coming of Age and Our Whole Lives (OWL), special fees help to cover the cost of additional teacher training, support, supplies, and weekend retreats. Financial assistance is available to enable all families to participate.

Membership: We invite you to consider membership in this congregation. A Newcomers' Orientation to Membership Class takes place three times a year. Watch the monthly Unigram newsletter for an upcoming class. You may sign up for an orientation at the Welcome Table or contact the main office or the Minister at (916) 483-9283. Parents and others are welcome to join the congregation when it feels right. Meanwhile, please take advantage of the many programs & activities going on at UUSS for adults as well as for families with children. Please speak to the Senior Minister for more information.

Senior Minister's Welcome

Dear Friends, Families, Volunteers and Members,

Welcome to the RE program at UUSS. I am happy to invite you to participate in, learn about, and support our lively programs for children and youth. Our volunteers and staff plan and lead an enriching year of programs for Sunday school and other activities for children and youth. Religious Education programs for all ages are in my ministerial portfolio at UUSS.

I'm grateful to our Religious Education Committee and staff, our Sunday school teachers, and our many other volunteers of all ages and stages of life. The gifts of time, talent, and care by our staff and volunteer leaders make our programs exciting and excellent.

Our Congregational Mission Statement is just as true in Religious Education as in any other program.

We are here to change lives, make the world a better place, and enjoy ourselves while doing so. We are here to build relationships of depth and to make memories of love and gratitude.

I'd like to invite you to join us. Please read this handbook, visit with others at the RE table, and let me know if you have any questions.

Many blessings,
Roger

From the Religious Education Volunteer Leaders

Welcome to Religious Education at UUSS. In our Congregational Mission Statement, we affirm that we are an intergenerational community.

RE provides opportunities for people of all ages to come together to support the youth and children.

We provide a safe environment for youth to explore UU Principles, to ask questions, and to search for meaning in their own lives. The RE Committee supports youth through Sunday services, RE classes, Coming of Age (COA) and Our Whole Lives (OWL). All of this requires the work of many hands, and we hope you will consider giving us the gift of your time and support. There are many opportunities to participate in RE, from lending a hand at a one-time event to becoming a frequent helper in classrooms. Prior teaching experience is not required—just a willingness to grant us your time and patience. Please feel free to contact the RE Coordinator if you have questions or are interested.

Sunday Morning Rhythms

Religious Education for children and youth occurs during the service. Children in Religious Education will begin their Sunday in the Sanctuary with their families. They will then be sung out of service to attend RE.

In their classrooms, children and youth gather for stories, art explorations, movement activities, wondering, and discussion.

Play clothing that is comfortable and modest is appropriate dress for Sunday school at UUSS.

Once each month, children and youth participate with their families in Worship for All-Ages in the Sanctuary. These services are announced in the monthly Unigram newsletter and biweekly RE Outreach emails.

Child care by our paid staff is available will be available for children age 5 and under in the UUSS Nursery (Room 11) during service.

Classes and special events are led by volunteer teachers working in teams of two. They are supported by the Senior Minister, RE Coordinator and the RE Volunteer Leaders.

Our RE Classes September through May

Childcare (infant through age 5)	Room 11
Spirit Play (Kinder through 2 nd grades)	Room 10
Spirit Play (3 rd through 5 th grades)	Room 7/8
JHYG-Jr High Youth Group (gr. 6, 7, 8) 1 st & 4 th Sunday	Room 6
SHYG-Sr High Youth Group (High School)	Room 12

Religious Education (RE) Program Policies

- All families participating in RE will register infants, children, and youth in the program. These registration forms provide staff and teachers with essential information; help us to keep accurate records, and to communicate with you effectively.
- Visiting families will be asked to complete Visitors' Forms for their children and youth for the same reasons. On your third visit a completed registration form will be needed.
- Infants & toddlers should be taken to the Nursery to sign in.
- Religious Services begin at 10:30 am. Families should arrive at 10:15 to check in and make name tags at the RE Table inside the Welcome Hall. They will then proceed to the Sanctuary. After 20 minutes they are sung out of Service. Children and youth will accompany their teachers to the classrooms.
- Children in Preschool through Fifth Grade must be checked in at the RE Table by a parent or other accompanying adult prior to class time. Youth in Jr. & Sr. High may check themselves in at the RE Table prior to class time.
- Unsupervised minors may not roam the campus during services. Minors (age 17 and under) may attend their RE class or the whole Worship Service.
- Religious Education classes end 15 minutes after the end of the Worship Service. In order to allow children and youth to complete their activities without distraction, parents please do not enter the classrooms before classes are dismissed.
- Children and youth are released to their designated parent or guardians. To help ensure safety, please make personal contact with a teacher when you pick up your child.
- In order to provide a safe environment for the youngest children, only children ages 5 and under may play in the Nursery from 10:15 to 12:00.

