

**Information about Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 8<sup>th</sup> graders**  
**First Unitarian Universalist Society**  
**2017-2018 Program Year**

Overview

The OWL curriculum we use is written for a 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade age range. At First UU, most participants are 8<sup>th</sup> graders, though there are many reasons why 7<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> graders may choose to participate.

OWL is actually a comprehensive sexuality curriculum *series*. There are components available for various age groups, including young children and adults. We have begun introducing levels for younger children, which at this point are unfortunately only open to UU families. You can find out more about all of OWL on our website: [uusociety.org](http://uusociety.org).

OWL Teachers

OWL is taught by a team of volunteer teachers, each of whom has completed a 15-hour training in the Do's, Don't's, and How To's of its implementation. It is a highly acclaimed, well-written and comprehensive program, and teachers are trained to follow it essentially to the letter. Two or three teachers, with a diversity of gender identities, lead each class session.

Each year, the OWL teaching team is comprised of leads and substitutes, with a diversity of gender identities on the team. Several of them have been teaching for multiple years and we typically have at least one new team member. We take care to recruit prospective OWL teachers who have demonstrated commitment to teaching and/or who have relevant professional experience (ie social work, medicine, etc.). All teachers are vetted and trained according to our Safe Congregation Policies.

OWL Application process

The value and importance that this curriculum has for UU families, combined with the strong reputation it has gained in the wider Burlington community, has caused us to develop a clear and fair process for families to request a spot in OWL. This allows us to offer it to a group we can manage effectively, ensuring the quality and integrity of the content delivery. We therefore use an application form, the link to which you will find on our website. **All families, whether part of First UU or not, must first submit the OWL Application form to express their desire to enroll their child in OWL.**

Please see the application for details about the application and registration process. **Please apply only if you are sure you want a spot and can commit to the program.**

## Orientation for parents:

**Parents of OWL accepted participants are required to attend an introductory orientation** before the program begins, where they will receive a special OWL Permission Slip, which must be signed in order for their child to participate. We strongly expect all custodial parents who reside locally to attend an orientation. At minimum, one parent must attend. Orientations are held at First UU. We will offer two orientation times in September, in order to accommodate busy schedules, and their dates/times will be emailed to applicants by early summer. They are usually on a Sunday early afternoon and a Wednesday evening.

## OWL class schedule

Classes meet Sunday mornings. Each class session is 1 ½ hours long, from 11-12:30; We offer several double sessions, which run one hour longer: from 11-1:30.

OWL starts in September, and usually ends by April break. It has a strict attendance policy, such that a student who misses a fourth session will be asked not to continue with the class. To facilitate everyone's compliance with the policy, OWL has a special schedule which avoids Sundays on long weekends and during local public school vacations. This schedule, which lists Sundays when there is no OWL, as well as Sundays when we will have "double sessions," is distributed at the parent orientations.

## OWL Program cost

OWL costs significantly more to provide than our other religious education programs. This is due largely to annual expenses incurred in training new teachers, but also to paying honoraria for guest presenters and panelists, and special supplies for the class. Therefore, participants must either pay a program fee or be financial contributors to First UU for the year in question. Details are found in the application form.

## Registration for Religious Education as an OWL participant

Because OWL is part of First UU's Religious Education Program, participants (whether UUs or not) must register in our R. E. Program, along with completing the OWL application form. UU families registered in the previous year will receive email notification when the form for the new year is ready. Otherwise, please check our website ([www.uusociety.org](http://www.uusociety.org)) and find access to it via the "Register Now" part of the Religious Education menu. Make sure you complete the form for the proper year!

## Questions?

Contact Martha Dallas, Director of Religious Education, at 862-5630 x28 or [martha@uusociety.org](mailto:martha@uusociety.org).