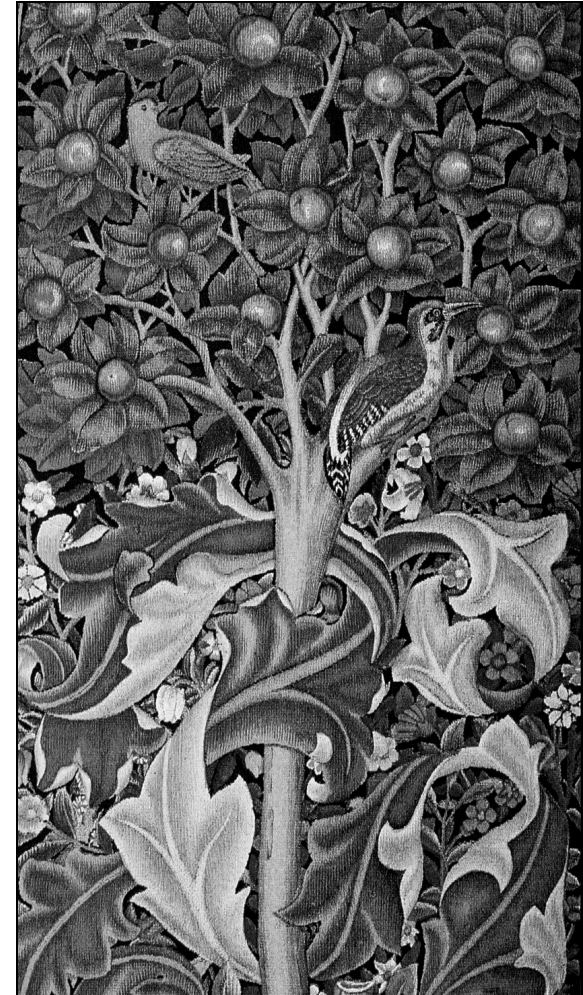


Harrisonburg Unitarian Universalists



Religious Education for Children and Youth
Harrisonburg Unitarian Universalists
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Religious Education
Programming
for Children and Youth
2011-12



You can try “walking” this finger labyrinth, allowing your finger to follow the path to the middle and then back out to the exit. Visit the Religious Education building to walk a full-size labyrinth!

Credits

Cover art: Detail of *Woodpeckertapestry* designed by William Morris. 1885. (Public domain.)

Above: Handout 1. Finger Labyrinth. From *Creating Home: A Tapestry of Faith Program for Children*, by Jessica York and Christy Olson. UUA, 2008.

Religious Education Staff Contact Information

Julie Caran Director of Children’s RE 540-421-8556 (cell) huudcre@gmail.com	Pax Helferstay PreK Lead 434-660-4118 khelferstay@gmail.com
Tabatha LaFreniere RE Assistant 540-209-3314 TabathaLa@gmail.com	Melissa Bowers Nursery Care Provider 276-233-5070 melissabowers@gmail.com

Chalice Lighting Words

Nursery We light this chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism.
This is the church of the open mind;
This is the church of the helping hands;
This is the church of the loving heart.

Ages 3 and Up We are Unitarian Universalists
With minds that think,
Hearts that love,
And hands that are ready to serve.

Closing Song

Nursery As we leave this friendly place,
Love give light to every face.
Hymn 414 May the kindness which we learn
Light our hearts till we return.

Ages 3 and Up When our heart is in a holy place,
When our heart is in a holy place,
Hymn 1008 We are blessed with love and amazing grace
When our heart is in a holy place.

Dear Children, Parents, and Grandparents,

Thank you for your interest in the Religious Education (RE) program at Harrisonburg Unitarian Universalists! Each child at HUU is invited to engage in a journey of faith. Adults support children on their individual journeys, acting as guides by giving witness to our values, teaching what it means to live in beloved community, inviting questions, and affirming the dignity of each child.

In our congregation, the support for children is evident. I see this support in the number of non-parents who volunteer in our program and can tell you the name of each child in the nursery. I see it in the financial commitment that members have made to our children and youth through pledges. I see it in the structural support of a board that created four staff positions dedicated to the service of children and youth. And, perhaps most importantly, I see it in the parents who make a commitment to be present on Sunday mornings so that their children have the chance to walk the journey of faith with peers and guides by their side.

