



### **UU Faith Works: Promising Practices for Lifespan Learning Communities**

Mission: The mission of the UU Faith Works clearinghouse packet is to share resources that inspire faith development, educate religious identity, connect ethical and spiritual practices and empower religious educators, ministers and lay congregational leaders in their roles and responsibilities of serving Unitarian Universalists throughout their lives.

Resource categories:

- Leadership Development
- Curriculum and Learning Resources
- Social Justice
- Worship
- Community Building
- Administration

Two issues per year: Summer/Fall and Winter/Spring

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Co-editors: Pat Hoertdoerfer and Jacqui James

-UUA Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group



**UU FAITH WORKS**  
**Summer/Fall 2003**  
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*UU Faith Works* Readers,

Welcome to you who develop faith with UUs of all ages and who practice faith works in our congregations, our communities and homes! As the earth turns and we (re)turn to our congregations and communities, let us dedicate ourselves anew to the callings and actions of our ever-evolving Unitarian Universalist faith. This packet of resources reflects the mission of *UU Faith Works* as well as the purposes and priorities of the UUA of Congregations.

The mission of *UU Faith Works* is to share resources that inspire faith development, educate for religious identity, connect spiritual and ethical practices and empower religious educators, ministers and lay congregational leaders in their roles and responsibilities of serving Unitarian Universalists throughout their lives.

The three current UUA priorities for congregational advocacy and witness leaders are family matters, religion and society and racial justice. Addressing these priorities are many resources in this packet: *Family Matters* endeavors range from Small Group Ministry and Religious Education to Coming of Age celebration words to the Tao of Aging refrain; *Religion and Society* messages feature a rabbi's sermon on sexuality and a teen holocaust story; *Racial Justice* materials include culturally relevant anti-bias resources and book reviews. We have the usual worship, leadership and community building resources. And there are invitations to you to (re)write your covenant, contribute to the FMTF pamphlet series and send us your best *UU Faith Works* ideas and programs.

*UU Faith Works* is a resource to be shared; please feel free to copy packet materials for your teachers, parents, youth and adult leadership in your congregations.

Two resources of particular interest to parents and families are *A Toy Action Guide* from TRUCE (Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment) and information about a pamphlet, *Children and Terrorism: Explaining Today's World* from the American Social Health Association. Both of these resources include information about additional resource options. TRUCE also offers other resources; visit their web page [www.truceteachers.org](http://www.truceteachers.org). The story, "Where My Fears Are Planted" by Rebecca Pournoor, is a related resource for use in either intergenerational or children's worship.

We are companions in our UU faith work and on our life journeys. Stay in touch!

Shalom,

Jacqui James and Pat Hoerldoerfer



**LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT PEOPLE FINDER**  
**UUA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 (617) 742-2100 FAX (617) 742-0321**

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<b>Megan Selby</b>	<b>YRUU Programs Specialist, x353</b> <b>Trainings/Youth Social Justice Con/Resources</b> <b>6/03-6/04</b>	<b><a href="mailto:mselby@uua.org">mselby@uua.org</a></b>

**PROGRAMS/RESOURCES/CONSULTATIONS**

<b>ANTI-BIAS DIVERSITY PROGRAMS</b>	<b>Judith Frediani, Pat Hoertdoerfer</b>
<b>ANGUS MACLEAN AWARD</b>	<b>Judith Frediani</b>
<b>COMING OF AGE PROGRAMS</b>	
Orders	<b>Ethan Field</b>
Consultations	<b>Jesse Jaeger</b>
<b>CURRICULUM CONSULTATION</b>	
Children	<b>Patricia Hoertdoerfer</b>
Youth	<b>Jesse Jaeger</b>
Adult	<b>Judith Frediani</b>
All Ages/Curriculum Project	<b>Judith Frediani</b>
<b>FAMILY MINISTRY AND RESOURCES</b>	<b>Patricia Hoertdoerfer</b>
<b>INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS</b>	<b>Patricia Hoertdoerfer</b>

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH PROGRAMS	Jesse Jaeger
OUR WHOLE LIVES	
Grades K-1, Grades 4-6	Patricia Hoertdoerfer
Grades 7-9, Grades 10-12	Jesse Jaeger
Adult	Judith Frediani
Concerns	Judith Frediani
PAMPHLET COMMISSION	Judith Frediani
RE CREDENTIALING	(Beth Williams, Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group x417)
RENAISSANCE PROGRAM	(Contact Rev. Francis Manly fmanly@aol.com (716) 837-9230)
RE SCHOLARSHIPS	(Beth Williams, Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group x417)
RESOURCE LOAN LIBRARY	Barbara Gifford
SCOUTING	
Program Information	Jesse Jaeger
Ordering award, curricula & medals	Bookstore x102
UU FAITH WORKS	
Contents, Policy	Patricia Hoertdoerfer
Subscriptions, Mailing	Adrienne Ross
RE LISTSERVES	<a href="http://www.uua.org/lists">www.uua.org/lists</a>
WORSHIP WEB	Barbara Gifford
YOUNG RELIGIOUS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS (YRUU)	
Youth Council/ConCon/Computers/Layout	Bryan Beck
GA/Anti-Racism/UUA Networker	Jason Lydon
Trainings/Youth Social Justice Con/Resources	Megan Selby
YOUTH PROGRAMS DIRECTOR	Jesse Jaeger





*Empower,  
Inspire,  
and Connect  
Unitarian Universalist religious educators across the continent.*

*We need your submissions to help us make these "connections."*

Please send your submission(s), four sides or less preferred, with one-inch margins on top and left sides, on white paper (letterhead if appropriate). If possible, include a disk (we use Microsoft Word). Mail to:

UU Faith Works Editor  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108-2800

**Submission Deadlines:**

June 1st for the Summer/Fall packet  
December 1st for the Winter/Spring packet

**Subscription Information:**

UU Faith Works is an online publication of the Unitarian Universalist Association. If you would like a personal copy, or if your congregation would like to receive a hard copy, please send \$20 per one-year subscription. Please use the form below.

***Please be advised if you have a PO box, UU Faith Works may not fit into the mailbox. Be sure to inquire at the post office if mail has been set aside for you.***

Circle the subscription you would like to begin with:      Summer/Fall      Winter/Spring

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zip/Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**No. of subscriptions ordered:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to UUA. Return this form to:

UU Faith Works Subscriptions,  
Lifespan Faith Development  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108-2800

# *Religious Education Is Lifespan Education*

*Bette Rotert*

*Director of Religious Education*

*North Shore Unitarian Church*

*Deerfield, IL*

As various groups in the church such as the RE Council, Expansion Committee and Leadership have met to discuss goals, needs and visions of our congregation, one perception has continuously surfaced. That perception is that there are two very distinct groups in our community, the children in RE and the adults in the sanctuary and each of these groups has needs that are mutually exclusive of the other. What is very clear to all of us is that this is not a perception that is accurate or one that anyone wants to continue perpetuating. It is time to put these old thoughts away and replace them with the view that we are one community and that everything we do from the babysitters in the nursery to the sermon on Sunday morning is part of sharing community. We all come to this church looking for community, a community that embraces, welcomes and serves the needs of all our members from the youngest baby to our elders in nursing homes.

Whether it is the Sunday morning service, a covenant group meeting, children's choir practice, people visiting at coffee hour, children attending a Sunday morning class, or adults coming to movie night, everything we do here should also be looked at as religious education. When an adult stops to talk about the story with a child, that is religious education. When children watch us interact with each other and model the seven principles, that is religious education. What happens each Sunday in the classrooms is also religious education. As we take this more global look at the definition of religious education we begin to see each decision we make with a wider view.

What is exciting is that we already have in place many activities that are building our community and making religious education lifespan. Some of these are:

- Children in the sanctuary on Sunday morning
- Intergenerational services such as Thanksgiving and Easter
- Mentor program for Affirmation
- Seder
- Secret Pal program
- Adults and Youth who teach in RE even though they don't have children in the program
- RE Council has added a permanent voting youth group member
- Adult Ed Chairperson who has been actively involved in the RE Council
- The safe church policy that has been completed
- Room 2 has been designated an adult meeting room and will be redecorated over the summer

What needs to happen next to continue this paradigm shift in our church? Here are some possibilities:

- Move the children's snack into fellowship hall on Sunday mornings so that the adults and children can get to know each other.
- Plan some evening all-church pot lucks.
- Begin coordinating activities of the RE Council with church committees such as worship arts, social action and general programming.
- When adult activities are planned, think about ways that children might be productively included.
- Adult committees, Church Council and the Board should consider whether having youth members serving on their committees would be beneficial.

As we begin this 50<sup>th</sup> year, and as we honor those who came before us and had the vision to create what is now our home, let us look to the future and continue to build a place where all of us are welcomed and cherished.

# Continental Leadership Development Conference Training of Trainers

February 5-8, 2004

Murray Grove Retreat and Conference Center  
Lanoka Harbor, NJ

Leadership Development Conferences (LDCs) are small working conferences designed for youth and adult leaders. An LDC focuses on making the YRUU group mind "smarter" by helping the participants learn how to be leaders. At an LDC, YRUU youth and advisors learn concrete leadership skills within a structure that helps them reflect on why they are involved in YRUU, what roles they play in their YRUU group (local or district), and what they think it means to be a leader in YRUU. Leadership training is a process of empowerment-giving the members of the group the skills they need to have power in their group.

An LDC can also provide benefits to local youth groups and congregations; the youth and advisors returning from LDC conferences often bring their congregations new skills and energy. Most importantly, an LDC is about personal empowerment, offering each participant a chance to grow in terms of actual skills, self-confidence as a leader, and enthusiasm and commitment.

## **THE C\*LDC:**

This February there will be a Training of Trainers to lead Leadership Development Conferences. We are looking for youth (ages 14-20) and adults (25 or older) who are great facilitators, charismatic presenters and are passionate about YRUU and youth empowerment. Each participant should have experience facilitating and leading different sized groups, and presenting to a varied audience. A willingness to lead goofy energy breaks is required.

## **COMMITMENT:**

Participants must be able to attend the C\*LDC this February in New Jersey, as well as be available to lead at least two district Leadership Development Conferences over the next two years. The option of continuing to train after two years is available, although the participant needs to apply for the C\*LDC again.

## **EXPENSE:**

It's free!!! All people selected to attend will have their travel, registration, housing and food costs paid for by the Youth Office. In addition, leaders will receive a stipend for the LDCs they lead.

To apply on opposite side



## To Apply for the CLDC

Please type answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Name, address, phone number, date of birth, e-mail address, UU congregation (if any), UUA district

- 1) Describe your experience working with youth (if you are an adult) or adults (if you are a youth)?
- 2) What is your experience with YRUU (local, district, continental, etc.)?
- 3) What is a "Youth Leader" to you? Give an example:
- 4) Have you attended a Leadership Development Conference or any of the other trainings the Youth Office offers (Spirituality Development Conferences, Basic or Advanced Advisor Trainings)? If so, which ones and when?
- 5) What experience do you have leading trainings or workshops?
- 6) What inspired you to apply to lead LDCs?
- 7) What do you feel is a youth's responsibility in YRUU leadership?
- 8) What do you feel is an adult's responsibility in YRUU leadership?
- 9) What special skills do you have to train youth in leadership skills?
- 10) What unique skills can you bring to YRUU as an LDC trainer?
- 11) What would an anti-racist YRUU look like? What is your role in an anti-racist world/YRUU?
- 12) Why is it especially important for youth in leadership positions to be actively anti-racist?

Describe any other relevant experience that you feel may apply:

List three references' names and phone numbers, with at least one youth and one adult:

**\*\*Application due Friday November 14, 2003\*\***



## ***YRUU Program Specialist Application***

The YRUU Program Specialist position is a one-year staff program position for youth at the UUA headquarters in Boston. The 2 YRUU Program Specialists will work with the Youth Programs Director to manage day-to-day business of Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. General responsibilities for every YPS include: managing the continental YRUU office, planning and administering conferences and other youth gatherings, participating in meetings, implementing decisions of the YRUU Youth Council and Steering Committee, traveling to plan continental youth events and editing and laying out the YRUU Magazine *Synapse*.

There are 2 YPS terms beginning June 1 and September 1. The salary is \$27,450 (before taxes). The YPS will be reimbursed up to a total of \$1,500, \$1,000 of which may be used to purchase necessities and up to \$500 for shipping/moving expenses. In addition, the YPSs are also eligible for a personal loan up to \$1,500 for first and last months' rent and security deposit. Moving from Boston, the YPS will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for shipping/moving expenses.

Each YPS has a specific skill set need for their term.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Skill Set</b>	<b>Continental Event</b>
<i>Both YPSs</i>	Website skills, resource development and layout of <i>Synapse</i>	GA and ConCon responsibilities
<i>June</i>	Network with district SACs and be the Social Justice guru	Continental Trainings and the YRUU Social Justice Conference
<i>September</i>	Network with UUA staff groups and be the anti-racism guru	Youth Council

**The successful applicant will** have an amiable personality with leadership qualities, good written and verbal communication skills, the maturity and creativity to handle an often hectic but rewarding full-time job, have the freedom to live in the Boston area as well as travel, and will be between the ages of 16 and 22 at the time of application.

### **How to Apply**

To apply, send a cover letter, an application form, (see application questions on page 8) and at least three letters of recommendation addressed to the YRUU Steering Committee c/o the Youth Office, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. Please feel free to complete the application form on your own paper. The completed cover letter, application and recommendations must be postmarked by:

<b>Start Date For Position</b>	<b>Application Deadline Postmarked by</b>
June 1	November 15
September 1	February 15

**The cover letter** should briefly but thoroughly address:

- 1) ***What is in it for us?*** Include your visions for YRUU, your special areas of interest, your experience with leadership development, problem solving and experiences working with different age groups.
- 2) ***What is in it for you?*** Include how the job will fit into your life plan, and your personal goals.
- 3) ***What is your relationship to YRUU?*** What does the "religious" in YRUU mean to you? What influence has YRUU had on your life, and what would you like it to have?
- 4) ***What are your strengths, and where do you feel you need improvement?***

**Letters of recommendation** should be from people who you know well. It is good to get letters from a variety of people, such as ministers, directors of religious education, youth active in YRUU, and adults with whom you've worked. Please make sure each recommendation includes the person's phone number at which they may be reached during the day.

### **Application Questions (all applicants must answer these questions)**

Please answer the application questions, typewritten, on your own paper. We look forward to receiving your application!

NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE, EMAIL, DATE OF BIRTH, UU SOCIETY, UUA DISTRICT:

1. Educational History
2. Youth and Other UU Experience (participation and positions held)
  - A) Local UU Society/Youth Group
  - B) YRUU district experience (conferences, district youth committees, etc.)
  - C) Continental YRUU Experience (Youth Council, ConCon, or other annual or one-time continental events or committees)
3. What does anti-racism mean to you, and what experiences have you had with anti-racism? How do you think YRUU should deal with racism?
4. Other Related Experience (neighborhood, local, school-related, state/provincial, national)
5. What skills do you have? (experience and positions held)
6. Leadership (motivating others, delegation, public speaking)
7. Working with Other People (as part of a team, in an office or business environment, with other youth and with adults)
8. Communication (assertiveness, cooperation, representing adult needs to youth and youth needs to adults)
9. Office (being organized, meeting deadlines, typing, computer, writing) How are you at juggling multiple tasks in a busy work environment?
10. Working with Publications/Newspapers (editing, layout, writing and production)
11. Other Skills (second languages or any other cool skill you haven't mentioned)
12. Employment Experience and History
13. Please describe your computer skills and please send any examples of your work with web pages.
14. Describe your knowledge and experience with ConCon.
15. Describe your experience coordinating any youth events or conferences and how those skills might apply to coordinating General Assembly Youth Caucus.
16. What role should youth play in GA and in the Association.

### **Questions for the specific YPS Terms**

Answer only the questions that are for the term for which you are applying.

#### **June term:**

1. Send a sample of your writing/any resources you've developed.
2. What social justice issues are important to you, and how have you put your faith into action?
3. Describe your experience coordinating any youth events or conferences. Specify any training or workshop leading experience you've had.
4. What resources do you think YRUU needs? What resources would you like to develop as YPS?

#### **September term:**

1. Describe your knowledge of Youth Council. How do you best think Youth Council Representatives can serve their districts?
2. What impact do you think Youth Council can have on the rest of YRUU?
3. Describe your ability to network and work with adults. What UU organizations are you currently involved with? Give examples of your ability to schmooze.

