

# Religious Education for Children at UFWC

September 2010 – June 2011

*Offering Sunday programming for Children and Youth,  
and Nursery care for children age three and under*

## Welcome!

Whether you are returning from summer break or visiting the Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester for the first time, we are glad you are here with us. We have an exciting year planned for your child(ren), full of exploration, wondering, worship, community-building and fun.

Our focus this year is on understanding our Unitarian Universalist Principles. The Principles are simple in word, but can be challenging to practice. We begin here, in safe and sacred space, to come to our own understanding of what the Principles say to each of us in terms of how we live our life.

I look forward to getting to know you and your children better throughout the year. Please contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions you might have.



In joyful anticipation,

Pam Baxter  
Director of Religious Education  
[dre@ufwc.org](mailto:dre@ufwc.org)

## Our Mission is . . .

- to provide the children of our Congregation with a positive experience of a faith community
- to educate them in Unitarian Universalist principles and values,
- to empower them to embark on a path of personal faith development,
- to create in them an awareness and appreciation of the faith traditions that shape our world,
- and to provide opportunities for them to put our Unitarian Universalist Principles into action.

**In addition**, we want our children to have fun, develop friendships and to feel a sense of belonging.



## Sunday a.m. Schedule

*All classes and Youth Group meetings are held downstairs.*

**9 - 10:00 a.m. Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
*Way Cool Sunday School*

**9 - 10:15 a.m. 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Grade:**  
*It Starts With Me and  
The Gospel According to  
the Simpsons*

**9 - 10:30 a.m. 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Grade: Our Whole Lives (OWL)**

**10:45 a.m. Youth Group** (*unless announced otherwise*)

**Annual Registration is required** for all students Pre-K through 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Visitors are welcome without pre-registering, but please fill out a *Visiting Child form* at the Greeters Table in the lobby when you arrive.

*Registering your child —*

- helps us with planning,
- ensures that you receive timely communication about events
- provides us with information important to your child's safety.
- allows your child to take part in walking field trips, and for his/her photo to appear anonymously on our website, if you wish.

You may register online at [www.ufwc.org](http://www.ufwc.org) or fill out a hard copy, available in each classroom.

## The Active Role of Parents

First and foremost, we hope you make a regular practice of bringing your children to the Fellowship. Parents are children's primary spiritual teachers, but there is something children get when they come to church that they cannot get elsewhere.

In addition, children love to see their friends, and many build lasting relationships with their classmates. Regular attendance helps them forge these bonds.

### As Unitarian Universalists, we teach that . . .

1. Each and every person is unique and to be respected.
2. All people should be treated fairly and with kindness.
3. Our churches are places where everyone is accepted and where we learn together.
4. Every person is free to search for truth and meaning.
5. All people have the right to think for themselves and vote on issues that concern them.
6. We must work for a world in which there is peace, fairness and freedom.
7. We should respect and care for all parts of our planet Earth.

(This is a children's version of the 7 Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association)

## Supporting Our Teachers

Our classroom teachers are members of the Fellowship who volunteer their time to prepare lessons and teach on Sunday mornings. Their commitment to your children is what drives our Program. Please support them by helping in the following ways:

**1. Pick up your children**, from Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade **immediately after the service**; they will not be dismissed from class. Teachers, too, would like to enjoy coffee hour and conversation. Honor them by retrieving your children promptly. **If the service finishes early, please wait until 10:00 to retrieve your children.**

**2. Review appropriate classroom conduct** with your children. Our teachers and the RE Committee spend much time and energy creating a safe, supportive, nurturing and positive atmosphere in the classroom. We expect all children to behave in a manner that fosters these feelings for themselves and their classmates. In addition to our Group Covenant, each teaching team is encouraged to develop a classroom code of conduct with the children. Basic rules of conduct and consideration apply. You can help by acquainting yourself with, and reinforcing the classroom covenant.

**3. Spend time in the classroom.** Parents are welcome to observe in their child's classroom or to stay for a while to help a new child get adjusted. If you plan to be in the classroom, please identify yourself to the teacher. Also, please ask if you may help. An extra pair of hands is often helpful, especially with younger children.



## Helping Children Honor our Sacred Space

In all spaces of our Fellowship building we encourage parents to ensure that their children treat their church home with respect. This behavior includes no running, no standing or climbing on chairs/tables, no throwing things, no hitting, and no shouting. If food or drink is spilled, it should be cleaned up. When children are not in their RE classes, parents are responsible for them. If you observe an unattended child behaving in a disrespectful or potentially harmful manner, please either notify the Director of Religious Education or a member of the RE Committee, or simply speak gently to the child and remind him/her of the rules.

