



September 13, 2009

Children at UUCF explore world religions, tenets of UU

Children at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington are embarking on a journey, of a spiritual sort.

This month kicks off a series of world religions study for elementary-school students, intertwined with the principles and sources of Unitarian Universalism.

"Teaching about and engaging in the world religions encourages students to see the commonalities in other religions as they continue on their individual spiritual and philosophical journey," according to a church's brochure.

Children in grades 2-4 work individually at home on their booklet, *My Unitarian Universalist Journey*, and then meet monthly to discuss topics with their parents and peers. Unitarian Universalist identity is strengthened through individual and group process.

Youth in grades 6-8 attend social evening gatherings once a month. Activities include games, art, drama, dance, cooking and social justice activities.

Youth in grades 9-12 learn to apply UU values and principles in their daily lives through leadership development, worship, and social action.

The mission of the Religious Education Committee at UUCF is to create a Unitarian Universalist program that teaches youth inclusion, compassion, and peace.

"We reach our mission through: Modeling our mission values; encouraging a commitment to UU principles; exploring our spirituality; participating in rituals; learning about world religions; engaging with the larger church community through worship and social events and taking part in social action projects in our local community and worldwide."

Unitarian Universalism is a belief in the worth of each individual and the power of community.

On the first Sunday of every month, children attend the beginning of the regular worship service. By bringing the whole congregation together for the chalice lighting, hymn, joys and concerns, and a special "Message For All Ages," young people feel a part of the larger congregation.

Their participation in the chalice lighting and other U.U. rituals also helps to strengthen their identity as Unitarian Universalists.

The Director of Religious Education leads this child centered, developmentally appropriate worship the additional 3-4 Sundays a month.

"Our UU Community welcomes the child into the human community, in the spirit of humanity's oneness, and into the fellowship of life," states the brochure.

INTERFAITH JOURNEY

Religious Education Program 2009-2010, "An Interfaith Journey," focuses on a different topic or world religion each month. This course is for children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

- September — Team Building / Class Covenants
- October — Islam
- November — Earth-based creation story from the Native American Iroquois Tribe.
- December — Judeo-Christian
- January — Buddhism
- February — Hinduism
- March — Humanism
- April — Greek myths on creation
- May — UUism. During this final month of the curriculum, students of all ages will share their personal creation stories and investigate the role those stories play in their lives, create the world through music and movement, and review their knowledge of world religions through games.

Middle school students in sixth through eighth grades, move toward adulthood in the UU faith and are called to foster a deeper understanding of local and world issues. Becoming more aware of social justice and environmental concerns, and preparing to lead a more purposeful life is a part of that journey. This year's curriculum focuses on peace and justice, and our seventh UU principal "the interdependent web of life".

High school students in grades 9-12 study "Popcorn Theology," taking the concept and popularity of movie night and using it to explore issues of theology and ethics in popular film. While watching and discussing movie clips, the youth examine how the choices we make affect our lives and the lives of others; explore how concepts such as truth and meaning are related to perspective and point of view; understand ways in which the right of conscience calls us to do what is right despite possible negative results; consider ways in which faith can help us understand our questions, seek answers, and deal with trials of life; learn about other faith traditions and their responses to important theological and ethical issues.

For more information on class plans or to register your child, visit www.uufarmington.org/uucf/re.htm or contact Jennifer Teed at (248) 478-7272 or dre@uufarmington.org.

Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington is located at 25301 Halsted Road in Farmington Hills, MI 48335. (248) 478-7272.

Religious Education classes are offered during church services at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. (September-May), and 10 a.m. (June- August).

Nursery care is available for children 8 weeks to 3 years. Preschool Friendship Finders is a unique program for 3 and 4-year-olds. The themes are simplified highlights of our UU principles, and include a variety of age-appropriate and engaging activities.