4. What experience do you have working in relationship with district UU organizations like the district YAC, District RE Committee, District Trustees, etc.

**If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call one of the current YRUU Program Specialists in the Youth Office at (617) 742-2100 ext. 351/352/353.**

Position Title: **YRUU Program Specialist**  
Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group  
Reports to: Youth Program Director  
(YPS are program staff)

**Basic Responsibilities:** To design and implement YRUU program and publications of religious growth for Unitarian Universalist youth, and act as a field consultant to districts and local congregations regarding YRUU program.

**Principal Responsibilities:**

1. UUA/Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group

Works in dual association with the Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group and Young Religious Unitarian Universalists with major responsibilities to both. Acts as liaison from Continental YRUU to the UUA Staff and serves as an active “youth presence” at Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters and at UUA meetings and events.

2. Program/Events

Plans, designs and implements YRUU programs of religious growth for Unitarian Universalist youth. Serves as a logistical resource and coordinator for Continental YRUU conferences, meetings and trainings. Edits *Synapse*, YRUU's Continental Youth Magazine. Writes grants and coordinates fundraising for areas where funding is not sufficient.

3. Consultations and Liaisons

Acts as a YRUU consultant to the UUA at large, to districts, to congregations; acts as a field consultant regarding YRUU programs; assists congregations in the formation and promotion of new YRUU youth groups; plans, designs and conducts workshops, trainings and leadership development seminars for and with youth and adults. Develops and maintains relationships with key committees, affiliates and staff groups as needed.

4. YRUU Governing Organizations

Administers YRUU Programs; in consultation with the YRUU Steering Committee and YRUU Youth Council and Youth Programs Director to ascertain needs identifies trends and issues, and evaluates the effectiveness of current youth programs and services. Coordinates the ongoing business of Steering Committee. Supports the decisions of the Youth Council and Steering Committee. Reports to Youth Council and Steering Committee.

5. Additional Responsibilities

Assumes additional responsibilities as requested by the Youth Programs Director, Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group Director, the UUA President, Executive Vice President, or Financial Vice President.

**Qualifications:** Knowledge of youth ages 14-20 and their religious development; experience and expertise with youth; experience and expertise with YRUU programming at the local, district and continental levels; leadership ability and experience with both youth and adults; broad acquaintance with Unitarian Universalism and the Association; good office, computer and organizational skills; willingness to travel; good written and verbal communication skills; the maturity and creativity to handle a busy full-time job; have the freedom to live in the Boston area and will be between the ages of 16 and 22 at the time of application.

**The June YPS will specialize in social justice, Continental Trainings, Youth Social Justice Conference and resource and curriculum development. These special responsibilities include:**

- Coordinating Training of Trainers and coordinating the Continental Leadership Development Conference, Continental Spirituality Development Conference, Advisor Training, Advanced Advisor Trainings and any new trainings.
- Coordinating the Youth Social Justice Conference.
- Communicating with the Continental Social Action Coordinator of YRUU and keeping track of all the Social Justice initiatives of YRUU (POA, Youth Council, SWAT, YSJC).

**The September YPS will specialize in Anti-Racism Work, General Assembly and UU Networking. These special responsibilities include:**

- Coordinating with all Anti-Racism initiatives at the UUA and developing relationships with other groups doing Anti-Racism work.
- Developing and maintaining relationships with key UUA organizations, affiliates and departments.
- Planning logistics of Youth Council with the Steering Committee.

**Shared responsibilities of the YPSs:**

- General Assembly responsibilities including logistics for Youth Caucus.
- Website management. All YPSs will receive technical training on how to maintain the website and will get support from the UUA's Office of Electronic Communications.
- Synapse* - an intern will be responsible for much of the editing and layout of *Synapse*. YPSs will work on creation and solicitation of content.
- Resource Development/Revision-interns will support YPSs with editing and more.



# ***Children and Terrorism*** ***Explaining Today's World*** *A Resource from the American Social Health Association*

*How we as parents and teachers respond to our children's anxieties and concerns—and turn these worries into a positive force that will influence their lives in productive ways—is the subject of this brochure.*

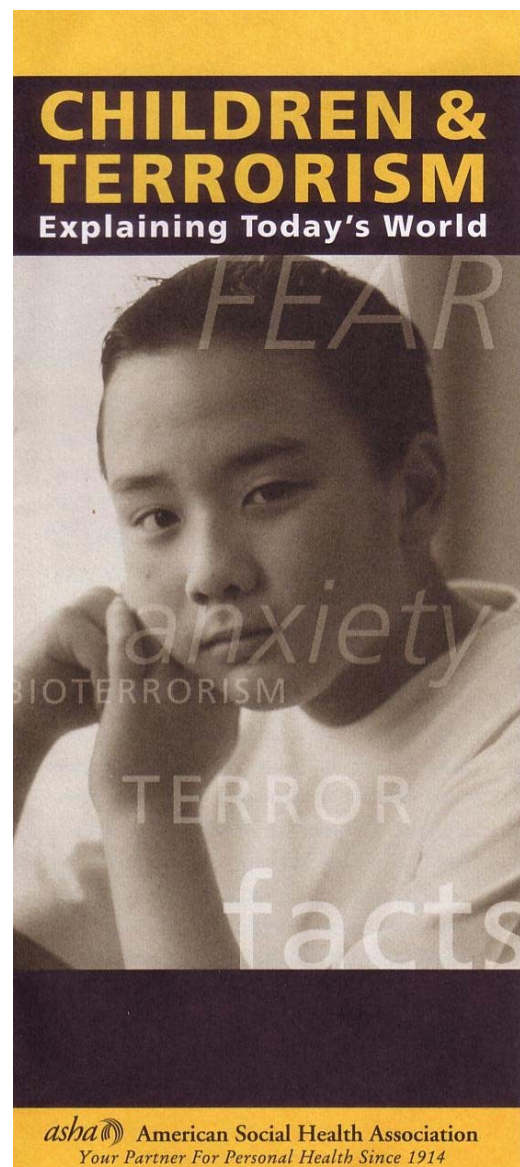
Subjects covered in this excellent resource include:

- Acts of Terrorism
- Current Issues of Terrorism
- Through the Eyes of a Child
- What Can and Cannot Be Controlled
- Developing Emergency Procedures for the family at home
- Where Can I Get More Information?

To order copies of this brochure, or to request a free catalog of ASHA products, please call 1-800-783-9877 or visit their Websites:

[www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)

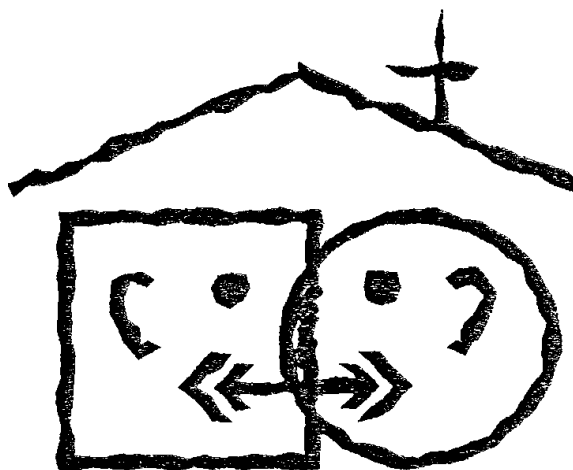
[www.iwannaknow.org](http://www.iwannaknow.org) (teens)



If you are a religious educator, minister, UU leader, or teacher and committed to families, family matters, family ministry

We need writers to contribute to the

*Taking It Home: Families and Faith*  
pamphlet series



This pamphlet series is sponsored by the

UUA Family Matters Task Force.

Themes for the next pamphlets in our series are:

*Let's Celebrate Interfaith Families*

*Let's Talk About Substance Abuse*

*Let's Talk About Mental Illness*

*Let's Talk About Divorce*

Send letter of intent, resume and sample of your writing to:  
UUA FMTF, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108

# *Hints for Making RE More Boy-Friendly for Teens*

*Jaco B. ten Hove, Paint Branch UU Church Adelphi, MD*

*Janice Holmblad, UU Congregation of Fairfax, VA*

NOTE: Some of these ideas apply to younger boys and all teens as well.

Language issues:

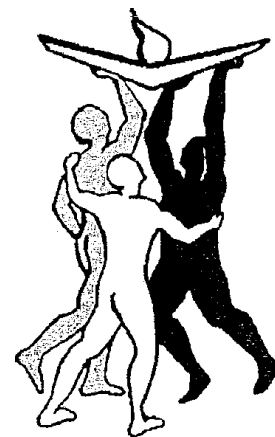
“Religious Exploration” can be a more boy-friendly title than Religious Education. “Projects” instead of “crafts” will generally be more enticing activities for teen boys.

## *Adults' Role:*

- Adult credibility is an often elusive but essential element.
- There is often much testing of adult authority and boundaries.  
Be firm but don't overreact.
- Adults vary widely in their reaction to the wildness of some teen boys.
- Teen boys' behavior will sometimes flip-flop in different contexts. Don't be surprised.
- Adults can be helpful in guiding apparently chaotic behavior into content for learning.
- As helpful as men are as teachers, they may lack relevant experience and training and make assumptions that they can or can't do it. (Either may be true.)
- Boys maturing in this post-modern world often have few older role models for learning non-stereotyped behaviors.  
Protect those who take healthy risks.
- Adults can model how leadership is important ministry.
- Adult male-female interactions in RE settings can be important role models for impressionable teen boys.
- Adults can benefit greatly from "de-briefing" together after activities.
- If things are really out of hand, ask for help!
- Ensure more than enough organization and planning and be prepared to make adjustments.
- Establish rules and consequences *with* youth. Be wary of imposing authority.
- Channel rebellious leaders into specific, often customized roles.  
Help boys develop their own unique support network.
- Invite in guest speakers who bring interesting talents, skills, and especially props.

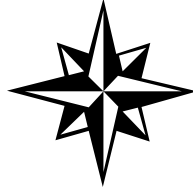
## *Things to Balance:*

Complementary adult styles.  
Spirituality, leadership, *and* goofiness.  
Activity *and* time for self-reflection.  
Curriculum/information acquisition *and* group-building opportunities.  
Clear class goals *and* willingness to shift gears when necessary and as appropriate.  
Strict organization *and* an attitude of softer, "benign structure" (less noticeable).  
Good, productive space inside *and* outside.



# *Teacher Appreciation Song/Verse*

*Lisa Horne  
Co-Director of Religious Education  
UU Society of Oneonta, NY  
Oneonta, NY*



## “Rainbow Teachers”

1. Red, red, our teachers excel!  
Revvng up, reaching out raring to go,  
They like to read books and teach us so well.  
UU teachers excel!
2. Orange, orange, our teachers are kind!  
Organized, outgoing outstanding in every way.  
They open their hearts and their arms and their minds.  
UU teachers are kind!
3. Yellow, yellow, our teachers are cool!  
Youthful and happy and yearning to celebrate.  
They yearn to educate in Sunday school.  
UU teachers are cool!
4. Green, green, our teachers are neat!  
Giving and gentle and gleeful and glorious.  
Their genuine graciousness cannot be beat.  
UU teachers are neat!
5. Blue, blue, our teachers are best!  
Blooming and brilliant bringers of knowledge.  
They believe Sunday school is a fun-fest.  
UU teachers are best!
6. Indigo, indigo, our teachers inspire!  
Incredible, interesting, independent thinkers.  
They even sing in the UU Church Choir.  
UU teachers inspire!
7. Violet, violet, our teachers empower!  
Vigorous, valiant, virtuous, too.  
They never make it to coffee hour.  
UU teachers empower!

**TRUCE 2002-2003*****Toy Action Guide****www.truceteachers.org**West Somerville, MA*

Play is essential to children's healthy development and learning. Children use play to actively construct knowledge and acquire life skills. The content of their play comes from their own experiences. Changes in today's childhood are undermining play. Because of the pervasive influence of the electronic media — such as TV, movies, videos and computer — children spend more time sitting in front of a screen and less time playing creatively with each other.

Toys are the tools of children's play. Toys influence play. Toys of value enhance children's natural ability to engage in imaginative, meaningful play by allowing them to bring their own ideas and solve their own problems. Many of the toys on the market today are highly structured and linked to TV and videos. These toys channel children into imitative play, robbing them of their own imagination, problem solving and creativity.

Parents are constantly faced with decisions about what toys to buy and what toys to avoid. Peers, ads and link-ups between products and the media pressure parents and children to buy every new toy from TV or movies, instead of making thoughtful decisions about which toys promote the healthiest play. This guide is intended to help parents promote their children's creative and constructive play by making informed choices about toys and by working with other adults at home, school and in the community to promote positive play and toys.

***For more information contact TRUCE: [www.truceteachers.org](http://www.truceteachers.org)  
PO Box 441261, West Somerville, MA 02144 • e-mail: [truceteachers@aol.com](mailto:truceteachers@aol.com)***

**Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment**

Violent events such as those of September 11th, 2001, affect everyone. Children receive different information about war, plane crashes, natural disasters, snipers. Some children are included in discussions, some overhear adults' or other children's talk, some hear or see it on the news. Many young children may be confused or frightened and try to work out their feelings and understanding in play. Adults can observe and guide the play by responding to what children say with simple, accurate information and keeping the play within safe physical and emotional boundaries. (See guidelines, p. 2,)

**What Parents & Other Adults Can Do**

Since the Federal Communications Commission deregulated children's television in 1984, it has been legal to sell toys through TV programs. As a result, most best selling toys have been linked to children's TV shows and other electronic media, many of which promote violence, sexiness and buying more and more. Deregulation has made choosing toys and creating a healthy play environment harder for adults. Dealing with this challenge provides an opportunity to build communication and share values with children in a meaningful way. It also offers adults a chance to work together with schools and the community to create healthy play options for children.

**Parents & Children**

- Provide interesting activities, materials and trips to encourage positive interests and hobbies.
- Define your values about violence and share them with your children.
- Shop at toy stores that consciously don't sell toys of violence or toys that undermine healthy play.
- Take action — write a letter to a toy company or store.

- Plan toy purchases together and limit impulse buying and over stimulating trips to toy stores.
- Provide uninterrupted daily playtime and organize play materials so they are easily accessible.
- Work together to make thoughtful decisions about the role of media in the home.

### **Parents & Other Parents**

- Support each others' efforts to reduce children's exposure to TV shows and movies that are used to market toys, especially violent toys.
- Support each others' efforts to avoid buying toys of violence or items with logos related to movies, TV shows, restaurants, etc.
- Share resources for activities, good toys and books, ideas for birthday gifts and events and outings with other families.
- Share strategies and ideas for alternatives to TV, especially at difficult times of day.

### **Parents & Teachers**

- Discuss the importance of play and how toys and media affect it.
- Suggest ways to promote healthy play and limit children's involvement with TV, movies, videos, computer.
- Work together to develop school policies that promote healthy play (e.g., ample free play).
- Start a home lending book and tape program to provide positive leisure-time play options.

### **Parents & Community**

- Create coalitions among existing community groups who support healthy play environments for children. Plan a community forum on this issue.
- Organize efforts to voice concerns about harmful toys being marketed or advertised to children in your community (e.g., complain at stores, write letters to newspapers).
- Plan a violent toy trade-in, good toy and book fair or swap. Involve older children in your efforts.

### **Helping Children Use Their Play to Safely Work Out Scary Events**

When young children see scary things in their own lives or in the media (news or entertainment), it's normal for them to bring what interests, confuses, or frightens them into their play to try to work out their ideas and feelings. Here are guidelines to help you respond effectively when such play occurs.

- Watch children as they play, to learn more about what they know, are struggling to understand and may be worried about.
- If the play gets scary or dangerous gently intervene and redirect it. For example, ask how people might help each other or provide toys, such as rescue vehicles and medical equipment. [See Rescue Kit p. 7.]
- Try to follow the children's lead in the roles that you take rather than taking over the play. Help them come up with ways for extending the play.
- After the play, talk with children about what they played. Reassure them about their safety. Clear up confusions.
- Answer questions simply.

*All toys listed are suitable for girls and boys. Age guidelines represent youngest age for safety and appropriateness. However, we have selected toys that children can use throughout their early years.*

### **Toys have enhanced play value when they . . .**

- Can be used in many ways.
- Allow children to determine the play.
- Appeal to children at more than one age or level of development.
- Are not linked to video games, TV, or movies.
- Can be used with other toys for new and more complex play.
- Will stand the test of time and continue to be part of play as children develop new interests and skills.

