

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Children and youth can be adults' spiritual guides, posing deep, honest questions as they wonder aloud about their world.

As Unitarian Universalists, we have the responsibility of **engaging in spiritual growth and actively nurturing the development of our faith**. We must do the work of discerning our beliefs for ourselves, and live our lives accordingly.

The learning process is never finished! Active faith development is a lifelong adventure. Ours is a large congregation, **so we nurture community and friendship through teams of teachers and smaller groups of learners**.

Children learn through...

- The choices and actions modeled by their parents and other adults
- Classroom Sundays, with peers in a similar age group
- Justice Sundays, when a multiage group explores a themed presentation together
- Joining the adults for worship, whether it's just 15 minutes, or for a multigenerational service.

Youth learn through taking risks, building trust, and sharing group leadership with caring adult advisors.

Safety is essential to spiritual growth. Therefore, compliance with our Safe Congregation Policies is required of everyone.

CONTACT US

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Lifespan Faith Development

2016-2017

Religious Education

&

Spiritual Growth for All Ages



WELCOME!

At First UU, we affirm and support religious education and faith formation throughout the lifespan. Several different teams and committees serve and support our Spiritual Growth and Learning ministries. We believe that each has something to teach, as well as much to learn; and we know that moments of transformation and transcendence are possible for anyone who participates actively and intentionally in this faith community! We gather not only to quench our own spiritual thirsts; but also for encouragement to reach out into a world which is too often hurting in pain and crying for justice.



We who call ourselves Unitarian Universalists do not all share the same beliefs. Rather, we enter into a covenant – a sacred promise with one another– to shape our living according to Seven Principles which guide and balance our values and inform our choices and actions.

Unitarian Universalism’s spiritual wisdom draws from many sources, including the religions of the world; the reasoned insights of science; and our own direct human experience. **There is so much to explore together of life’s meaning and each person’s unique embodiment of the Spirit of Life!**

Whether you are raising young children, navigating the teenage years, seeking loving community as a young adult, or hungering for enrichment and a deepening sense of life in your adult years, we welcome you. May this community affirm why you came, remind you of your truest self, and help unveil your journey ahead. We hope you’ll join us!

*Warmly,
Martha Dallas
Director of Religious Education*



INFANTS AND TODDLERS

...are cared for in our safe, friendly nursery by trained adult supervisors and teen staff.



CHILDREN

Preschool and lower elementary children follow Spirit Play, a Montessori-based curriculum centered on the children, engaging stories which pose wondering questions. Groups of older children explore UU identity, spiritual growth, justice-making, and faith formation through selections in the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Tapestry of Faith curricula series. Sixth graders grapple with Big Questions and explore UU History; Seventh graders experience other faiths directly as they consider religiousness, itself. Eighth graders participate in our highly-acclaimed comprehensive sexuality program, Our Whole Lives (OWL).

YOUTH

Our high school YUUth Group provides community service, furthers social justice, plays together and confides deeply in one another. It is supported by our Youth Ministry Coordinator and several adult advisors. Our Coming of Age participants consider Ultimate Questions and their own beliefs through this rite of passage program.



CAMPUS MINISTRY

...is based at the University of Vermont and open to those of undergrad age. Contact our Campus Ministry Coordinator to get involved (campusministry@uusociety.org) or  Unitarian Universalists at UVM.

YOUNG ADULTS

Contact Martha Dallas (martha@uusociety.org) or Rev. Mara Dowdall (revmara@uusociety.org) for help connecting with our 20s & 30s group!



ADULTS



We offer multi-session classes and stand-alone workshops, always inspired by your passions. Many wonderful resources are at our fingertips. Let us know how

you’d like to explore meaning, deepen understanding, and nurture beloved community and we’ll help you do it!

SUPPORTING LEADERS

Leading groups can be educational and fulfilling, but requires support and assistance.

To this end, we:

- Offer several convenient training and orientation events in September for parents and teachers before classes begin
- Prepare curricula and gather materials in advance for our volunteer teachers
- Offer a monthly, drop-in sustenance circle for class leaders
- Check in weekly with teaching teams to offer support

SUPPORTING PARENTS

First UU serves as a small “village of values” where parents mutually support one another in raising their children. Even so, 21st-Century parenting is extremely challenging, and must be supported beyond Sunday worship and religious education programs. This year, we introduce a monthly UU parenting newsletter, “We Are Going,” to provide inspiration, insight, and resources for all those moments along the way when you just can’t figure it out on your own. We invite you to check it out!