Our congregation is an excellent place to be, to grow, and to become our best selves. In the words of UU Minister of Religious Education Linda Olson Peebles, “We are who we are, in part, because of the love and guidance and the inspiration and ideals that we receive, especially from those who [guide] us. And the church community has the privileged role not only of supporting parents in the sacred task of nurturing life but also of weaving the threads of culture—history, values, arts, wisdom, visions—into a fabric that can enfold the family.”

Thank you for joining us this year.

In Peace,

Julie Caran
Director of Children’s Religious Education

What We Believe, What We Teach

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm and promote these principles:

1. Every person is important and valuable.
2. All people should be treated fairly.
3. Our churches are places where we should accept one another and learn together.
4. Each person should be free to search for what is true and right.
5. All people have the right to speak out and vote on things that matter to them.
6. We should help build a peaceful, free, and fair world.
7. We need to take care of the earth, our home, which we share with all living things.

These ideas come from many places:

- The sense of wonder we share,
- Women and men of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind, fair, and understanding,
- Ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions,
- Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love others as we love ourselves,
- The use of reason and discoveries of science, and
- The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

Thankful for all these ideas, we want to learn even more. In Sunday Morning Religious Education at HUU, we freely share our thoughts and feelings and promise to trust and help one another.

Lessons in the RE program at HUU are taught in the spirit of the seven principles, with guidance from sacred and secular sources and personal experience.

Religious Education Staff

Director of Children's Religious Education

Julie Goldman Caran, B.A., M.A., has been a member of HUU since 2004. She is in her third year as the Director of Children's Religious Education at HUU, but has been involved in UU Religious Education since the turn of the century. Julie is currently working toward her Master of Arts in Teaching degree at Mary Baldwin College. Her interests include reading, writing, arts of all kinds, playing music with blue stone sky, and spending time with her husband, their young son, and their three dogs.

PreK Lead Teacher

Kirsten "Pax" Helferstay joined the HUU staff as the Nursery Care Provider in 2009. She works with the DCRE to prepare lessons appropriate to our multiage group. Pax is a senior at James Madison University, with a major in History and a minor in Secondary Education. She enjoys reading, hiking, and ultimate frisbee. A lapsed soccer player, but an avid fan, she loves taking road trips to cheer on D.C. United. Together with her roommates, she keeps busy trying to convince the backyard garden that it is in fact a garden, and not a jungle. Though the garden seems generally unimpressed with their efforts, it does at least provide plenty of opportunities for cooking adventures!

Nursery Care Provider

Melissa Bowers is a welcome addition to the Religious Education Staff. A student in her 4th year at James Madison University, Melissa is studying Inclusive Early Childhood education. Her ultimate goal is to one day open up her own pre-school program. She enjoys playing the trombone, watching movies and exploring new places. She is currently in the Marching Royal Dukes and loves being a part of the Alternative Break Program at JMU. Her favorite thing to do is to meet new people and learn about their lives and experiences.

RE Assistant

Tabatha LaFreniere is our youngest but most senior staff member. She has been working with the younger children in our program for four years, and has experience with all ages from infant through middle school. Tabatha is interested in a career in interior design, and is also known for her talents in the visual arts and theatre.

Behavioral plan

The Religious Education Staff and volunteers in our congregation attempt to provide a “sacred space” for our children, akin to the space of worship that adults experience in the service. Religious Education is a place to explore together, to ask questions, to work, to serve, and to play. In order to provide a welcoming, safe environment for all children, a behavioral plan is in place. Please review this plan with your child so that he or she understands the expectations at HUU.

If a child disrupts the group during a planned activity or discussion, a leader will attempt to pull that child back into appropriate engagement in the activity. The child will be invited to participate and to rejoin the group.

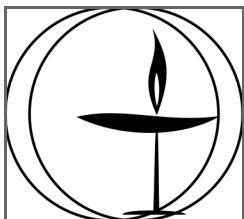
If the child continues to disrupt the group, he or she will be invited to take a few moments to sit outside of the circle and refocus his or her attention. He or she may also choose to “walk the labyrinth” as a means of regaining calm.

If the child disrupts the group a third time, a leader will retrieve the child’s guardian from the service.

The child may rejoin the group at any point during these steps, if he or she feels ready to engage appropriately in the lesson.

If a child at any time risks endangering him/herself or others, the leaders may choose to involve the child’s guardian immediately.

We welcome children of all abilities at HUU. If you feel that this behavioral plan will inhibit your child’s ability to participate in the Religious Education program at HUU, please contact the DCRE, Julie Caran, to discuss your child’s needs. Thank you!