- Promote respectful, non-stereotyped, non-violent interactions among children.
- Help children develop skills important for further learning and a sense of mastery.

### **Choose toys that promote . . .**

***Dramatic Play.*** Helps children work out their own ideas about their experiences. Provides a powerful way of learning new skills and a sense of mastery. Examples: blocks, toy vehicles—cars, trucks, planes, boats; dress up clothes, small animals, dolls, stuffed animals, puppets, props to recreate real life (post office, restaurant, store), materials for creating small worlds like doll houses, castles.

- Tote Along Garden (International Playthings) Ages 3 & up \$15  
12 accessories, 6 pockets, mesh bottom on tote can be used in sandbox, garden, or container of dirt/sand.
- Junior Chef (Schylling) Ages 3 & up \$25  
8 piece enamel cookware set - pots, pans and utensils.
- Cutting Food Box (Melissa & Doug Classic Wooden Toys) Ages 3 & up \$20  
2 wooden knives, 2 cutting boards - 33 wooden pieces that can be sliced into (pre-cut) pieces.

***Manipulative Play with Small Play Objects.*** Develops small muscle control and eye-hand coordination. Teaches about relationships between objects, essential for understanding math and science. Examples: construction sets and toys with interlocking pieces (Legos, Lincoln Logs), puzzles, pegboards, miniature models, parquetry blocks.

- Melissa & Doug Classic Wooden Toys
- Pattern Blocks and Boards 120 wooden shapes, 10 pattern board Ages 3 & up \$15
- Wooden 3-D Dominoes—Shapes/Farm/Nature themes Ages 3 & up \$10
- Wooden Magnetic Farm/Vehicles/Dinosaurs Sets Ages 2 & up \$8
- Curiosity Kits (Curiosity Kits, Inc) Ages 4 & up \$14  
"Super Dooper Build'em Up Sticks." 130 wooden sticks, dowels, beads.
- Atollo (Atollo) Ages 5 & up \$3-\$13 & \$26  
Endless possibilities for creating creatures, vehicles, etc. Sets of 24, 120, or 240.

### **Choosing Toys of Value**

**2002-2003**

***Support independent specialty toy stores that have made a commitment to high quality non-violent toys.***

***Creative Arts.*** Encourages self-expression and the use of symbols, a vital skill for problem solving and literacy. Develops fine motor skills. Examples: poster and finger paints, assortment of blank paper of all sizes and colors, crayons and markers, scissors, glue, recycled materials, stamps, clay, weaving kits.

- Craft materials (Creativity for Kids) Ages 3 & up \$1.50-\$2  
Individual packages of colored sticks, pom-poms, wood shapes, feathers, jumbo pipe cleaners.
- Wikki Stix (Omnikor) Ages 3 & up \$6.25  
Waxed yarn sticks can be bent in many shapes. Variety of colors.
- Magnetic Wall (Smethport Specialty Co.) Ages 2 & up \$20  
2'x3' folding panel magnet-receptive wallboard. Use with magnets or dry erase markers.
- Peg Loom (Harrisville Designs) Ages 5 & up \$20  
Weaving for beginners. Includes wool. Can make wall hangings, bags, magic carpets.

***Physical Play.*** Promotes healthy body awareness and coordination and helps let off steam. Opportunities for social interaction. Examples: bikes, scooters and other wheel toys, balls, bats, jump ropes, space trolleys, pogo sticks, giant chalk, swing sets, climbing structures, play tunnels.

- Egg 'N' Spoon Race (International Playthings) Ages 3 & up \$20  
Balancing game for 2-4 players/teams. Appropriate for different age levels.
- Ring Toss (Schylling) Ages 3 & up \$8  
Classic family game.
- O ball (Rhino Toys) Ages 0 to 106 \$8

"Easiest ball in the world to catch."

**Game Playing.** Teaches about taking turns, planning strategy, sequencing, rules and cooperation. Examples: board games like checkers and chess, card games, jacks.

- Amazing Animal Trivia (International Playthings) Ages 6 & up \$20

Wild question and answer adventure. 2-6 players. Can be non-competitive. Created by Wildlife Conservation Society.

- Charades for Kids (Pressman) Ages 4 & up \$14

Act out animals, spaghetti, etc. 3-6 players. No reading required. Can be non-competitive.

### **Remember the Classics!**

- table blocks • ocean, farm and rainforest animals or insects • construction sets (Legos, Lincoln Logs, etc.) • people and animal props • tool sets • flashlights • dolls with accurate features • clay • basic art supplies • blocks • cars, trucks, boats, planes and trains • dress-up clothes and house wares • bean bags • balls • jump ropes • playing cards • puzzles • tape stories • medical kits • musical instruments

### **Things You Can Do For Free**

**Reading Books.** Provides exciting content to use in play and an essential foundation for literacy. Children enjoy telling, acting out and drawing their own stories. Visit your local library. Select books with meaningful stories and characters and positive values.

**Play with Natural Materials.** Using sand, water, mud, rocks, shells and leaves cultivates a love of nature and the environment. Extend play with buckets and shovels, bubble blowers, watering cans, plastic tubing, cardboard boxes for collecting and sorting, magnifying glasses, flashlight, butterfly net, balance scales.

### **Toys and Toy Trends to Avoid**

We have chosen toys that dramatically illustrate the harmful toy trends. Some toys could fit into more than one category.

#### **Toys have limited play value when they . . .**

- Can only be used in one way.
- Encourage everyone to play the same way as determined by the toy designer.
- Appeal primarily to a single age or level of development.
- Will probably sit on a shelf after the first "fun" half hour.
- Will channel children into imitating scripts they see on TV or movie screens.
- Do special high tech actions for the child instead of encouraging the child's exploration and mastery.
- Lure children into watching the TV program or other media linked to the toy.
- Promote violence and stereotypes, which can lead to disrespectful and aggressive behavior.

#### **Try to avoid toys that . . .**

**Make Electronic Technology the Focus of Play.** Young children, especially infants and toddlers, learn best by interacting with people and materials and by seeing their direct effect on the environment. Often billed as educational, many electronic toys control and limit play.

- Star Wars Trivia Game (Hasbro) Ages 6 & up \$30

This handheld palm pilot look-alike includes an encyclopedia of trivia from every Star Wars movie ever made. It also has an organizer, alarm, calendar, calculator address book and "to do" list features which are useless to children.

- First Impressions Loveable Lily (Leap Frog) Ages 1 & up \$20

Soft toy frog that claims to teach numbers, counting, time, colors and body parts when you press its nose, face and tongue. Really does little more than focus babies' "play" on pushing buttons to get a reaction.

- Elmo's World Cell Phone (Fisher-Price) Ages 18 months & up \$10



Flip phone has moving eyes and animated screen. Press phone buttons to hear numbers and silly sounds instead of really talking on a play phone.

***Lure Young Girls into Focusing on Appearance.*** Promote stereotyped and sexualized behaviors, making how bodies look the sole focus of play and equating self-worth and success with appearance, including being thin and wearing make-up and skimpy clothes.

- Amazing Christie Nails (Mattel) No age given \$10

20 different kinds of nails for young girls complete with stickers and stamps encourages girls to think that “doing their nails” is actually play and elevates nail fashion as an appropriate activity for young girls.

- Barbie “Make Me Pretty Talking Styling Head” (Mattel) Ages 3 & up \$30

A life-size Barbie head for styling hair. “She’s a pretty talking head! Should Barbie be a princess or a bride today? Just ask Barbie! She talks to you as you style her hair and do her makeup!”

***Link Non-nutritious Food to Play.*** Toys with logos of fast food restaurants and junk foods, or that make junk food the focus of the play promote poor nutrition and ensure an early, easy market for brand name foods. Products like these can contribute to obesity and eating disorders, a growing problem for children.

- Barbie McDonald Playset (Mattel) Ages 3 & up \$10
- Barbie Pizza Hut Playset (Arco Toys) Ages 3 & up \$10

Miniature equipment so Barbie (who couldn't eat such food often and keep her shape) can prepare meals at these fast food restaurants.

- Kellogg's FROOT LOOPS Counting Fun Book (Harper Collins) No age given \$6

A cardboard book like those for toddlers. Children count out sugar-coated Froot Loop cereal pieces and place them in slots in the book. Comes with Froot Loops coupon.

***Glorify Violence, Including Military and War Toys.*** Since September 11th and with growing talk of war, many toys of violence have appeared on the market. Such toys focus children's play on violent themes, undermine lessons adults teach, glorify war and violent behavior and bring in scary real-world themes young children cannot fully understand.

- Forward Command Post (Ever Sparkle Industrial) Ages 5 & up \$40

Miniature building that “looks like Barbie's dream house with partially blown up walls.” 75-piece set of soldier figures, toy weapons and furniture to create a “fully outfitted battle zone.”

- GI Joe Motorized Humvee with Rapid Fire Cannon (FunRise) Ages 3 & up \$40

Army “attack vehicle” makes realistic battle sounds and has rapid fire air-powered cannon. “Controls are designed specifically for small fingers.” (Age rating makes this toy particularly objectionable.)

- Lego Galidor Toy Line (Lego) Ages 4 & up \$15/action figure

- Lego Alpha Team Toy Line (Lego) Ages 6, 7, or 8 & up (Varies) \$9 & up

Two toy lines of interchangeable action figures and props whose sole purpose is to fight. Lego, long trusted by parents for its construction toys that encourage creative play, has changed direction with these toys.

***Turn Children into “Media” and “Action Figure” Characters Using Dress-up Kits.*** Channel children into imitating stereotyped, violent, or sexualized behavior of characters on TV, in movies and from popular culture.

- Power Rangers Wild Force Action Set (Manley Toy Quest) Ages 5 & up \$12

Includes vest, mask, belt, sword so that children can fight like the Power Rangers do.

- Barbie “Pop Sensation” (Mattel) Ages 3 & up \$25

Comes with headset child can wear in order to be a pop star and “sing with Barbie.”

***Are Linked to TV Programs, Movies and Video Games with Content Rated as Appropriate for Older Audiences.*** Involve children in content not intended for them and can lead them to think that the video game, film, or TV program linked to the toys is meant for them to see.

- Play-Doh Jurassic Park III Playset (Playskool) Age 3 & up \$10

Turns open-ended Play-Doh into a toy of violence. Make dinosaurs, "then destroy them with chomping action Spinosaurus' mouth," a puppet that fits over child's hand so "you can control the carnage!"

- Spiderman and Friends Action Heroes including "Crime Fighter" and "Police Officer" (Playwell) Ages 3 & up \$8 Community helper action figures with faces and features of Spiderman. Confuses real helpers with fantasy figures.
- WWE & WCW Professional Wrestling Figures Ages vary from 4 & up \$6 & up Wrestling action figures of real life TV wrestlers do single violent actions and make hostile comments when button is pushed.

***Undermine Good Parenting Practices.*** Appeal to parents' insecurities and desire to do a good job preparing their children for school. These toys promote teaching of rote skills inappropriate for young children and how they learn.

- Baby Shakespeare Find and Rhyme (Playskool/Hasbro) Ages 18 mos. & up \$35
- Baby Einstein Toy Line claims to teach "human expression." "Learn" object names, make rhymes of prepackaged words. Use CD to "teach more" including dependence on fast-paced media at too young an age.

### **A Letter About Fighting Toys: for Children & Adults to Talk About Together**

Some kids really love toy guns and toys with weapons on them. They have fun pretending to fight with them. A lot of teachers worry about weapon toys. They think that if kids play with these toys and pretend to fight and kill, it will teach kids that it's okay to hurt people and that fighting and hurting are fun. Kids often say, "We're only pretending. We're just 'playing.'" Some teachers say kids in their classes pretend to be characters on TV. Kids act out kicking and fighting. Then kids often really do hurt each other. It gets scary. It isn't pretend, teachers say. Many teachers are worried. They are angry that TV shows and ads make violent toys look cool so kids want to buy them. They say companies shouldn't be allowed to sell violent toys to kids on TV. Teachers hope this letter will help families talk together about the toys they buy and make thoughtful choices.

- What do you think about what the teachers say?
- What do you think teachers, parents and children should do about fighting toys?
- What can grown-ups do to help children be safe and learn not to fight?
- What ideas do you have about how children can play without fighting toys?

### **Shoe Box Gifts for Hours of Creative Play**

Usually, giving gifts to children means buying manufactured toys at a store. Here is an alternative gift idea that you can easily put together. Shoe box gifts are collections of small, familiar items that are organized around a play theme and presented in an appealing way. They also show that expensive toys in fancy packages aren't necessarily the best. The process of putting together such an easy, yet imaginative and age-appropriate gift for a special child in your life can be very satisfying for you, too.

### **Making Shoe Box Gifts**

- Decorate an empty shoe box and lid (gift wrap, stickers, etc.).
- Choose a theme and put a clear label on the box which includes both a simple word and picture of the theme.
- Most of the items we suggest are found at hardware stores, pharmacies, stationery stores and art/crafts stores, supermarkets.
- Use small containers, zip-type sandwich bags, or building dividers with small pieces of cardboard to make "compartments" for the various items in the shoe box. Young children appreciate organization—being able to return everything to its place.
- Most of these suggestions are appropriate and safe for children to use independently; however, objects in some kits may require adult supervision and/or aid (e.g., food coloring).

**Shoe Box Gift Theme Ideas: Use these or create your own****PLAY DOUGH**

- buy a can of play dough or make your own
- garlic press
- plastic knife
- Popsicle sticks
- wooden dowel
- plastic lids
- small tray/plate
- buttons/beads
- plastic animals

**PLAY DOUGH RECIPE**

- 1 cup flour  
1 Tbsp. oil  
1 cup water  
1/2 cup salt  
2 tsp. cream of tartar  
food coloring
- Mix ingredients in saucepan.
  - Cook over low heat stirring constantly until play dough pulls away from sides of pan.
  - Scoop play dough onto wax paper, knead until smooth.
  - Store in airtight container.

**RESCUE/FIRST AID**

- flashlight
- Band Aids
- ace bandage
- sling
- eye patch
- gauze
- stethoscope
- fabric strips/bandages
- surgical mask

**OFFICE**

- stapler (4 or 5 yrs. & up)
- hole puncher
- tape
- Post-its or message pad
- small clipboard
- receipt book
- sticky-back blank labels
- key ring with old keys
- pens/pencils/markers
- ink pad & stamp

**RESTAURANT**

- take out menus
- desk bell
- plastic utensils
- plastic dishes
- cloth napkins
- pretend food
- order books
- pens/pencils
- placemats
- apron

**SHOE BOX GARDEN**

- plastic lined shoebox
- potting soil
- seed packets
- small watering can
- Popsicle sticks
- garden tools
- gardening gloves

**WATER/BATH**

- plastic funnel
- plastic tubing
- plastic eye dropper
- turkey baster
- spray bottle
- squirt bottle
- plastic sea animals
- plastic nesting/measuring cups
- bubble bath packet

**BABY BOX**

(with baby doll or stuffed animal)

- newborn disposable diapers
- empty plastic baby food jars
- baby-size spoon
- plastic baby bottle
- infant clothes & blanket
- small wash cloth
- pacifier & rattle
- bib

**Resources****ORGANIZATIONS*****Coalition to Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children***

Media Center of Judge Baker Children's Center

3 Blackfin Circle, Boston, MA 02115

[www.commercialexploitation.com](http://www.commercialexploitation.com)

- Works to stop marketing practices that harm children.

**Commercial Alert**

1611 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 3A  
Washington, DC 20029  
202-296-2787 [www.essential.org/alert](http://www.essential.org/alert)

- Helps parents defend against harmful marketing & commercialism.

**Lion and Lamb Project**

4300 Montgomery Ave., Suite 104  
Bethesda, MD 20814, 301-654-3091 [www.lionlamb.org](http://www.lionlamb.org)

- Promotes healthy play & non-violent toys. Publishes Parent Action Kits, Violent Toy Trade-in Manual

**Playing for Keeps**

171 Green Bay Road, Wilmette, IL 60091  
[www.playingforkeeps.org](http://www.playingforkeeps.org)

- Educates public about the value of play

**American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA)**

[www.astratoy.org](http://www.astratoy.org)

- Toy store and manufacturers who produce and sell many toys on

TRUCE's recommended list.