## ***Our Program*** ***Pre-K through 9th grade***

*All classes use age-appropriate curricula. Our theme this year is Unitarian Universalist Identity, with special focus on Social Action and our environment.*

### **Nursery Care**

*For infants through 3-year-olds, babysitting is available downstairs in our Nursery. Your little ones are also welcome to stay with you during the service, but we ask that you take them out to the lobby if they become restless or vocal. Speakers in the lobby enable you to hear the service.*

### ***Pre-K / Kindergarten: Treasure Hunting***

Treasure Hunting involves children in the excitement of the search for meaning in life at the concrete,



tangible level of their understanding. Each week through games, crafts,

songs and stories, the children explore the meaning behind a Unitarian Universalist principle or value. For example, the children treasure hunt among themselves to find people who have “curly hair,” who “like chocolate ice cream,” who “have a little brother,” etc. The story and discussion that follow emphasize that Unitarian Universalists treasure people’s differences as well as similarities.

A central feature is the class Treasure Chest along with each child’s treasure chest, which she or he makes to take home. Every week the children make or receive an object to put into their chests, symbolic of that week’s principle. The object also is added to the class Treasure Chest.

The year’s lessons are divided into three units: Treasuring Ourselves and Others; Treasuring Our Church and Religion; and Treasuring Our Neighbors and Our Planet.

**Teaching Team:** Shelly Case • Julie Cottage • Robin Garrett • Kim Cain

### ***1st / 2nd : Picture Book UU***

What an inspired idea – a UU identity curriculum based on the 36 best picture books for teaching young children about the love, reason, tolerance and good works that make up our faith. Through engaging illustrations and thought-provoking text, each book provides a starting point for young children to discover and talk about these important qualities. A peek at two of the units:

#### ***“Henry Builds a Cabin”***

Walden’s chapter on “Economy,” by Thoreau, is the idea behind the tale of Henry, a bear who plans to build and live in a one-room cabin. When

friends Emerson and Alcott pronounce the cabin “too small,” Henry replies, “It’s bigger than it looks.” He proudly guides his friends to a vegetable garden (“This will be my dining room”) and a winding path to the pond (“This will be the ballroom”). The conclusion finds Henry happily outdoors in his “library.” Through the story, children are encouraged to think for themselves and to simplify their lives.

#### ***“The Everything Seed”***

The facts of science and the wonder of myth combine in this unusual creation story (written by a UU minister) that finds the universe in



an acorn. The story moves from a plant’s origins in a seed to how the universe began. The words offer a unique, cosmic view that celebrates the divine without rejecting science.

**Teaching Team:** B Daniels • Mike Farnum • Holly Heidelbaugh • Dawn Kriebel • Susan Sluk

### ***3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup>: Toolbox of Faith & Love Connects Us***

#### ***Toolbox of Faith***

What tools does Unitarian Universalism offer for the challenges of life? Toolbox of Faith invites children to reflect on the qualities of our UU faith – such as integrity, courage, and love – as tools they can use in living their lives and building their own faith.



Each session uses a tool as a metaphor for an important quality of our faith such as reflection (symbolized by a mirror), integrity (Compass), spirit of life (Canteen) and justice (a flashlight). Reflecting on the qualities (tools) of our faith, children gain insight into what makes our faith important in their lives, and how they can grow in our faith.

#### ***Love Connects Us***

In this program, participants learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask questions such as –

“Where did we come from?”

“What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?”

“How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?”

“What happens when you die?”

Sessions apply wisdom from our Sources to help participants answer these questions. Participants will learn that asking questions is valued in Unitarian Universalism, even as they begin to shape their own answers.

**Teaching Team:** Clarke Arnold • Heidi Frayer • Esme Jane Lippiatt-Cook • Rick London

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### ***6<sup>th</sup> / 7<sup>th</sup>: It Starts With Me, and The Gospel According to the Simpsons***

*It Starts With Me* is designed to teach middle-school children about community service and the idea that one’s work, volunteer or otherwise, can be a form of creative expression of one’s passions, talents and abilities. It teaches children about the value of community service and provides them with hands-on volunteer experience. The message is that community service is good for both those who give and those who receive.

Some of the goals are for the children to –

- develop an understanding of the concept of community and an awareness of themselves as part of a community
- explore their family’s values around community service
- learn about the different forms that community service can take, with

an emphasis on simple acts of kindness, human rights and environmental protection

- gain skills and experience in project planning, evaluation, leadership and cooperation as well as hands-on work experience

*The Gospel According to the Simpsons* mines this TV cartoon sitcom for its wealth of questions and observations about religion and spirituality, and helps participants to see issues of religion and spirituality in their everyday lives. If you’ve watched *The Simpsons*, you’ll remember Bart selling

his soul, born-again-Christian Ned Flanders being scorned by the community, and Homer considering starting his own religion.

**Teaching Team:** Chris Brenner • Dianne Herrin • Jaan Troltenier •



## ***8th / 9th: Our Whole Lives***

*Our Whole Lives* helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture.

Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, *Our Whole Lives* provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality.