Safe Setting Policy

The lay and professional leaders of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento are entrusted with the care of our children and youth. We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing physical space and to developing relationships of caring, mutual respect and trust with one another. The safety and well-being of all children, youth, and adults in our congregation is a sacred responsibility of our religious community.

Staff and Volunteers:

- All paid staff will comply with current UUSS policies regarding background screening, in cooperation with and at the direction of the Senior Minister and the Religious Education Coordinator.
- All volunteer teachers in the Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education curriculum will be required to complete background screening, as will any paid Youth Advisor and paid Child Care Providers. Background screening for volunteers is at the discretion of the Minister and the Religious Education Committee. UUSS will pay the fees for any required screenings.
- Volunteers will always work in teams of at least two in the classroom. In most cases, volunteers will have been active in UUSS for one year before being invited to lead a class. The Senior Minister may from time to time make exceptions to this policy, in consultation with the Religious Education Coordinator.
- All volunteers will sign a [Code of Ethics](#) statement which will be kept on file in the RE office, to be renewed annually or as needed.
- Paid child care staff and the Religious Education Coordinator will assist in observing classroom and playground activities, and will report to the Senior Minister any areas of concern.

Safety inside and outside:

- Classrooms are clean and in good repair.
- Each room has two unlocked exterior doors.
- Each room has a window that allows unobstructed views.
- All play areas are free from debris.
- A cell phone is available from the RE Coordinator on Sunday mornings.
- First Aid kits are available in the RE Office & in the Nursery.

About our Classes

Childcare for the Very Young – (infant through age 5) – UUSS Nursery
Child care will be from 10:15 to Noon for children age 5 and under. As part of our efforts to ensure a safe environment, it is very important that parents sign their children in and out of the Nursery. Please be sure to indicate any food allergies or other important health information.
*Bring a change of clothes and diapers in a labeled bag. In addition, we ask that you sit where we can find you easily if your child needs you.
*Please ask for a copy of our UUSS Nursery Sick Policy!

Spirit Play – Kinder through 2nd grades and 3rd through 5th grades
Spirit Play is a Unitarian Universalist curriculum based on the ideas of Maria Montessori. Children will start in the Sanctuary and then be led to their classroom by the Spirit Play Doorkeeper. Once there, we will practice our classroom rituals, hear a story that reflects UU identity and have a period of “wondering” about it. Ideas are presented in such a way as to encourage open thought, with no right or wrong answers for questions. The children will then choose from a number of art, craft, and game materials to explore their thoughts in their “work.”



About our Classes (cont.)

Junior High (JHYG) – 6th, 7th & 8th Grades

JHYG meets on the first and fourth Sundays only of each month this year. After beginning service in the Sanctuary, our Jr. High Youth Group will be led to Room 6 where they will explore Unitarian Universalism using the 6 Pillars of Balanced Youth Ministry. Our youth will have the opportunity to explore cooperative games in a fun setting. Games are to provide a vehicle for exploration of the 6 Pillars.

Senior High Youth Group (SHYG) – 9th -12th grade

The Senior High Youth Group meets to discuss a range of topics of interest to its members, including life as a Unitarian Universalist youth, spirituality and current events. Within our congregation those of age 18 – 20 may continue to attend SHYG at the discretion of SHYG Youth Advisors and the Senior Minister. New attendees age 18 and older are invited to attend the worship service only.

Our Whole Lives (OWL)

OWL is based on a philosophy of comprehensive sexuality education, which helps youth make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. OWL provides not only facts about anatomy & human development, but also helps participants to clarify their values, build relationship skills, & understand the spiritual, emotional, social & political aspects of sexuality. Volunteer leaders with special training lead the workshop series offered as an optional program by pre-registration. See the OWL brochure.

Coming of Age (COA)

COA is a rite of passage equivalent to the Christian Confirmation or the Jewish Bat or Bar Mitzvah. COA helps adolescents discern for themselves what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist (UU), individually and as part of the larger faith community. COA is in addition to regular youth programs at UUSS with its own schedule and separate registration. We offer this program on Sunday afternoons during the 2015-2016 church year. See the COA brochure.

In the Classroom

While most children in RE enjoy making friends and participating in classroom activities, we occasionally need to address a child working through behavioral issues. Parents of children who may have behavioral difficulties are asked to let the Religious Education staff know of any strategies that may be helpful in working with your child. If teachers find that a child's behavior is disruptive, there are several steps they may ordinarily take in order to maintain an environment conducive to group learning.

Teachers begin with such simple strategies as:

1. Redirecting the child by suggesting specific appropriate behavior (e.g. requesting that the child speak respectfully, help with a task, or engage in an alternative activity such as reading or coloring). Children in Spirit Play will be asked to sit with the Doorkeeper until ready to return to the circle.
2. Intervening between children who are distracting each other (e.g. asking them to sit separately, sitting between them).

If a child's behavior remains unmanageably disruptive, the teacher will:

1. Ask the child whether he or she needs to leave the class.
2. Request assistance from the RE Coordinator, who will help locate the child's parent or guardian.