**Books**

- Auerbach, S. (1998). *Dr. Toy's Smart Play*. NY: St Martin's Griffin. Lists "100 Best Children's Products of 2002." [www.drtoy.com](http://www.drtoy.com)
- Bronson, M. (1995). *The Right Stuff for Children Birth to 8: Selecting Play Materials to Support Development*. Washington, DC: NAEYC [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).
- Carlsson-Paige, N. and Levin, D.E. (1990). *Who's Calling the Shots? How to Respond Effectively to Children's Fascination with War Play and War Toys*. Gabriola Island, BC, CAN: New Society [www.newsociety.com](http://www.newsociety.com).
- Giroux, H. (2000). *Stealing Innocence: Corporate Culture's War on Children*. New York: Palgrave.
- Levin, D. E. (1998). *Remote Control Childhood? Combating the Hazards of Media Culture*. Washington, DC: NAEYC [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).
- Ready at Five Partnership. *Moving Young Children's Play Away from TV Violence and Bringing Parents Into the Picture*, available through Center for Media Literacy [www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org).
- Walsh, D. (1994). *Selling Out America's Children: How America Puts Profits Before Values—and What Parents Can Do*. Minneapolis: Fairview Press.

**Additional Resources**

Both available from: Media Education Foundation, 26 Center St., Northampton, MA 01060 • 800-659-6882; [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org).

- "Game Over: Gender, Race, & Violence in Video Games" Addresses how video games exploit gender, race and violence.
- "Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood and Corporate Power." Looks at Disney's role in shaping childhood and the ideas Disney movies and related products teach about race, gender and ethnic groups.
- UNICEF Website: MAGIC (Media Activities and Good Ideas by, with and For Children) [www.unicef.org/magic](http://www.unicef.org/magic). Shows how to implement the Oslo Challenge, which calls on media educators, governments, organizations, parents and children to support media's potential to make the world a better place for children.

**TRUCE** is a national group of educators deeply concerned about how children's entertainment and toys are affecting the play and behavior of children in our classrooms.

**TRUCE's** goals are:

- To raise public awareness about the negative effects of violent and stereotyped toys and media on children, families, schools and society.
- To work to limit the harmful influence of unhealthy children's entertainment.
- To provide children with toys and activities that promote healthy play and non-violent behavior at home and school.
- To create a broad-based effort to eliminate marketing to children and to reduce the sale of toys of violence. To support parents' and teachers' efforts to deal with the issues regarding media.

For more information about what you can do and to make a contribution to cover our printing and disseminating costs, write:

**TRUCE**, PO Box 441261, Somerville, MA 02144

[www.truceteachers.org](http://www.truceteachers.org) or e-mail: [truceteachers@aol.com](mailto:truceteachers@aol.com).

***TRUCE** wishes to thank BAEYC, Child Care Information Exchange, and Teaching Strategies, Inc. for their generous support.*

# *How Elder-Friendly Is Your Congregation?*

*Rev. Devorah Greenstein  
Accessibility Program Associate, UUA  
Boston, MA*

Twelve percent of our members are 65 years old and older; more than half of these elders are at least 75 years old. Our eldest elders may need assistance to participate fully in UU activities. We UUs like to help others yet often find it hard to ask for help ourselves. UU societies have to be proactive in thinking of ways to help our eldest elders continue to be deeply incorporated in congregational life. Often, small changes make a big difference.

Over the next several months I will be sending out simple hints about ways to accommodate our eldest elders' needs. If you have one, please give me your email address, or give this page to a lay leader who has an interest in elder issues. Together, we can make a difference.

## **In general:**

Do you ask elders how you can better accommodate their needs?

Do you offer your elders the gift of your patience?

Do you include elders on your boards and committees and make sure that they can get to meetings, hear what is being said, read notes and minutes, and sit comfortably, without having to ask for what they need?

## **For people with physical limitations:**

Is your building accessible? Is your chancel accessible?

Are there some chairs with arms among the more usual folding or straight chairs?

Are existing doorways a bit too narrow for wheelchairs? (Have you heard of offset hinges?)

Is there seating available at coffee hour (not only at the far edges of the room)?

## **For people with vision loss:**

Are there large print orders of service? Hymns? (Do you know how to create them?)

Would it help anyone in your congregation if the newsletter were audio taped?

Have you asked if large print copies of lyrics would help your choir members?

Are large print copies of minutes and agendas available for committee members?

## **For people with hearing loss:**

Are there assistive listening devices available?

Are sermon copies available (for hard-of-hearing people) before the sermon is delivered?

Are there good acoustical environments for meetings and group events?

Are small quiet conversation areas available?

Do you know helpful strategies to communicate comfortably with a hard-of-hearing person?

## **For people with memory loss:**

Do you encourage everyone to wear a name-tag (written clearly in large letters)?

In your social events, are you patient with a person who has cognitive problems?

Do you know how to communicate more effectively with a person who has a cognitive problem?

# ***Bridging Youth into Young Adulthood***

***Michael Tino***

***Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, UUA***

***Boston, MA***

Recent attention has focused on the fact that many youth who grow up in Unitarian Universalist congregations leave our movement between the ages of 14 and 20, most never to return. While exact statistics vary, the resulting gap in our membership between the ages of 14 and 35 is glaring. Outreach to non-UU young adults is an important part of addressing this membership gap, but at least as vital to our success as a movement is working with our youth to ensure that they stay a part of Unitarian Universalism as they cross the bridge into young adulthood. Towards that end, the Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry, working in partnership with the Youth Programs Office, is endeavoring to develop new programs and resources to help congregations with bridging ministry. Following are some ways you can support your youth as they become young adults.

## ***Pre-Bridging Work***

As youth near the time when they will make the transition to young adulthood, it is necessary to prepare them for this transition. Two new curricula are in the process of being published to help congregations with this ministry. *Walking Between the Worlds*, by Colin Bossen and Dawn Star Borchelt, is a 3-session pre-bridging workshop first offered at the UUA General Assembly. This curriculum focuses on the identification of youth with Unitarian Universalist communities, and the development of a commitment to pursuing UU faith development opportunities as a young adult. More in-depth is the all-new *UU Backpacking*, by Rev. Donna DiSciullo and Michael Tino. This year-long curriculum partners youth with an adult mentor and asks them to explore pathways of learning, service and leadership in their congregation. We hope to have both curricula available soon for your use.

## ***Bridging Ceremonies***

It is important that we recognize the passage from youth into young adulthood with a ceremony that is quite different from a graduation. As a rite of passage and not a “goodbye,” bridging ceremonies celebrate a passage between two parts of life, both equally affirmed and supported by our congregations. The Bridging Ceremony Resource Guide, available from the UUA Bookstore, can help you put together a bridging ceremony, but the important part is the intentional programming that must be available for people on both sides of the bridge—else your bridge becomes a cliff, over which you are pushing new young adults, with no hope of survival in our congregations.

## ***Bridge Connections and Congregation-Based Programs for New Young Adults***

Last year, the Bridge Connections program was unveiled with a wonderful response. In the spring of 2003, over 1,600 packets were mailed to congregations to give to their graduating high school seniors. These packets contained a book, *Poems to Live By in Uncertain Times*, a UU Campus Ministry directory, and a postage-paid reply card entitling each new young adult to a free one-year subscription to the UU World, the Church of the Larger Fellowship’s Quest, and, if they live in Canada, the Canadian Unitarian Council’s quarterly magazine. In addition, these new young adults will receive *Ferment*, the young adult journal published by the UUA and C\*UUYAN. We have committed to continuing this program in 2004 for a small fee, and we hope to continue it for years to come.

This is only one example of a program designed to keep new young adults connected to Unitarian Universalism. We encourage congregations to send new young adults their newsletter, to invite them to special programs during school breaks, and to host conferences and groups for young adults at the younger end of the age range. We invite you to design your own “post-bridging” programs that will meet the needs of new young adults.

### ***Campus Ministry***

Many, though not all, of our youth go on to college as young adults. Towards that end, campus ministry is an important way to retain our youth in UU communities, as well as to attract new young adults to our movement. We encourage you to explore campus ministry as a potential outreach ministry of your congregation, and have developed a number of resources to help congregations with this ministry.

#### ***Resources Available For You***

The Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry has many resources available to help you with ministry to people making the transition between youth and young adulthood. Here is a brief list of some of them:

- **Connect UU**—Online database of youth, young adults and groups ([www.uua.org/connect/](http://www.uua.org/connect/)). Individuals can search for a young adult or campus group near them, and will be given contact information; in addition, signing up in the database gives young adults free subscriptions to *Ferment*, the young adult journal.
- **Web Site ([www.uuyan.org](http://www.uuyan.org))**—Newly redesigned Web site has information for congregations, groups and individuals.
- **Covenant Group/Small Group Ministry Resources**—A new manual and curricula for use with young adult-centered covenant groups are available free on our Web site ([www.uuyan.org](http://www.uuyan.org)).
- **Regional Campus Ministry Workshops**—Held around the U.S. and Canada, these 1.5-day workshops provide a good basis for doing and supporting campus ministry.
- **Consulting and Training Resources**—Workshops and consultations designed to meet your needs. You can fill out our on line request form at [www.uua.org/ya-cm/request.html](http://www.uua.org/ya-cm/request.html) or call us at 617-948-6463 to request a consultation.
- **Bridging Ceremony Resource Guide**—Updated this year, and available at the UUA Bookstore.
- **Bridging Cards**—Available from the UUA Bookstore, these cards are designed to let congregations know when UU young adults have moved into their area. The cards also have a list of outreach tips on them.





## Bridge Connections 2004

A program of the UUA Office of  
Young Adult and Campus Ministry

Bridge Connections are gifts for each UU youth turning 18 or graduating from high school in 2004, intended to help keep them connected to Unitarian Universalism as they become adults.

Thanks to the overwhelming response last year, this popular gift is being offered for a second year.

Unfortunately, due to budget restrictions, we must charge a small fee for the program this year (the \$5 fee entitles you to a packet with a retail value of over \$35).

Each Connection Pack contains:

- A copy of one of the UUA's wonderful hard-cover meditation collections (titles include *All the Gifts of Life*, *Listening for Our Song* and *What We Share*—each retails for \$15.00), suitable for a personal message of congratulations from the congregation;
- A postage-paid reply card entitling each bridging senior to one free year of *UU World*, *Quest* (the newsletter of the Church of the Larger Fellowship) and *Ferment* (the newsletter of the Continental UU Young Adult Network and the Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry), as well as the Canadian Unitarian Council's quarterly magazine for those who live in Canada; *and*
- A directory of UU Campus Ministry groups.

**Questions? Need more information? Contact us at [ya-cm@uua.org](mailto:ya-cm@uua.org) or 617-948-4273.**

Send in the order form below **by March 15** with payment. We will send the packs to you by May 15, 2004, in time for bridging ceremonies or recognition of your graduating seniors in a Sunday service.

Bridge Connections 2004 Order Form

**Congregation Name:**

**Congregation Mailing Address:**

**Contact Person:**

**Title:**

**Daytime Phone Number:**

**E-mail address:**

**# of packets needed:**

**Amount enclosed (\$5 US or CDN per packet): \$**

**Date of your 2004 Bridging Ceremony:**

**Mail to:**

Bridge Connections Orders  
UUA Office of Young Adult and Campus Ministry  
25 Beacon St  
Boston, MA 02108

**Order deadline: March 15, 2004. Late orders cannot be accepted.**





# *The Spellman Museum of Stamps & Postal History Presents: Increasing Global Awareness Through Stamps*

*The Spellman Museum of Stamps & Postal History  
Weston, MA 02493*

This special exhibit and program uses stamps in the Spellman Museum's collection to help children learn about:

- Symbols of peace and social justice
- The role of the United Nations and the Universal Postal Union
- Global social issues on the stamps of the United Nations such as the Declaration of Human Rights, International Peace Year, International Year of the Family, and Combating Racism
- Global social reformers who worked for change without violence

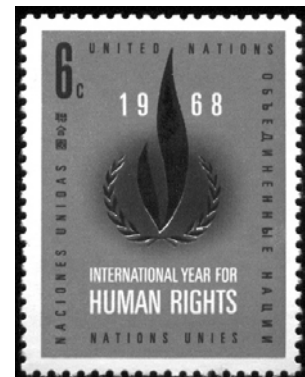
**Availability:** The exhibit and program are available from October 2003 until January 2004.

**Grades:** The program may accommodate children in grades 1 to 5.

**Location:** The Spellman Museum of Stamps & Postal History  
235 Wellesley Street on the campus of Regis College  
Weston, MA 02493

**Cost:** \$75 for a pre-visit by Spellman Museum staff to your **congregation** and \$3 per child to visit the museum and participate in the program.

**Contact:** To find out how children from your congregation may participate in the program, contact Laura Rundell, Director of Education & Community Outreach (781) 768-7343



## ***Concerns About Our RE Workshop Rotation?***

***Jude Henzy  
Director of Religious Education  
First Unitarian Church  
Wilmington, DE***

Recently, a parent expressed concern about the Religious Education Workshop Rotation mode for grades one through six we'll be field-testing this year. The worry was that our children would just come to RE and have fun, the content of the program would be watered down. The parent wondered if we would be sacrificing important material to make the program more entertaining for our consumer-oriented culture. These are valid concerns, to be sure.

Part of my response reflects a difference in educational theory. Some educators teach a "core curriculum," believing that there is specific material or information that we need to teach our children. Opinions differ on the content of the core curriculum, but educators using this model have in common the desire to transfer information from themselves or a lesson book to the children.

The workshop rotation model approach to religious education is exploring programs and concepts and stories through child-friendly multi-media workshops: an art workshop, drama, music, games, puppets, story telling, computers and other educational media. The same UU (Bible World Religion/story) principle is taught in all of the workshops for four of five Sundays, rotating the young people to a different workshop each week. The teachers in each workshop lead the same workshop for all five weeks to different children. This approach honors the various learning styles and participants and matches teachers' interests to the different ways of learning. The theory that the method is the message. While this model covers curriculum content, it focuses more on helping children learn the concept of caring for the earth by creating a play or story about it; others will resonate, if you will, with songs and music on the topic; still others will need to use art, science, or physical movement activities.

While parents may or may not see this model as appropriate for school, I believe it is very well suited to Unitarian Universalist religious education. Like our faith, it draws from many sources, and when you look at the model in terms of our seven principles it makes a whole lot of sense. (Think about the inherent worth and dignity of every person, acceptance of one another, free search for truth and meaning, world community—it's all in there!)

I believe most important of all, that the Workshop Model is designed to accommodate a lot of different learning styles so that children can be their most authentic selves at church. Instead of having to fit the limited mold of the traditional classroom environment, our kids will be freer to shine where their talents are, or they'll discover new ones. What better foundation on which to build meaningful relationships with other members of our community and spiritual connections to our faith could there be?

# *Religious Education and Small Group Ministry: One Congregation's Plan*

*Gail Forsyth-Vail*

*Director of Religious Education*

*The North Parish of North Andover, MA*

*North Andover, MA*

It has been two months since the RE Committee voted to try a brand-new model of Sunday religious education programming at the North Parish. During that time, I have spent a great deal of time thinking, reading, listening and talking with Rev. Lee Bluemel, with parishioners and with my colleagues in religious education. As I have “digested” all of the information and ideas that have come my way, examining them in the light of what the RE Committee at North Parish proposes to do, it has become increasingly clear to me that a broad blueprint for the RE program would be helpful to me and to the committee. It will provide us with talking points for conversation with parents and with other parishioners and will help us not to lose the bigger picture while we work on the logistics of the program. I offer you a draft of such a blueprint in this report. It is a *draft*, and I hope we will discuss and refine it. I owe credit to the work and writing of James Fowler (*Stages of Faith, 1981*); Thomas Groome (*Educating for Life, 1998*); Jeanne Gibbs (*Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together, 1995*) and from three authors in *Essex Conversations, 2001*: Daniel Harper (Learning Types and Their Needs), Rev. Barry Andrews (Educating for Faith) and Jen Harrison (Youth Groups as a Model for Transformative Ministry).

## *Religious Education Program for Children and Youth At the North Parish of North Andover, Unitarian Universalist*

Goal: Development of a sustaining faith, a total response to life, composed of both spirituality and religious identity as a Unitarian Universalist. Unitarian Universalist faith is spirituality, a depth of personal religious feeling and active commitment, shaped by the heritage of wisdom preserved in our Unitarian Universalist community and heritage and conveyed by elders and spiritual mentors.