**Facilitators:** Gerry Giess • Hank Griffin • Joanna Iliff • Lori Ratajczak

## ***Youth Group***

The UFWC Youth Group – open to young people in 9th – 12th grade (ages 14 through 19) – is a vital part of our congregation. The group is bound together in trust, providing freedom to freely share thoughts, hopes, dreams and concerns. Along with providing many opportunities for fun, the Youth Group is a springboard for community service, and for leadership opportunities within the group, the congregation and our District. Many of the youth particularly enjoy attending Youth Conferences (“Cons”), held at congregations throughout our local District. A team of adult Youth Advisors helps guide the Youth in their activities. Each of them completes 15 hours of Youth Advisor training prior to working with the Youth. Our Youth Group is well known in our District – since 2004 it has won six consecutive YES! (Youth Empowering and Sustaining Congregation) awards, a unique achievement. For more information, please email [youth-group@ufwc.org](mailto:youth-group@ufwc.org).



## ***A message from the Minister***

Religious Education is a life-long process. We don't formulate the answers in our school years and assume we are set for life. That being said, what we learn as children regarding our place in the universe and what faith and values mean to us is something that does stay with us. It is a foundation upon which we build as each new life experience hands us new challenges. We at the Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester are committed to providing a solid foundation upon which a child will learn to formulate her or his questions and answers in a way that is expansive and inclusive. We teach our children (and ourselves) to be open to new information, new insights, and new possibilities. More often than not, the adults who volunteer to teach our children learn more about themselves and their own faith journey than they had ever imagined they could or would. Yes, religious education is a life-long process.



I am a great supporter of the UU way of doing religious education and have nothing but admiration for those who run our program and volunteer to teach. Just as we are committed to educating our children, we also offer a variety of programs for adults throughout the year and hope that you will want to expand your own horizons as well. I'm glad that you are here and hope you and your children will find this a place that welcomes you on your journey.

Rev. Deborah Mero

### **Working with us this year:**

#### **Director of Religious Education**

Pam Baxter  
[dre@ufwc.org](mailto:dre@ufwc.org)

#### **Religious Education Committee:**

##### **Committee Chair**

Clarke Arnold  
[RE@ufwc.org](mailto:RE@ufwc.org)

##### **Committee Members**

Kim Cain  
Nancy Schilling  
Cathy Vogt

For more information, visit  
[www.ufwc.org](http://www.ufwc.org)

## 2010-11 RE CALENDAR Pre-K — OWL (8/9th)

Rosh Hashana starts 9/8  
Yom Kippur 9/17

RE Work Party  
Sat., 9/11, 9 a.m.

Carpet Cleaning  
Mon., 9/13

Teacher Orientation  
Wed., 9/15, 7 pm

Replace Furniture  
9/18, 9 a.m.

RE Parent Orientation  
Sun. 9/19, 10:10

OWL Parent Orientation  
TBD

Fire Drill  
Oct. date TBD

Xmas Eve  
Kids 4:00?  
Adults ?  
Fri. 12/24

MLK Day of Service  
Mon. 1/17

JPD Spring Conf  
Fri 4/8 - Sun 4/10

YG Sunday  
Probably 3/27

\* Intergen Choir Performs

SEPT	Labor Day Weekend No RE 5	INTERGEN UFWC Picnic IGC* 12	GROUP RE Int'l Peace Day/ H2O Parent Orientation "Ice Cream Sunday" 10:10 19	Class-1 1st OWL Class 26	
OCT	CLASS-2 OWL 3	CLASS-3 OWL 10	CLASS-4 FIRE DRILL? YG Fall Con / AIDS Walk 17	CLASS-5 OWL DRE at Conference 24	GROUP RE Dia de los Muertos OWL 6th/7th IGC* 31
NOV	CLASS-6 OWL 7	CLASS-7 OWL YG BATCon poss 14	INTERGEN IGC* 21	Thanksgiving weekend No RE 28	
DEC	CLASS-8 OWL Hanukkah starts 12/1 5	INTERGEN IGC* 12	CLASS-9 OWL 19	Christmas Week No RE 26	
JAN	CLASS-10 OWL 2	CLASS-11 OWL 9	GROUP RE OWL / 6th/7th Social Action MLK YG Winter Con 16	CLASS-12 OWL 23	CLASS-13 OWL 30
FEB	CLASS-14 OWL 6	INTERGEN IGC* Feast of Chocolate 13	CLASS-15 OWL Presidents' Day 20	CLASS-16 OWL 27	
MARCH	CLASS-17 OWL 6	CLASS-18 OWL 13	CLASS-19 OWL 1st Day of Spring 20	GROUP RE Begin Earth Day month OWL / 6th/7th IGC* 27	
APRIL	CLASS-20 OWL Earth Day April 22 3	CLASS-21 YG Spring Con JPD Spring Conf. Harrisburg 10	CLASS-22 OWL Start Spring Break 17	EASTER SUNDAY GROUP RE? 24	
MAY	INTERGEN May Day Fest IGC* 1	GROUP RE Safe Harbor Meal OWL / 6th/7th Mothers' Day 8	CLASS-23 OWL 15	CLASS-24 OWL 22	Memorial Day No RE 29
JUNE	CLASS CLEANUP/ Make Banners OWL / 6th/7th 5	RE SUNDAY/ OWL at 9:00 BRIDGING at 11:00 IGC* 12	SUMMER BREAK BEGINS Fathers' Day 19	26	