

2007-2008 Program Descriptions

Sunday Morning Learning Ministry with Children

Youth Ministry

Our Whole Lives

Young People's Music Program

Worship for All Ages

Parents Ministry

Whole Family Learning

Sunday Morning Learning Ministry with Children

Infant and Toddler Care (9:15 & 11:15 in the Nursery)

Supervised childcare is offered for infants and toddlers (to age 2) in our first floor space. Free play, stories and simple snacks are available. Parents are asked to bring diapers and any preferred foods for their child.

Friendship Finders (9:15 & 11:15 in the Arts and Crafts Room)

This program will allow our youngest learners to have a mix of creative play and structured activities with an introduction to such Unitarian Universalist rituals as chalice lighting as a part of their weekly time at church. Early learners (3-4-5 year olds) will gather for stories and snack as a part of their weekly sessions. Parent volunteers are needed to assist with the classroom each week.

Spirit Play* (9:15 & 11:15, Program Room)

Drawing from progressive educational approaches to the classroom, especially Montessori methods, this new program will be especially engaging for a mixed age group of learners (kindergarten – 4th grade). As designed, this program will be best for:

- visual, auditory and interpersonal learners
- students curious about stories
- families interested in UU identity through sacred texts and seasonal celebrations
- participants who enjoy ritual, routine and consistent attendance

Spirit Play is a highly praised Unitarian Universalist learning program that incorporates story telling, creativity and personal exploration. Each session includes a “feast time” where children share a snack and fellowship. All participants need to arrive on time and will be asked if they are prepared to enter the space. This program will be quite accessible to a range of ages and learning styles.

*Orientation sessions are required and offered: 9/9 at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm
9/14 at 6:30 pm and 7:00 pm, and 9/15 at 10 am and 11:00 am

Children's Creative Cooperative Collaborative (9:15 & 11:15, 3rd Floor)
CCCC is an experiment in community building and active learning launching this year in Bay Area congregations. This program, with its multi-age focus, will need parent and adult COOPERATION and participation and be a work in progress in the months ahead. Each session will begin with a chalice lighting and time for sharing, followed by a name game/get to know you activity and time to work as a team on a project. Since leaders and learners will likely vary from week to week, there will also be access to the Crompton Library as a quiet game/reading area for participants who need such a space. At the end of the session, a snack will be available. The program is designed to be of best support for:

- active and intrapersonal learners
- visiting/drop in attendees
- families comfortable with implicit UU learning through community building activities
- students who adapt to new situations with greater ease

Club UU – Grades 5 & 6 (11:15 only, Preservation Park)

This is the third year of Club UU our specialized, developmentally appropriate learning ministry for children who want to be a part of a unique community that explores worship, the arts, spiritual practice and community building. We ask that you make a regular participation a high priority.

Faith Explorers – Grades 7 & 8 (11:15 only, Starr King Room)

This new program will be an adaptation of the “neighboring faiths” curriculum, and invites students to explore their own beliefs by asking and answering questions about religion and life. As questions emerge, visits to local houses of worship or visits with faithful leaders may be arranged. A goal of the program is to create a podcast or video about what UU young people believe. Students will engage in a year long service project and have the opportunity to assist with worship in our community on several occasions throughout the year.

In alternate years, this age group participates in the “Coming of Age” Rite of Passage program.

Youth Ministry

The First Unitarian Church of Oakland offers a weekly youth group for 9-12th graders on (most) Sunday afternoons from September through May. Youth meet with their advisors to plan social, spiritual and service activities that may include retreats, learning sessions, worship experience and projects

in the neighborhood or for the congregation. Unitarian Universalist identity is supported with guided conversations and reflection as well as opportunities to connect with other teens in nearby congregations. Youth are empowered to set the agenda for their time together in consultation and contact with their adult leaders. Mutual support and respect are nurtured in the group through times of deep sharing and listening in community. While many of the youth have been raised in the church, we seek to be a place of welcome for those who come at any stage of their faith journey. In May, the youth lead a worship service for the congregation, and, as appropriate, participate in such rituals as our youth to adult bridging ceremony.

Our Whole Lives

Our Whole Lives is series of sexuality education curricula for five age groups: grades K-1, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, grades 10-12, starting in January 2008. Sessions will take place at times “other than” Sunday Morning. Parent Orientation is required for all participating families. For children at other ages/grades, please contact the education staff to discuss options.

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.

Our Whole Lives uses approaches that work. The curricula are based on the Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education produced by the National Guidelines Task Force, a group of leading health, education, and sexuality professionals assembled by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

Each level of Our Whole Lives offers:

- up-to-date information and honest, age-appropriate answers to all participants' questions
- activities to help participants clarify values and improve decision-making skills
- effective group-building to create a safe and supportive peer group
- education about sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment

- opportunities to critique media messages about gender and sexuality
- acceptance of diversity
- encouragement to act for justice
- a well designed, teacher-friendly leaders' guide
- parent orientation programs that affirm parents as the primary sexuality educators of their children

Young People's Music Program

All children and youth are invited to be a part of our multicultural music ministry this fall. We will sing, drum, move and build community as we share the gift of music in worship and a special holiday concert! Opportunities for small ensemble, and solos for older students will be woven into the repertoire. All students will learn basic skills and work as a team to help one another as we make music with our bodies and spirits.

We ask that you make this a high priority commitment and understand that attendance at rehearsals will be required prior to worship and concert performances.

We will meet on Thursdays starting October 4 through December 20, at the church from 5-6 pm. Dates for Winter and Spring sessions will be determined later this fall.

Worship for All Ages

As we celebrate in a spirit of worship, our children learn about what it means to be a part of a religious community, and have the chance to experience the sacred through traditional and contemporary tales from around the world, and right near by. With ritual, drama and music we create a space for that which is "of worth" in our personal, family and communal lives. From September through May we have a 10:30 service most weeks, designed with particular attention to the spiritual lives of children. On certain holidays, our 9:15 service will be particularly geared for younger worshippers and their families. Keep an eye on our weekly announcements and monthly newsletters for changes to our worship schedule.

Parents Ministry

Throughout the year, we seek to offer opportunities for skill-building as well as spiritual nourishment to those who are parenting UU children and all who are guiding the spiritual development of young people. Some of our resources include:

UU Helping Hand, our on-line newsletter.

Parent Support Circles emerge from time to time, such as a new parent group, or our adoptive families group. If you are interested in starting or joining such a ministry, please speak with one of our Ministers.

1:1 and Family Pastoral Care is available from our chaplains and clergy.

A Spiritual Parenting Workshop to be offered at Community Learning Day Workshop on November 10. Keep an eye out for details!

Whole Family Learning

This year, we seek to offer events and field trips as well as in-home resources for all members of the family to learn and develop in faith, together. Some of our current plans include:

Family Gratitude Journal

Each family that registers for our learning programs will automatically receive a family gratitude journal to track the learning and worship themes of our liturgical year.

"My Unitarian Universalist Journey" is a learning program for family use, for children of 7 years or older. Families may wish to explore this together at the time of "older child" child dedication, or in the first year or two of joining the First Unitarian Church of Oakland. Consult with Rev. Michelle for more information.

Family Story Circles

We look forward to working with groups of families to create intentional extended learning experiences for the whole family. Family Story Circles are a form of Covenant Group that children and adults participate in together. Look for sign up information in September and January.