There are four “tasks” for learners on this path to faith.

### First Task: Learn How Unitarian Universalists “Do” Religion

*Who?* Children four to eight years old, families and children new to Unitarian Universalism.

*Faith Stage:* Faith by imitation

*Content:* Introduction to Unitarian Universalism and its practices, Name, chalice symbol, caring community, worship practices, hymnal, covenant

*How?* Four to six year olds, in two separate groups, learn about UUism and the chalice. They experience caring community and begin to learn some worship practices. Six to eight year olds learn about worship practices and the hymnal through attendance at Children’s Worship. They experience caring community and our covenant through small group sessions following worship.

#### *Milestones/Rituals:*

Ceremony to give chalice to family, noting that religious education is primarily the responsibility of the family, supported by the community. Ceremony to take place at the end of the first year in the program.

Ceremony to give each child their own hymnal, at the close of the fourth year in the program (at the end of second grade). This puts some of the wisdom and spiritual practice of UUism in the hands of each child and family.

Second Task: Learn the Stories, Practices, and Lore of the Faith Community

*Who?* Children eight to twelve years old. Families new to Unitarian Universalism

*Faith Stage:* Joining stage

*Content:*

1. Unitarian Universalist heritage
  - From Universalism: God is Love, everyone included; build the Kingdom of God on earth.
  - From Unitarianism: freedom of belief, use of reason, tolerance of difference
  - We are carriers of the heretic's flame.
2. God (the Divine/Mystery) is too big for any one metaphor
  - Direct experience of mystery and of gratitude
  - Wisdom from the world's religious
  - Wisdom from the Jewish and Christian struggle to understand God
3. Our Unitarian Universalist covenant
  - Living individually and collectively as part of covenanting community
  - Responsibilities to others and to the earth
  - Responsibility to act upon our principles/to give back

*How?* Eight to eleven year olds participate in children's worship, and in small group sessions. Small groups engage in social action, reflecting on service in the light of UU faith. All groups act as covenanting communities. Children's worship stories draw from UU heritage and from wisdom of other religious. Direct experience of mystery and wonder is a goal of both worship and small groups.

Eleven to thirteen year olds assist in leading children's worship, as well as attending. They also do "field tripping," visiting other faith communities and engaging in social action projects.

*Milestones/Rituals:*

Ceremony to give each child a copy of the UUA principles and sources. Ceremony to take place at the end of the seventh year of the program (at the end of grade five).

Those who are entering grade six (or equivalent age, for home schoolers) are invited to join Junior Youth Group. Ceremony to mark entry into Junior Youth Group.

Third Task: Thinking about Oneself and One's Faith

*Who?* Youth twelve to fifteen years old

Fourth Task: Deeper Reflection, Testing of Faith Against the Ambiguities/Difficulties of Life

*Who?* Youth aged fifteen and older through adulthood

**Small Group Ministry Model for Religious Education**  
**All Souls Sunday Session for Children and Family**  
***Children's Worship for All Souls Sunday October 28, 2001***

**Altar:** leaves, chrysanthemums and orange tablecloth, bowl of candles, chalice, bowl of mustard seed

**Prelude:** Children's Handbells (Tune: Jacob's Ladder)

**Chalice Lighting:** Life is a gift for which we are grateful. We gather in community to celebrate the glories and the mysteries of this great gift.

**Reading** (in three voices)

From *Many Winters* by Nancy Woods

**You shall ask:**

*A: What good are dead leaves? And I will tell you*

*B: They nourish the sore earth. You shall ask*

*A: What reason is therefore winter? And I will tell you*

*B: To bring about new leaves. You shall ask*

*A: Why are the leaves so green? And I will tell you*

*B: Because they are rich with life. You shall ask*

*A: Why must summer end? And I will tell you*

*B: So that the leaves can die.*

This time of the year, when the days grow darker and colder, is a time when we are all very aware of death. The leaves have died and fallen—we wear Halloween costumes of ghosts and other spirits; we hang skeletons on our doors. These things are part of Halloween, to be sure, but they are also part of a much older and very important holiday. Although it has other names, the Universalists called it All Souls Day—it is a day when we remember those we love who have died. It seems especially important right now to remember those friends and family members, both humans and animals, who have died this year.

Why do we take the time to remember? And why we do it here in church, gathered together in our worship service?

I'd like to answer that by telling a story. Like the other stories I have been telling this month, this is a story from the Buddhist tradition.

**Story:** *The Mustard Seed Medicine*

This is why we come together to mark All Souls Day. We remember that each of us has times of sadness, and each of us has times when we grieve the death of someone close to us. It is in coming together, in sharing our sadness, in knowing that others understand our feelings and miss their loved ones as well, that we are comforted.

Today we name the people that you would like to remember. I'll read the list out loud, lighting a candle for each of them. At the end of the list, if you have people to add, you may mention them as well.

***Candles of Remembrance***  
***Meditation***

Sit straight up in your chair or sit cross-legged on the floor so that you can breathe well. Close your eyes. Take a couple of long, slow, deep breaths.

Now, take a cleansing breath... as you breathe out, imagine that you are breathing out all of the things that disappointed or discouraged you last week.

Now, slowly breathe in, imagining that you are breathing in hope. Now take another cleansing breath and breathe out sadness and pain.... Then imagine that you are breathing in love and healing.

Now breathe out stress.

And breathe in peace and calm.

Sit quietly with your eyes closed for a few more minutes. When you are ready, open your eyes.

**Song:** *A Little More Oil in My Lamp* (taught by Rev. Ruth Gibson)

A little more oil in my lamp to keep it burning. A little more oil in my lamp, I pray.

A little more oil in my lamp to keep it burning. Keep it burning through the night and the day.

A little more love in my heart to keep me growing. A little more love in my heart I pray.

A little more love in my heart to keep me growing. Keep me growing through the night and the day.

A little more joy in my heart to keep me laughing. A little more joy in my heart I pray.

A little more joy in my heart to keep me laughing. Keep me laughing through the night and the day.

A little more peace in the world to keep it turning. A little more peace in the world I pray.

A little more peace in the world to keep it turning. Keep it turning through the night and the day.

**Prayer:**

Spirit of Life, God of Love,

We pause today to remember those whom we love who have died.

We remember our special times with them, their faces, their voices, their laughter and the times when they were grumpy.

We remember them, and we are sad at the great loss we have experienced.

This year, we also are sad about the deaths of people we did not know. We remember those who died in New York City, Washington and Pennsylvania on September 11. We also remember those people of Afghanistan who have died because they are caught up in a war they did not create.

Help us to realize on this All Souls Day that in our sadness we are not alone. Help us to remind others when they are sad that they are not alone.

Help us to remember that we are joined together with others, here in this church and all over the world, wishing for comfort in time of sadness and wishing for peace in the world.

We will all know death many times in our lives.

May we be comforted in knowing that others understand, and can offer us kindness when our hearts are sad. And may we also know that life will go on, and that, although we will always miss those who have died, the sadness will lessen as time goes on.

And may we remember always to grow our souls by being the hands and feet, voices and hearts, of the Spirit of Love in this world.

Amen.

**Hymn:** *We Are Dancing the Year's Circle* (tune: *Jacob's Ladder*)

*We are dancing the year's circle (3 times) Sisters, brothers all.*

*Spring to summer, fall to winter (3 times) Brothers, sisters all.*

*Dark to light and light to darkness (3 times) Sisters, brothers all.*

*Birth to death and death to birth (3 times) Brothers, sisters all.*



### **Benediction**

Small group questions for reflection:

All groups should begin with some kind of check-in. One possible check-in is to ask about Halloween plans. Those in grades 6-8 might want to tell about the Haunted House.

### **Reflection Questions**

Grades One and Two

Divide group in half and ask children if they have ever had someone they love (or a pet) die. Ask each child to tell something about that person or pet.

What do you do when someone you know has had a death in their family? (Cards, words of comfort, bringing food, going to a service, being especially kind)

Please read the plans for grades 3-5 in case children ask you questions about death. If they don't ask theological questions, I advise sticking with a discussion of response to loss and grief (as above).

Grades Three-Five

Use the same questions as with grades one and two. This age group may have more experience with death and with the rituals following death than the younger ones (and they may not!). They will probably have questions about what happens when someone dies. For the theological questions (e.g., Is there a heaven?) you can state what you believe, but tell the children that other people have different beliefs. Ask them what they think. For the practical questions (e.g., What happens at a funeral?), you can simply tell them what your experiences have been and ask if any children have gone to a funeral. Encourage them to ask their parents the same questions they have asked you.

Grades Six-Eight

Ask the questions for grades one and two. This group will probably want to ask both practical and theological questions (see plans for grades 3-5). Do not hide what you believe, SHARE IT. DO, however, be sure to allow for other points of view among the youth. Some may be aware of their parents' points of view on these issues.

Practical responses to death and grief are extremely important for this age group. Ask them to talk about what you say and do when someone has had a death in the family (say, "I'm sorry," send a card, go to the service, bring food). Help them understand that they should respond to the loss, not ignore it. This is the compassionate thing to do.

### **Carrying Out Faith Into the World**

Remind them that responding to death and grief is a part of carrying our faith into the world.

### **Wishes/Appreciation and Closure**

Ask what they appreciated about the morning? What would have made the morning even better?

Restore the space by picking up and putting things away.

*Small Group Ministry and Religious Education programming make an excellent match. Go to [www.uua.org/families](http://www.uua.org/families) for more educational resources, contact Gail Forsyth-Vail for her publication [gail@northparish.org](mailto:gail@northparish.org), and check the UUA Bookstore for resources.*

## *Videos for Youth Groups*

*Jesse C. Jaeger*  
*Youth Programs Director, UUA*  
*Boston, MA*

Here are descriptions and reviews of two videos that are available through the Lifespan Faith Development loan library. Both of these videos come recommended from the UUA Youth Office and have study guides that can be downloaded from the Internet. They would both make ideal youth group activities.

*Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity*  
Produced by: Jackson Katz

### **Description:**

While the social construction of femininity has been widely examined, the dominant role of masculinity has until recently remained largely invisible. *Tough Guise* is the first educational video geared toward college and high school students to systematically examine the relationship between pop-cultural imagery and the social construction of masculine identities in the U.S. at the dawn of the 21st century.

In this innovative and wide-ranging analysis, Jackson Katz argues that widespread violence in American society, including the tragic school shootings in Littleton, Colorado; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and elsewhere, needs to be understood as part of an ongoing crisis in masculinity.

This exciting new media literacy tool—utilizing racially diverse subject matter and examples—will enlighten and provoke students (both males and females) to evaluate their own participation in the culture of contemporary masculinity.

### **Review and Suggested Uses:**

This is a wonderful video that combines footage from contemporary media and analysis from Jackson Katz to explore issues of masculinity. Katz gives a clear look at how men in our society internalize superiority through pressure from across society and how that translates into higher levels of violence perpetrated by men. However, it is not all bad news for Katz. He spends time at the end of this documentary exploring ways to break the cycle.

Youth should find it engaging and discussion provoking. There is a study guide available online (<http://www.mediaed.org/videos/MediaGenderAndDiversity/ToughGuise/studyguide/ToughGuise.pdf>) that can help shape the conversation if you like, but Unitarian Universalist youth will find much to talk about after viewing this video.

This video could be used in a larger discussion about gender roles and power or as a linked oppression piece to an anti-racism training. Our Whole Lives teachers could also use it as supplemental programming in the gender-role portions of the curriculum.

*What Do You Believe?*  
Produced by: Sarah Fienbloom

### **Descriptions:**

The *What Do You Believe?* Project was conceived in 1998 in order to promote tolerance and understanding among American teenagers from different religious and spiritual backgrounds. 200 teenagers have been

interviewed for this project, and their beliefs and experiences are incorporated in a unique 50-minute educational documentary.

The interviewees include Muslim, Pagan, Atheist, Hindu, Buddhist, Agnostic, Native American, Mormon, Jewish, Catholic, Baptist, Christian, Latino, Black, White and Asian American youth. By weaving six teenagers' in-depth stories with commentary from 20 diverse teens, this documentary paints a broad picture of religious and spiritual lives of teenagers in America and delves deeply into the issues that are at the heart of being human. *What Do You Believe?* does not promote one specific religion or belief. It does promote tolerance and cross-cultural dialogue.

**Review and Suggested Use:**

*What Do You Believe?* is a great documentary that looks at religious pluralism among American youth. Fienbloom has done a good job of bringing together youth from diverse backgrounds to share how they experience their faith and how their faith interacts with the society around them. It is clear that Fienbloom's goal is to teach religious understanding, and she does well in meeting this goal. The film becomes useful to Unitarian Universalist youth by showing just how much religious diversity exists in their school communities.

Like *Tough Guise*, *What Do You Believe?* will make for great youth group programming. It also comes with a study guide that can be downloaded from the web ([www.whatdoyoubelieve.org](http://www.whatdoyoubelieve.org)) that will help shape the discussion. However, a great conversation will probably emerge without needing the study guide. Congregations following *Neighboring Faiths* could also use this video to supplement that curriculum. The film is accessible to junior high as well senior high youth.

# *A Teen Holocaust Story*

*By Frank E. Robertson*

The incredible story of George Landecker's teenage life began to unravel before my eyes on a visit to his home during the weekend of November 16, 2002. I had known him and his artist-wife Jessie since the early 1960s when I served as minister of the Unitarian Church of Barneveld, New York, fresh out of theological school. They became members at that time. I went on to serve other churches, but we've kept up a continuing close friendship over the years. All those decades had gone by and I had never known that he was a Holocaust survivor with a story deserving as much attention as the most astounding Holocaust stories.

George is a rather modest, retired dairy farmer with thick hands, a husky body, and a slight German accent. He worked hard making a success at farming on the hilly land of Remsen, north of Utica, New York, always searching for improvements in stock and seed and doing much of the building and repairs around the farm himself. He worked closely with the Cooperative Extension Service and took leadership positions in its area organization. I had always known that he was extraordinary from the day in 1962 when we met and he showed me around the farm. In the barn, he introduced me to the cows: Tosca, Aida, Butterfly, etc., chewing away at their feed while recorded opera music played in the background.



1936 Photograph taken at Gross-Breesen, Germany, showing George Landecker (center) with two other teens.

Was the story there and I just had not been sensitive to some clue in our conversations? Perhaps, but even his church, where he has been a leader in most every position over the years, has not heard his story. Was he overly cautious because of the anti-Semitism in American culture? Perhaps. Some other Holocaust survivors have been known to hide their identity.

Well, somehow he began to tell the story of Gross-Breesen (pronounced bray' sen) as I sat riveted with surprise, looking at pictures in a late-1930s album he had carried with him when he fled Nazi Germany. Then came three thick notebooks full of his and his Gross-Breesen friends' accounts, gathered at a series of reunions he had organized. I did not care to sleep much that night as I curled up reading those stories and wondering why I had not heard of that amazing group of young people before. Gross-Breesen is the name of a village in northeast Germany in a section called Silesia. Adolph Hitler came to power in 1933 and it soon became apparent to Jewish leaders that a reign of terror against Jews was commencing. At first, no one dreamed of the Holocaust. Hitler's government was actively forcing Jews to leave Germany. In those days, Nazi anti-Semitism centered on boycotts of Jewish businesses and the exclusion of Jews from government jobs. There were occasional beatings but most people thought the oppression would go no further than that.

The Central Association of German Jews sought dozens of ways to help Jews get out of the country. It was the time of The Great Depression and other countries placed various restrictions on emigrants because of fears of a further drain on their economies. Unless someone had relatives with whom he could stay or a job promised to him, they were turned away; however, trained farmers were welcome.

The Association obtained a 567-acre farm with a castle-like great house in Gross-Breesen from a wealthy Polish Jew named Willi Rohr who fled Germany in 1936. They hired Dr. Curt Werner Bondy (1894-1972) to establish a two-year farm-training program for Jewish teens with Gestapo approval. The teens were carefully selected from the Jewish Youth Organization (BDJJ) and, with some exceptions, their parents paid for their tuition.



1936 photograph of The Castle at Gross-Breesen.