What to Expect on a Sunday Morning

Most families enter the church between 10 and 10:30 a.m. A greeter provides an order of service as you enter the front door. You may pick up a worship kit containing items to keep busy hands occupied as children join us for the first part of the service. You may also go ahead and sign in your children on the RE clipboard before the service begins. The bell in the historic Dale Enterprise Schoolhouse tower rings at 10:30 to bring us into the sacred space of our Sunday morning service.

Our service begins with a chalice lighting and a reading. The facilitator welcomes everyone and sometimes there are announcements. We always sing, so check the order of service for words and for hymn numbers. Visitors are invited to introduce themselves if they are comfortable doing so. Those present who would like to share a joy or a concern are invited to speak briefly to the congregation and place a pebble in a bowl of water. Children are included in each part of the service up to this point.

Following Joys and Concerns, we “sing out the children.” Julie, Pax, Tabatha, Melissa, and a volunteer usher the children out of the service. Ages 0-2 remain in the same building, just down the hall in our nursery. Ages 3 and up head out the back door for the Religious Education building, where they light their own electric chalice and participate in an interactive lesson. Two adults are always present in both age groups, in accordance with Safe Congregations procedures.

Parents are always welcome to join us for the RE lesson, but most parents remain in the service, which generally concludes at 11:30 a.m. Following the closing song, parents are asked to go to the nursery or RE building to sign out their children. The entire family is welcome to join congregants for refreshments and socializing during coffee hour, and to share in a pot luck on the first Sunday of each month.

Programming for Children and Youth, 2011-2012

Registration

Registration ensures that our Religious Education staff have the ability to contact parents and children regarding upcoming events and activities. In addition, we can provide the best possible experience for your child when we are aware of his or her special needs. There is no charge for participation in the children's Religious Education program at HUU.

Visitors are encouraged to fill out a Visitor Registration card so that we are aware of basic contact information and allergies. Registrants will not be added to mailing lists without their permission.

Nursery (ages 0-2)

Infants and toddlers are welcome in our nursery. Melissa Bowers is the Lead Nursery Care Provider. Each week, Melissa and a volunteer cultivate a clean, safe environment that embodies the UU principles.

We recognize the inherent worth and dignity of each child and provide developmentally appropriate toys and activities. Children should dress appropriately for the weather, as the group sometimes goes outside on nice days. Most parents bring a diaper bag with their child's necessities and leave it in the nursery while their child is in care, but the nursery does have diapers, wipes, and a changing table. Snacks are not provided in the nursery, except on special occasions. At those times, staff members will check in with parents prior to offering snacks.

Ages 3 and up

You are about to take a journey. It is a journey you take alone and in community — a journey of inward reflections and outward actions of faith. A Unitarian Universalist journey, open to stories and beliefs from different lands and people. It is a journey from home. It is a journey to home. Welcome home.

from "Creating Home," www.uua.org

Our multi-age program invites children to commune and learn together in the Religious Education building on Sunday mornings. Each session begins with a

chalice lighting. The children will then place a decorated stone on a labyrinth, representing the journey of faith that we are taking together. The labyrinth, like our journey, begins and ends in the home we create in our faith community.

Children will have the opportunity to share a joy or concern as our session begins. Julie and Pax will introduce the lesson, and then the children will engage in hands-on activities to reinforce the lesson's theme or concept. Activities will be varied, with the group working together at times and breaking into smaller groups by age at others. Tabatha will provide guidance and support to the children in their work.

This year's lessons come from "Creating Home," a curriculum within *Tapestry of Faith*, a "series of programs and resources for all ages that nurture Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual growth, a transforming faith, and vital communities of justice and love."

"Coming Home" is an on-line publication of the Unitarian Universalist Association. For the first time families at HUU can view each week's lesson on-line. Parents are encouraged to visit the Tapestry of Faith website and explore additional activities at home. For the full curriculum, visit <http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/creatinghome/index.shtml>, or type "UUA Tapestry of Faith" into a search engine, follow the link, click on "Children's Programming," and then click on "Creating Home."

HUUYouth

RE staff member and high school student Tabatha LaFreniere is working with Julie and other adults at HUU to begin a non-creedal Religious Education experience for 9th-12th graders. Youth interested in supporting one another on their journeys are invited to participate in the group. Check www.huuweb.org for meeting times and locations.