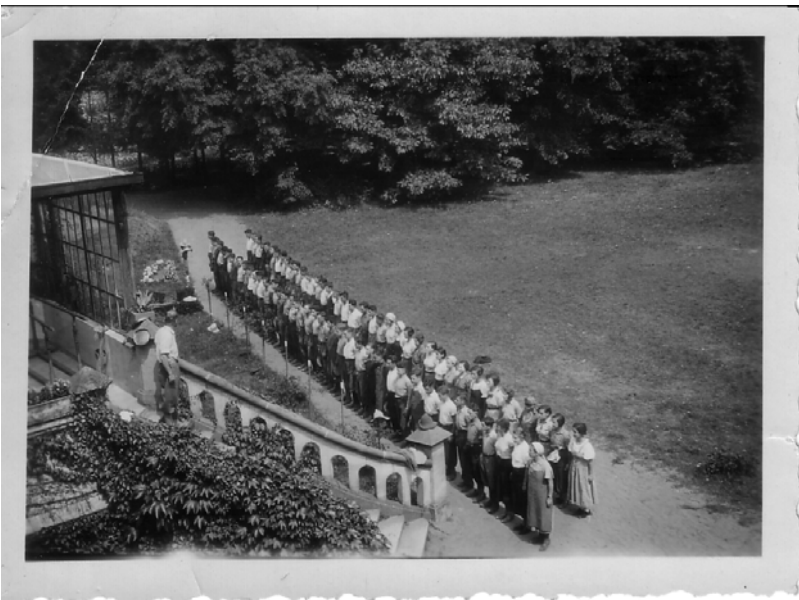
George was one of the first to be admitted to Gross-Breesen in May of 1936. He was seventeen at the time and considered somewhat of an “expert” because he had helped his father with a team of horses in his hauling business and had worked for his grandparents who had two cows. He went on scholarship because his family could not afford to pay the tuition. Most of the other teens who entered the program had little if any experience with farming. There is a story that got a good laugh at the time when one of those novices was learning to milk cows. He started with the first cow and gradually got the hang of it until he tried to milk a “cow” further down the row that turned out to be a bull.

The young people soon learned that Curt Bondy’s program was far from ordinary. He and his farm manager Erwin Scheier not only offered hands-on experience in animal husbandry and field farming, but the program included training in carpentry, machine repair, languages, classical music, philosophy, history, and religion. Over and over again, the writings of Gross-Breeseners express their deep gratitude for “Herr Bo,” as they called him, and the high level of expectation and trust he demanded in their work and attitude development.

Bondy held a PhD in Social Psychology from Hamburg University. He was a full professor from 1930 to 1933 at Gottingen and was also the director of a pioneering prison program for juvenile offenders at Eisenach/Thuringin. One of his books, *Pedagogical Problems in the Treatment of Juvenile Offenders*, printed in 1925, was considered to be of high importance in the field and was reissued in modern times. He also was the co-founder with Martin Buber of the Jewish Center for Adult Education in Frankfurt/Main in 1933.

George’s intellectual mentor has always been the great Jewish humanist philosopher, Martin Buber. Bondy arranged for Buber to visit Gross-Breesen and George had the opportunity to meet him and hear him speak before the students and faculty. Bondy applied Buber’s philosophy by stressing the value of a caring community at Gross-Breesen as well as helping the young people think through why intelligent hard work leads to good results for themselves and others. Indeed, years later, it would be a sign with a quote from Buber in front of the Unitarian Church of Barneveld that would convince George that he should try out that church.

One should not get the impression that Bondy’s program was liberal in terms of being loose in structure. It was quite typically “German” in structure. The young people lined up in military fashion in front of the big porch of the castle after breakfast to get their orders for the day. Herr Bo would shout “Herschaften!” to bring people to attention, meaning “Better be quiet and listen!” Groups of several students each would be assigned to tending to the animals, plowing, woodworking, machine repair, cleaning, weeding, etc. There were short breaks in mid-morning and mid-afternoon and opportunities to clean up before lunch and dinner.



1936 Photo of young people lined up outside The Castle getting their assignments for the day from Dr. Curt Bondy —at Gross-Breesen.

Girls slept on the first floor of the castle and boys on the second, often twelve to a room in bunk beds. Each room had a student leader. In rotation, several boys and girls were selected to get up early at 4 and 4:30 AM to prepare breakfast and milk the cows. There were around one hundred students at any one time at Gross-Breesen. During the period from 1936 to 1940, two-hundred-forty people took part in the farm-training program.

Although male and female roles were somewhat separate, with boys doing the more physical work and girls doing the more domestic work, boys took their turn cleaning rooms and washing dishes and girls learned horticulture and the milking of cows. All put in extra hours in the fields during harvest time.

Most of the students were oblivious to the great suffering going on among the Jews outside Gross-Breesen, but their leaders knew and were frantically seeking ways to set up emigration processes to other countries. At first, there was an effort to establish a group farm in Brazil. One graduate, Hans Rosenthal, was successful in starting a coffee plantation there but further emigration was frustrated when the Brazilian government demanded that additional people would have to convert to Catholicism.

A more successful plan took place in Virginia where a wealthy benefactor, William B. Thalheimer, donated land for a communal farm named Hyde Farmlands. Eventually, thirty-seven Gross-Breeseners would escape to there with papers proving to the Nazis and the U.S. Government that they each owned shares of the land. A group of thirty-one were able to emigrate to Australia and several went to Israel, Kenya, England, and Argentina.

On November 9, 1938, came the horrendous Kristallnacht (Crystal Night). Nazi police and citizen supporters were organized all over Germany to break into Jewish businesses and homes, smashing windows, plundering goods, and arresting men 18 years old and older. The Gestapo arrived at Gross-Breesen with a bus without warning. They herded all the students and faculty outside, sent the women and girls into the barn and the boys under age 18 into a shed. The older boys and men were forced onto the bus.

The evenings were far from free time. Most evenings had a music program and lecture on German history, philosophy, or religion. Some evenings featured plays put on by students, and they participated in the Sabbath services. One outstanding special event was the wedding in 1937 of Wastl and Lisbet Neumeier. George read a psalm during the service. Two other students, Richard and Ruth Bendit, became engaged that day.



1937 A teen boy inside his room on the second floor of the Castle at Gross-Breesen.

They then proceeded to take axes and smash the furniture inside the castle. The Gross-Breeseners were shocked to learn later that one of the area's non-Jewish young farmers, whom they knew and considered a friend, destroyed the grand piano. Bondy was especially distressed at that. He was the pianist for the evening music programs.

The bus left without a word about where they were going and delivered the older male students and staff to the concentration camp at Buchenwald. Curt Bondy was among them. Bondy's secretary, Ruth Hadra and the kitchen supervisor, Ruth Scheier, took over the program for the remaining students.

George had left Gross-Breesen in the fall of 1937 and worked on a sheep farm in Bavaria for about a year. He then went to his girlfriend's house in Frankfurt where he was preparing to emigrate to Hyde Farmlands in Virginia. The Gestapo came to the house on November 9 and took him immediately without allowing him to take anything with him. By coincidence, he was also brought to Buchenwald concentration camp. When he discovered the others, they gave him support and a blanket. With a wry smile, he calls that "the first Gross-Breesen reunion."

Meanwhile, two supporters of Gross-Breesen found out where the men and boys were and rushed to Berlin to get papers approved for them. One had already had his head shaved and had to wear a hat pulled down over his ears so that he would not be recognized as a Jew. Somehow they were successful getting the papers approved by the Gestapo; but, on hurrying back, they were distracted briefly by a friend on the train platform, only to watch in horror as the train went off with the papers in their suitcase. They were able to convince the Station Master to call ahead and have the suitcase taken off at the next stop and stored for them until they got there. They feared being arrested at any moment, but finally got back to Gross-Breesen with the precious papers.

Miracles happen! The faculty and students were released after about five weeks of negotiations. It took eight weeks for George to be released. Some of them would flee Germany; others would remain and meet a tragic end.



Groß Breesen, i.e. Brezno, today. Photo courtesy Michael Kaplan

In February of 1939, George left for Holland from his girlfriend Luise's house in Frankfurt. It took another year of negotiations for him to get his American visa and go to Virginia. He spent eighteen months working at the communal Hyde Farmlands and then he set out on his own. Luise and her family also went to Hyde Farmlands in 1939 but her love interest in George ended in that period. She left Hyde Farmlands and eventually married another Gross-Breeseners. Indeed, the communal style of farming did not work. Most people wanted to own their own farm or business. The experiment lasted about two years and then was abandoned.

George met Jessie while he was up a ladder picking cherries at a farm in Pennsylvania. Their courtship did not last long, for along came the war and he enlisted in the U.S. Army in November of 1942. He and Jessie were married in October of 1943 and by 1944 he was fighting in the U.S. Infantry in France and Germany. All along they saved every penny they could, and after the war they bought the farm in Upstate New York with the help of the GI Bill. They have two girls, Heidi

and Heller. After thirty-four years of farming, they sold the farm in Remsen and bought a Victorian octagon house across from the Unitarian Church of Barneveld. Their children are now adults. Heidi is married to Peter Murrell and they have two boys: Noah and Abraham.

George and Jessie continue to be leaders in the church and community. George works on the Program Committee and is most proud of turning Unity Hall into a community center to the benefit of both church and community. He also has been the local coordinator of the Guest At Your Table Program for over ten years, an annual intergenerational fund raising program to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Jessie arranges the flowers and wreaths at the front of the sanctuary and her drawing of the church is featured on its stationary. She has taught art courses at Munson Williams Proctor Institute in Utica and her paintings are highly sought after by museums and private art collectors.



Recent photograph of George and Jessie Landecker in their home in Barneveld, NY, with Jessie's paintings in the background.

Not all Gross-Breeseners were as lucky as George. About half of them died in various concentration camps and many of their family members perished likewise. A diary exists in the Yad Vashem in Israel by one young man from Gross-Breesen, Guenther Marcuse, who died at Auschwitz on March 23, 1944. George lost twenty members of his family, including a brother and grandparents, but his parents and sisters Eva and Hanna and other brother Martin were able to escape. His sister Eva had a very close call. She was fifteen at the time and had been trained to take the part of Hermia in the play "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to be performed at Gross-

Breesen. War had just been declared against Poland in September of 1939. People at Gross-Breesen could hear the sounds of the battle in the distance. After that first performance, Eva fled to Berlin to join her family. They managed to get to Genoa and then to Santiago, Chile.

Most other Gross-Breeseners who remained at the farm were herded into concentration camps and perished. The estate was turned into a labor camp to support the German Army with Polish prisoners for slave labor.

Dr. Bondy escaped from Holland to the United States and taught psychology at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. Later he returned to Germany and continued his teaching career at the University of Hamburg. He never married. On the day of his funeral in January of 1972, one of his students from Gross-Breesen, Ernst Cramer, said: "In those days, when one started to despair of the sense of life, Bondy showed and taught us the true essentials of life."

George was able to organize the first reunion of Gross-Breesen survivors in 1984 in Utica and Barneveld. Two years later, he assisted in organizing a reunion in Israel. Eighty people went from all over the world and the specialness of that experience is among the most cherished memories of the dwindling numbers, most of whom are now in their 80s. A recent reunion developed a fourth collection of writings called "Roundbrief-2003" containing many touching tributes by the children and grandchildren to their Gross-Breesen parents. All of those parents led successful lives in their work and in volunteer humanitarian service to their communities



# *Travel in Time Play*

*Bob Munson*

*Unitarian Society of New Brunswick, NJ*

*New Brunswick, NJ*

*This is a "TV News" script reporting on Rev. William Ellery Channing's historic 1819 sermon in Baltimore, Maryland. The approach is to have TV reporters "go back in time" to the event as well as report on earlier and later events to provide context. The intent is to have kids play the parts, both as an outlet for their energy and to involve them in the material.*

Cast:

Alicia - Anchor #1

Brian - Anchor #2

Casey - Roving Time Reporter

Diane - Interviewer at Rev. Channing's sermon

Edwards - Ian - Attendees at the service

Alicia: Good Morning from the UU-Span Broadcasting Network. We're coming to you today from our studios in New Brunswick, NJ. We have an exciting show for you today about a most important figure in UU History. Here's Brian to tell you more about it.

Brian: Thank you Alicia. Today's report is about William Ellery Channing, an American minister who preached a most important Sermon in 1819.

Alicia: What was going on at that time in America, Brian?

Brian: Glad you asked. To answer that question, we now switch to Casey, our Roving Time Reporter. Casey, can you hear me?

Casey: Yes, I can Brian. I'm reporting from 1815 in Boston, Massachusetts. James Monroe is president of the United States. Practical steamships were developed in 1807 but wind power is still the best way for people to travel across the Atlantic. The U.S. is only 30 years old and is still recovering from the War of 1812 with Britain. Just ten short years ago Lewis and Clark made their famous trip to the Pacific.

Besides politics, religion is a major topic. Just a few years ago, Harvard Divinity School began teaching about one God with less emphasis on the Trinity. This so angered many congregations that many withdrew their financial support of Harvard and founded Andover.

Alicia: Trinity. Correct me if I'm wrong, Casey, but isn't that the Christian belief that God is three persons—the Father—God of the Old Testament, the Son—Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost—the spirit that people experienced after Jesus' Crucifixion.

Casey: Right you are, Alicia. With all of the differences that separate Baptists, Episcopalians, Catholics, etc. one thing they all agreed on was the Trinity.

Brian: Thank you for that background, Casey. We now take you to Diane in 1819. Is that a church behind you Diane?

Diane: Yes, it is. It is the First Independent Church of Baltimore in Baltimore, Maryland, where, on this fine day, Jared Sparks is being ordained as a new minister. William Ellery Channing is preaching the sermon to a packed church. Ministers from as far away as Boston, Massachusetts and Richmond, Virginia, have come to attend the service. Word has it that Rev. Channing will break new ground this morning, but unfortunately we

do not have an advance copy of his sermon. Also attending are a number of ministers from local congregations—Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists.

Alicia: I see that some people are now leaving the church behind you—the service must be over. Try to get people to talk about what they heard this morning.

Diane: You, kind sir, can you tell us who you are, where you are from and what you thought of the ordination this morning?

Edwards: My name is Rev. Edwards from Washington DC. This was a beautiful ceremony for Rev. Sparks and I'm sure he will remember it his whole life.

Diane: And what of Rev. Channing's sermon?

Edwards: Most remarkable! Rev. Channing called for a new denomination, breaking away entirely from the Trinitarian Congregationalists. Rev. Channing finds the doctrines of this new faith inspiring and challenges us to spread the word to others.

Diane: Thank you. And you madam, tell us your name and what you thought of the sermon.

Felicia: My name is Felicia Demming, wife of Rev. Demming in Philadelphia. I found the sermon inspiring, a breath of fresh air. I particularly liked what was said about reason: "God has given us a rational nature, and will call us to account for it. We may let it sleep, but we do so at our peril."

Jenny: If I may add, I also like what he said about the Bible: "The Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books." There are so many who believe the Bible to be literally true, without question, even though it was written thousands of years ago.

Diane: Thank you. And you sir, what did you think?

Gregory: I am Gregory Hancock from Baltimore. I am the pastor of the Episcopal church, just a few blocks away and I am appalled! Rev. Channing broke from all of Christianity by denying the Trinity and affirming the Unity of God. Who is Jesus? Just a human being?

Diane: And you sir, what did you think of the sermon?

Harriet: I'm Harriet Snowe. To be honest, I heard very little of it. I was in the back and he spoke with such a quiet voice.

Diane: Sorry about that. And you sir?

Ian: I'm Ian Lancaster from New Brunswick. I think Rev. Channing has started a firestorm. He has angered many God-fearing people with his words, "Much stubble is yet to be burned; much rubbish to be removed; many gaudy decorations, which a false taste has hung around Christianity, must be swept away; and the earth-born fogs, which have long shrouded it, must be scattered, before this divine fabric will rise before us in its native and awful majesty..."

Alicia: Diane, your last speaker spoke the truth. We return now to Casey, our Roving Time Reporter.

Casey: I'm here in Boston in 1825. We just got word that another church nearby has voted whether or not to be Unitarian or Trinitarian. There was much heated debate over many months as nearby churches voted one way or another. These votes have split congregations, separated friends and families. After the vote, no matter who "wins" a group of disgusted parishioners leaves and begins another congregation.

There are now 125 new Unitarian congregations following Rev. Channing's historic speech. Rev. Channing just started today the American Unitarian Association.

Brian: Thank you, Casey. That's all the news we have for this morning. This is Brian...

Alicia: ...and Alicia signing off for UU-Span!

Author's notes:

This was put together rather quickly by Bob Munson of the Unitarian Society of New Brunswick, NJ, USA. This is just a first draft so feel free to adapt, add, cut, improve, etc. No claim is made to historical accuracy, though the quotes attributed to the sermon are taken from what I had as a copy. Also Harriet's remarks about Channing being inaudible I had heard in a sermon about the event.

Presentation comments:

You'll note that the characters names range alphabetically from A to J. Feel free to change them, as well as the location to your home church.

Please provide any feedback or editing changes to me at [rmunsonnj@yahoo.com](mailto:rmunsonnj@yahoo.com)

Thank you.

Links: First Unitarian Church of Baltimore <http://www.toad.net/-firstubalt>

Dictionary of UU Biography <http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/>

# *The Beacon Press Discussion Guides for Unitarian Universalist Communities*

*Tom Hallock  
Beacon Press  
Boston, MA*

*A resource for adult religious education or adult discussion groups seeking to examine issues of concern to the UU movement*

Available online at <http://www.beacon.org/uuguides/contentuu.html>.

## **About the Program**

Ideal tools for life-long learning in UU congregations, Beacon Press books have often led the UU community to identify areas of concern. With this program, we aspire to strengthen the social justice and spiritual work of the denomination.

This program aims to:

- deepen awareness of social justice issues in the UU community,
- provide the finest and most enlightened thinking about these issues as tools to enrich discussions within UU communities,
- create a new understanding of the work of Beacon Press, in UU congregations and communities.

The Beacon Press Discussion Guides provide a flexible structure for a short-term, small-group discussion program using Beacon books. The guides offer support materials for group leaders with all levels of experience, laying out information in such a way that preparation time is minimal.

Please contact Tom Hallock ([thallock@beacon.org](mailto:thallock@beacon.org)) if you have any questions or comments about these guides. Your feedback about their content and suggestions for future titles will aid us in our commitment to meet the program needs of UU congregations.

All discussion guides for Beacon titles may be viewed at our web site, [www.beacon.org](http://www.beacon.org). Many of the guides on our web site are also available as Adobe Acrobat .pdf files for easier printing.

## **Coming Soon**

*Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals*  
John A. Buehrens

Organized into an introduction and fifteen sessions (with suggestions about how to condense or shorten the curriculum, if desired), the study guide will provide questions, exercises and additional resources that will help leaders and participants use *Understanding the Bible* for their own exploration of the Bible. In addition to providing ample time for participants' responses to their reading, each session will focus on one or two particular biblical texts or stories and will offer specific tools for engaging more deeply with these passages. The guide will also suggest a variety of exercises to address different learning styles and will look for ways to encourage the community building that is an essential part of every religious education course.

## Program History

This program was developed in collaboration with the UUA Religious Education Department and Congregational, District and Extension Services and was funded through a grant by the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock.

*A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*

John A. Buehrens and Forrest Church

An introduction to Unitarian Universalism for searchers, newcomers, and lifelong learners

*Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*

Laurent A. Parks, Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen and Sharon Daloz Parks

Participants explore their commitment to the common good and strategies to sustain such commitment in a changing world (three sessions).

*Fist Stick Knife Gun: A Personal History of Violence in America*

Geoffrey Canada

A memoir of a young man's struggles with violence fuels discussion about issues that concern today's youth and how communities can address them (two sessions).

*The Force of Spirit*

Scott Russell Sanders

For adults of all ages, this program creates a safe space for personal sharing and reflection on the call of spirit in our lives (three sessions).

*Free For All: Defending Liberty in America Today*

Wendy Kaminer

What are the most important elements of liberty in America today? What is liberty in America today? As a nation, we preach "liberty and justice for all," and prize freedom—but what exactly is that freedom, and at what cost is it bestowed? The questions raised in the program will be, and should be, difficult to answer (three sessions).

*Kindred*

Octavia Butler

This program provides a framework for Unitarian Universalist discussion groups to engage in reflective dialogue about the legacy of slavery, the connections between historical burdens and present realities, and our vision for shaping our future (three sessions).

*Lifecraft: The Art of Meaning in the Everyday*

Forrest Church

From "one of our leading pastors" (Dan Wakefield), a joyous book on the art of finding meaning in daily life.

*Lifelines: Holding On (and Letting Go)*

Forrest Church

Popular writer and minister Forrest Church explores the lifelines that can sustain us in times of trouble.

*Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us*

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker

Models a process by which individuals and religious communities can reflect on their personal and shared histories in order to challenge limiting theologies and reshape our common truths.

*The Students Are Watching: Schools and the Moral Contract*

Theodore R. Sizer and Nancy Faust Sizer

This program encourages reflections and contributions of young adults as well as parents, educators and other adults who finished their years of formal schooling, acknowledging that we all have a stake in the nature of moral education (three sessions).

*Taking Retirement: A Beginner's Diary*

Carl H. Klaus

This program has relevance for all adults of all ages, creates a space for authentic sharing between UU elders and encourages intergenerational dialogue about aging and life transitions (two sessions).

*Waist High in the World: A Life Among the Nondisabled*

Nancy Mairs

In her book, Mairs shares her own insights on the nature and meaning of disability in her life. This program encourages the reflections and contributions of all people, whatever their experience with disability (three sessions).

*What Is Marriage For? The Strange Social History of Our Most Intimate Institution*

E. J. Graff

Participants investigate past and current marriage laws and customs and develop personal definitions of marriage (two sessions).

**Ordering Information**

You can order these and other Beacon books for your discussion group from the UUA Bookstore. The bookstore offers a 10% discount with orders of 5-9 copies of a single title, and 20% off 10 or more copies.

Tel: 1-800-215-9076, Fax: 1-617-723-4805, [www.uua.org/bookstore](http://www.uua.org/bookstore)

Beacon Press

25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108

[www.beacon.org](http://www.beacon.org)

# *Earth Charter*

*Roger Davies  
Halifax, Nova Scotia*

## INVITATION

The Earth is our home

- We are living at a very important time and we must save the Earth.
- All the peoples of the Earth form one big family.
- Our great task is to *respect Nature* and to *live in peace*.

We are part of an immense universe

- In this universe, our world is full of life, with lots of plants, animals and people.
- We depend on the water, the earth and the air and feel joy to live in this world.
- There are people who misuse the water, the earth and the air and who do harm to animals, plants and other people.
- Unfortunately there are wars, people who go hungry, people who have no home, nor school, or that are ill, with no doctor or medicine.

What must we do?

- We must help so that everybody in the world has what they need to live.
- We, the children, *will make a small effort every day* to change the bad things into good things; we will treat everybody well and share better what we have.
- If we help and love others, *we will live in joy and happiness*.
- We ask an effort from grown-ups: parents, teachers and neighbors

## RESPECT AND CARE FOR LIVING THINGS

1. Know about and respect people, animals and plants

- Because they are living things.
- Because they are necessary.
- Because they produce useful and beautiful things.

2. Treat people, animals and plants well

- Because they form part of nature.
- Because they need protection.
- Because they give you what you need to live.

3. Help your companions and give them your friendship

- Because they need it.
- Because you can do a lot for them.
- Because you want to share.

4. You can help see to it that more people enjoy good and beautiful things

- Because you respect everything that lives.
- Because you want there to be happiness.
- Because you are preparing a place for the children yet to be born.

## IN LIFE EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

5. Admire how plants, animals and people live

- Watch out that nobody does them harm.
- Ask for them to be protected.

- Call out for air, water, sun and earth for everyone.

6. Keep the place where you live clean

- Keep the Earth clean and save water.
- Collect litter.
- Try to keep your things tidy.

7. Always respect these three things:

- The life of any living thing.
- People's rights.
- The well-being of everybody.

8. Learn about the place where you live, appreciate it and share what you know

- About the living things around you.
- About the people from other places and countries.
- About what you need to live healthily.

#### EVERYBODY MUST HAVE WHAT THEY NEED

9. You will help to see that there are no poor

- Everybody must have what they need to live properly.
- All children must have schools.
- People in need should get the most help.

10. Help others so that they can live better

- Those who have the most must be the ones who help the most.
- You must only desire to have what you need.
- You must learn to share what you have.

11. Boys and girls are equally important

- All children should learn and grow up together.
- If a child is ill he or she must be taken care of.
- Women have the same rights as men.
- Every family will be protected.

12. Always defend the idea that any child

- Boy or girl,
  - From a rich family or a poor one,
  - Black, white or of another color,
  - From this country or another one,
  - Who talks our language or a different one,
  - Who is Christian, Muslim, of another religion or who has no religion,
- should have food to eat, a house, a family, rest, a school, friends, play and happiness and if they are ill, a doctor and medicine.

#### NO TO WAR, YES TO PEACE

13. Make an effort to see that there is no fighting where you live

- Find out about the way of life of the people in your neighborhood or village.
- You must be able to say what you think and to meet with whom you like.
- Everybody must look after their surroundings.

14. Study, paying special attention to things which help you to get along with other people

- You must study with interest everything that can help you to be a better person.



- The media will help you to understand the difficulties and problems of people around the world today.
- The better educated you are, the better you will know how to live.

15. Look after and respect other people, animals and plants

- At home.
- At school.
- In your neighborhood or village.

16. You will help to see that people live in peace

- Everybody must understand and help each other.
- We must never make war again, nor make more arms.
- There must be peace around the world.

#### TO SUM UP

- We humans must look after and improve the place where we live; to do this we must live in a new way, using the good things that we already have today.
- We must speak with all people so that we profit from existing cultures and inventions.
- The people of other countries, languages, customs and religions will help us; in this way we will learn new ways of living and treating other people.
- We will put care and effort into dealing with difficult situations.
- If we work together, we can improve the world a lot, because everybody is useful and can help.
- Let's hope it is said of us: "They are trying hard to live in peace"; and "they know how to look after the Earth."

The Earth Charter says what we must do to save the world:

- Respect nature, respect human rights, organize that everyone has what they need and always lives in peace.
- The Earth Charter will help to conserve and improve the world in which we live.
- The Earth Charter must be law for all countries and all peoples.

The Earth Charter was first written in 1992. Later it has been added to and improved. We ask for it to be approved, accepted and put into practice by every country of the world.

## Autumn Deity Festival

*Reprinted with permission from the Blessed Bee, A Pagan Family Newsletter*

Which Goddess or God presides over your family? In India, many homes have shrines to honor special deities, places where family members can place flowers, food, or other offerings, light incense and candles, and spend time connecting with Spirit. Most villages and towns hold yearly festivals to honor the deities of that place, with flower-garlanded statues paraded through the streets and a great deal of music, singing, and celebration. We can create beautiful, meaningful festivities with our own families to honor the aspect of Mystery that speaks most clearly and deeply to you. As the cold and dark begin to gain strength in the waning time of year, it can be heartening to make a little joyous celebration, a blessing on our homes to charge and prepare them for the winter time we'll spending indoors together.

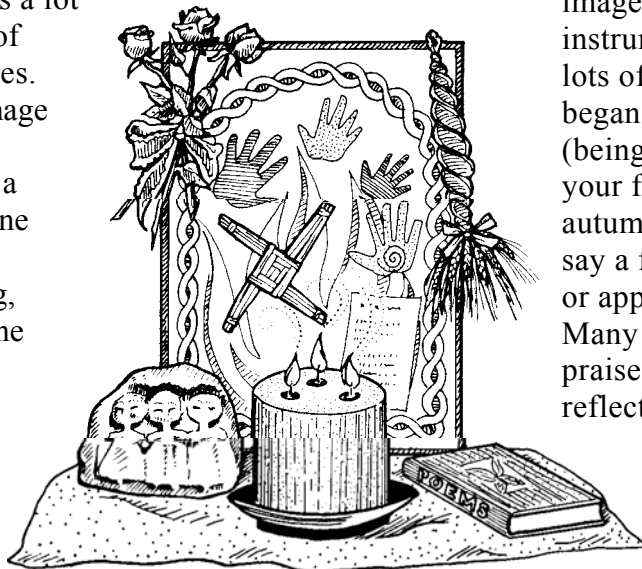
First, have a family meeting to choose the Goddess or God you want to honor (and if consensus can't be reached, just celebrate more than one). If your house is like mine, images of the deities abound: there is a Kali night-light in the bathroom and a carved soapstone Sheela-na-Gig on our kitchen altar. A magnetic monkey-faced Hanuman opens his heart on the fridge, and a brass Shiva dances on the windowsill, while Kwan Yin sits serenely on the bedroom chest of drawers and Demeter smiles from a vase on the bookshelf. But beautiful Irish Brigid of the triple fire is the Goddess in charge here. A friend living nearby says the Green Man, Lord of the Wild Wood, is the guardian of her family, while another honors Artemis in her woodsy home. Cuddle up with your family and talk about your favorite choices and why they are special to you: reflecting on the myriad aspects of Mystery is a lovely way to spend an autumn evening, and our children's preferences tell us a lot about the nature of their deepest selves.

Next, create an image of your deity of choice. Here is a chance for everyone to get involved, painting, sculpting, and decorating. The point is not to produce a great work of art, but to have some family fun expressing yourselves, and your affection for the

Goddess or God and each other. And this does not have to be literal at all: my family, for instance, might choose to make a Brigid collage on cardboard with hot-glued flame-colored roses and wheat crosses, a Celtic interlock border, outlines of each family member's hands, and snippets of poetry. Each person does what she or he can do and enjoys doing.

Set aside a time for your festival. It can be fun to wear special costumes for it, but they don't need to be elaborate; the Green Man family could simply wear green clothes or string leaves together as crowns, while we might paint Brigid's crosses on our hands.

Decide on an altar-space where your image can stay, preferably a place that is somewhat out of the way to allow for quiet time to be spent there, with some room in front of it for individual offerings (a chest or small table is ideal). Now the festival can begin! Starting at your altar, make a grand procession carrying your image all through the house, singing as you go, celebrating the magical presence of this powerful face of the Mystery in your home. Those who aren't actually carrying the image could drum or rattle, play a musical instrument or clash pots and pans together. Make lots of noise! When you end up back where you began, place your image on its altar. Light a candle (being mindful if there are very young children in your family) and make an offering of flowers or autumn leaves; each person may want to say a few words. Afterwards, feast on foods sacred or appropriate to your Goddess or God. Many blessings on you and your family, and joyful praise to the countless faces of Mystery that are reflected in our own.



*- Cait Johnson is the author of Witch in the Kitchen, and Celebrating the Great Mother (co-authored with Maura D. Shaw), a handbook for earth-honoring parenting.*

## ***AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ANGUS H. MacLEAN AWARD***



**Angus Hector MacLean  
(1892-1969)**

***The Angus H. MacLean award is presented yearly to a person who has made outstanding contributions to religious education over the years. It is awarded by the Alumni Association of the St. Lawrence University Theological School, and the Unitarian Universalist Association.***

In creating the award, the Alumni Association said, "Angus H. MacLean, Dean and Teacher of Religious Education at St. Lawrence University Theological School, was one of the pioneers in Unitarian Universalist religious education. It is appropriate that we recognize the inspiration and warmth that Angus gave to us all and his great concern for the religious nurture of both children and adults."

***A nominee for the award should be a UU who has achieved several of the following:***

- ❖ contributed to the quality of religious education at the local level
- ❖ raised the quality of religious education at the denominational level
- ❖ has affected more than one congregation
- ❖ has influenced religious education beyond our denomination
- ❖ has been innovative in the use of religious education resources
- ❖ has brought dignity to the profession of religious education

Nominations for this award can be made by anyone and must be submitted in writing by April 1, 2004. Nominations need to include biographical information about the nominee (name, address, telephone number) and specific qualities, achievements, contributions, and data that provide the Award Committee with information on the criteria listed above.

***Please submit nominations and supporting evidence to: MacLean Award Committee  
Attn: Adrienne Ross  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
25 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108***

## The Angus H. MacLean Award

In recognition of the great concern for the religious nurture of both children and adults shown by Angus H. MacLean, late Dean and teacher in the St. Lawrence Theological School, this award was established in 1971 by the St. Lawrence Alumni Association in his memory. It is administered by the Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group of the Unitarian Universalist Association and is awarded each year for excellence in the field of religious education.

2003 - Tirell Kimball  
2002 - Pat Ellenwood  
2001 - Elizabeth R. Stevens  
2000 - Jeanellen Ryan  
1999 - Carol A. Taylor  
1998 - Frank E. Robertson  
1997 - Marjorie C. Skwire  
1996 - Mary Ann Moore  
1995 - Norma Veridan  
1994 - Dorothy Tilden Spoerl  
1993 - Fred and Betty Ward  
1992 - Junella Elizabeth Hanson  
1991 - Eleanor Boyles Hunting  
1990 - Wayne B. Arnason  
1989 - Alice M. Harrison  
1988 - Ann Fields  
1987 - Barbara Marshman  
1986 - Robert L'Hommedieu Miller  
1985 - Margaret K. Gooding  
1984 - Richard S. Gilbert  
1983 - Elizabeth Holden Baker  
1982 - Gordon B. McKeeman  
1981 - Jean Starr Williams  
1980 - Til Evans  
1979 - Heather McDonald  
1978 - Christine M. Wetzel  
1977 - Eugene B. Navias  
1976 - Hugo and Barbara Holleroth  
1975 - Roberta Nelson  
1974 - Margaret Odell  
1973 - Mary Elizabeth Anastos  
1972 - Joan Welch Goodwin

# *Website Created Specifically for Lay Leaders of UU Congregations*

*Harlan Limpert*

*Director for Lay Leadership Development, UUA*

*Boston, MA*

How many times have you had a question you *knew* other lay leaders had struggled with, but you weren't sure how to tap into their experience?

How many times have you wished you could find resources more easily on the uua.org website?

How many times have you found some useful material on the uua.org website one day, and couldn't find it the next?

If you've had any one of these experiences, a new resource might be useful to you.

It's a new website designed specifically for lay leaders and was launched at GA. It's called **InterConnections Resources** (<http://www.uua.org/programs/layleader/>). It's a significant expansion of the highly acclaimed newsletter that has been useful to lay leaders (and others!) since 1998. It was designed to be a "one-stop shopping" experience for those lay leaders looking for resources that will help them be successful in their roles.

**InterConnections Resources** consists of four parts:

**QuickStart**—a link to the three most useful web links, articles, and books for people who have just assumed a new role and need basic information immediately. For instance, if you've just become Membership Chair, you can click here to find the information about that role you'll need right away.

**Events for Leadership**—this is a searchable database which will help locate conferences, workshops, classes, programs, and other events to help make lay leaders more effective in their roles.

**FAQ**—the third part of the website is a list of more than 100 Frequently Asked Questions about most aspects of congregational life and the UUA. Here's one question in the FAQ: *How can we improve our annual canvass?* There are six answers to this question including references to the UUA's Office of Congregational Fundraising Services, books on the topic, the Congregational Handbook, and articles in *InterConnections*. Another question: *How can we get people to volunteer?* There are two answers to this question, both of them articles in *InterConnections*. Each article has a clickable link to instantly bring up the article.

The most frequent resources cited in the FAQ are UUA staff, *InterConnections*, and information available at district offices. Other resources include the UUA Congregational Handbook, books in the UUA and Alban Institute bookstores and elsewhere, and *UU World* magazine.

**InterConnections**—the fourth part of the website is the *InterConnections* website itself, which provides access to all five years of *InterConnections* articles and permits searches by keywords.

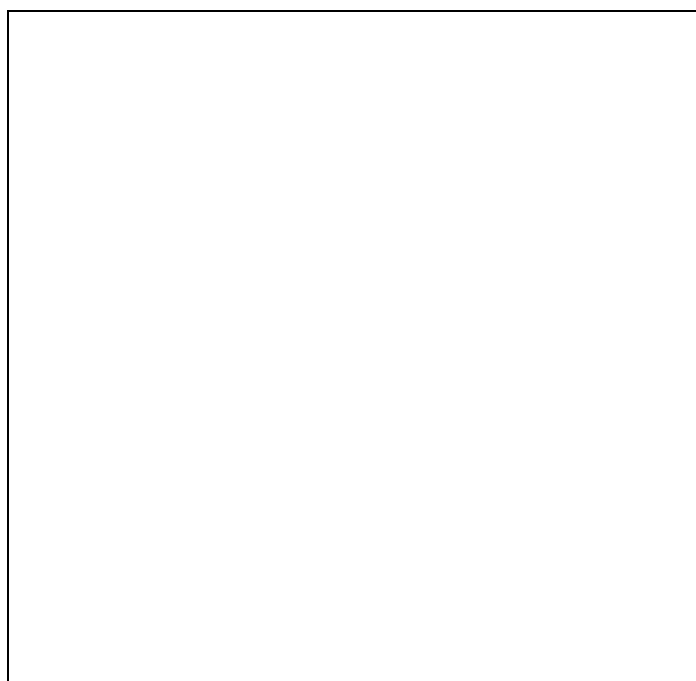
This website, like human beings themselves, is growing and changing and becoming better all the time. Check it out and see if it might help you serve your congregation more effectively and perhaps even with less effort.

The URL is <http://www.uua.org/programs/layleader>. Or lay leaders can simply go to [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org), and click on the **InterConnections Resources** link on the left sidebar.

# *Top Ten Reasons to Teach Religious Education*

*Leia Durland-Jones  
Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church  
Charlottesville, VA*

- ◆ The opportunity to build relationships with people of a different age than yourself.
- ◆ A chance to share your life experience with those coming after you—to pass on your wisdom.
- ◆ Our kids are counting on you.
- ◆ It's fun!
- ◆ Teaching helps you articulate what you believe.
- ◆ The opportunity to work with a team of other adults in the church and deepen your relationship with them.
- ◆ A chance to help nurture and develop the leaders of tomorrow.
- ◆ If not you, then who?
- ◆ The opportunity to have first-hand knowledge about what we teach our children in UU religious education.
- ◆ We rely on the support of volunteers to serve as teachers. We need you!



## ***Our Covenant***

*Shared by, Rev. Deborah Mero  
Interim Minister (2000-2002)  
All Souls Church Unitarian Universalist  
Brattleboro, VT*

We build our church on a foundation of love and covenant with one another,  
To freely explore our values and honor our diversity as a source of communal strength,  
To accept responsibility for our individual acts and promote justice and peace,  
To celebrate the joys of discovery, embracing the fullest measure of our humanity,  
To communicate with kindness and support,  
To serve with compassion and commitment,  
To openly share our laughter and tears and,  
To show reverence for the divine in all that it is.

Maintaining Right Relations: Expectations and Remedies (adopted 5/6/01)

The well-being, strength, and reputation of our church depend on a sense of fellowship among the members, friends, and staff, which thrives in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and cooperation. Within such an atmosphere, differences of opinion and their resolution through compromise or consensus can enhance a sense of community. However, differences or misunderstandings that go unresolved and descend into prolonged conflict can threaten the social fabric of our church. We recognize that conflict may arise from time to time and that, when it does, its management and resolution are paramount. We recognize that such conflict may occur between members, members and staff, members and minister, or staff and minister. This document is intended to identify the steps to be followed in our church should unresolved conflicts arise.

We preface these suggestions with the commonsense wisdom that we all should adhere to the UU Principles and Purposes and our own church covenant, exhibiting behaviors that enhance the dignity and inherent worth of all participants: expressing sincere appreciation; allowing for human fallibility; dealing directly with each other; speaking softly; being creative in problem solving; maintaining a sense of humor; actively listening and clarifying what we hear; letting others have their say; respecting boundaries that may differ from our own; respecting confidentiality; refraining from harmful gossip about others; and speaking honestly. Each person, regardless of his or her role in the church—including clergy, board members, non-member staff, etc.—is expected to live to this covenant within the context of their relationship with the church community.

We all, as responsible members of this community, have an obligation to bring to light concerns about things which threaten the health of our church. This should be done by using existing procedures, proper committees, etc. As members of this community, we have an obligation to find out what those procedures are, in a conflict or in any other dealing with the church, just as we have responsibilities to support the church, honor our pledges, show up, fulfill our commitments for committees, and strive to be on time. In short, we owe each other respectful participation in the life of our church.

This document is a policy statement that fits within a set of documents, some of which are still in the development stage. These include:

Bylaws (which may require revisions);  
Sexual Harassment Policy,  
Employment Policies,  
Membership Handbook that may include committee and membership responsibilities,  
A referral list to find the names of committee chairs and members,

Procedural items such as where to go to learn how to make copies, put something on the church calendar, and any number of other items that may come up.

### Conflict Resolution: Guidelines and Suggestions for Success

Step 1) Talk directly with the person (fellow member, minister, etc.) with whom you have the disagreement. Examine your own role in the conflict. Why is this matter important to you? Do some soul searching. At this step, and at all succeeding steps that become necessary, own your issue. Anonymous complaints are not acceptable.

Get a reality check from a trusted third party. Compare your perceptions. Did they see it or hear it in the same way? Based on your telling of events and your feelings about it, would they feel the same way?

Agree on a mutually acceptable time and place to talk in private and as soon as possible after the incident.

Use “I” statements in your discussion (“I feel...” not “You did...”); use active listening.

If a direct conversation is too difficult, consider putting your thoughts into writing. Be available to hear the response.

If you feel that safety is an issue, use an appropriate third party or committee to provide a safe environment for the discussion as in step 2 below.

If the conflict is less with a person than with how they are performing a job (staff, religious educator, etc.), address the concern to the proper supervisor so that individuals are not being “supervised” from all sides.

Step 2) If unresolved, go to the minister for counseling regarding the issue.

If all parties agree that the minister is neutral and appropriate, the minister mediates.

If the minister is not appropriate, the minister will direct you to the correct mediation body.

If the conflict involves the minister, the mediation body is the Committee on Ministry.

Step 3) If still unresolved, the matter is taken before the Conflict Resolution Committee. The minister (or mediator in step 2) will call the committee into action if their mediation is unsuccessful.

This committee will be a standing committee of at least three members (appointed by the minister, Board and Committee on Ministry) selected for their mediation skills and knowledge of various aspects of church functioning, who serve on an “as needed” basis. The committee members will receive training which will be an expense identified in the annual budget. Members will excuse themselves from any conflict for which they have an inherent bias based on the individuals or the topics involved. (Additional members may be recruited, if necessary.) A single member, the entire committee, or any combination thereof can be employed in seeking conflict resolution. The committee will report to the Board on the nature and outcomes of all conflicts for which they are called into service. The committee will determine a record-keeping format that provides an abstract of events while allowing for privacy considerations.

The Conflict Resolution Committee is empowered to make recommendations, behavior contracts and judgments. They are not limited to achieving compromises; when they believe that a situation exists where behaviors are harmful to the church, or not expressive of our collective values, they can recommend counseling, limits to participation in church life, or other behavior changing strategies. Should one or both of the parties refuse to participate in the resolution process, the behavior is unchanged and/or the belief of the committee is that the behavior is a threat to the church, the matter will go to the Board for consideration.

Step 4) The Board will consider matters coming from the Conflict Resolution Committee and take action as they deem appropriate. The Board can solicit assistance from the UUA.

The Board can endorse the committee’s recommendations or it can set its own recommendations and require the recommended behavior.



The Board can take action to exclude a person from attending for a period of time based on a refusal to honor our church covenant.

The Board, given just cause, by a two-thirds majority can exclude a person from the church and the church premises and remove their name from church membership.

The Board may specify conditions for returning as a welcomed member of our community and set criteria for evaluation of compliance.

Assent of the Board by a two-thirds majority will be required for return to the community.

The Board can call a congregational meeting to address the conflict with the collective compassion and shared wisdom of the entire body.

We hope that most conflicts *can and will* be resolved by effort on the part of individuals to live our covenant and Principles and approach the individual with whom they are having a conflict directly. We anticipate that these later steps (3 and 4) will be necessary only when behaviors are seen to be dangerous (threatening to people or property), disruptive (interfering with essential church functions), or image tarnishing (driving people away). We further anticipate that all who participate in the process will use the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes to inform their own actions and will treat everyone with compassion and dignity. Finally, when no resolution is possible, concern for the well-being, openness, safety and stability of the congregation as a whole shall be given priority over the feelings or actions of any individual.

# *Religious Education Credentialing*

*Beth Williams*

*RE Credentialing Director, UUA*

*Boston, MA*

*The UUA's new Religious Education Credentialing Program is a three level program for lay religious educators who are committed to Unitarian Universalist religious education as a career and desire professional development, mentoring, recognition and adherence to standards, but do not feel called to the professional ministry. Participants can achieve status in the program based on academic achievement, integration of knowledge of lifespan religious education, and length of professional experience.*

At this writing there are 22 religious educators enrolled in the program, representing all three levels and 15 UUA districts. Several other applications for admission are currently under review. We are pleased to report two major accomplishments that took place during this year's General Assembly in Boston.

The first is that the UUA Board of Trustees approved the inclusion of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee into the UUA Bylaws as a standing committee of the Association, and the appointment of a Credentialed Religious Educator to the UUA Board of Review (also a Bylaw change). We expect that both Bylaw changes will be recommended to the General Assembly for vote in June 2004. The Religious Education Credentialing Committee oversees the Religious Education Credentialing Program, creating rules, policies and procedures, as well as evaluating candidates and requests for equivalencies for program requirements. The following persons have been appointed by the UUA Board to serve on this committee: Gail Forsyth-Vail (Credentialed Religious Educator), Liz Jones (LREDA representative), Kirk Loadman-Copeland (Parish Minister), Sue McGovern (lay leader), Betty Jo Middleton (Minister of Religious Education) and Bill Rice (lay leader). We look forward to the first meeting of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee, which will take place in Sacramento in October before this year's LREDA Fall Conference, as well as the first matching by LREDA of mentors with RE Credentialing Program participants, which will also take place in October.

The second accomplishment is that Religious Education Credentialing levels were represented in the new UUA Salary Recommendations that were released at General Assembly. The UUA Salary Recommendations are available at [www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/2004salary.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/2004salary.html).

For more information about the Religious Education Credentialing Program and application materials, visit [www.uua.org/programs/ministry/reco/recp.html](http://www.uua.org/programs/ministry/reco/recp.html), or contact Emily Farbman, RE Credentialing Assistant, at [efarbman@uua.org](mailto:efarbman@uua.org) or 617/948-6418 or Beth Williams, RE Credentialing Director at [bethwilliams@uua.org](mailto:bethwilliams@uua.org) or 617/948-6417.

Congratulations to Beth Casebolt, DRE at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Ohio Valley in Wheeling, WV, who has received Level One Religious Educator status in the Religious Education Credentialing Program. Congratulations also to the following religious educators who have transitioned from the RE Leadership Landscape Options program to the Religious Education Credentialing program as Credentialed Religious Educator:

Ann Barker, DRE, Fox Valley UU Fellowship, Appleton, WI  
 Eva Ceskava, Assistant MRE, First Unitarian Church, Albuquerque, NM  
 Betsy Darr, DRE, First UU Society, San Francisco, CA  
 Gail Forsyth-Vail, DRE, North Parish, North Andover, MA  
 Barry Horn, Religious Educator, Universalist Church, Westbrook, ME  
 Carol MacFarlane, Mountain View, CA  
 Susan Antelis Nykolak, DRE, South Nassau UU Congregation, Freeport, NY  
 Ellie Smith-Sykes, DRE, Second Congregational Society UU, Concord, NH

Mindy Whisenhunt, DRE, First Unitarian Society, Schenectady, NY  
Patti Withers, Acting DRE, First UU Church, Houston, TX

### **DRE Settlement**

By the end of 2003, look for an Online DRE Settlement system available to those religious educators who have achieved status in the Religious Education Credentialing Program. In the meantime, job opportunities for religious educators continue to be advertised on the UUA website at [www.uua.org/hr/openings.html#related](http://www.uua.org/hr/openings.html#related), on the LREDA website at [www.uua.org/lreda/content/employment.html](http://www.uua.org/lreda/content/employment.html), and through the LREDA-L and Reach-I e-mail lists.

### **Religious Education Grants**

A reminder that modest amounts of financial aid are available for many professional development opportunities (such as Renaissance Modules, Meadville/Lombard Winter Institute, summer institutes and other workshops related to religious education leadership) for those serving Unitarian Universalist congregations as lay religious education professionals. Additional continuing education funds are available for religious educators enrolled in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program. Also, a one hundred dollar grant for curricula and program materials are available to twelve historically Universalist congregations per year. For more information and an application form, please contact Emily Farbman, RE Credentialing Assistant, at [efarbman@uua.org](mailto:efarbman@uua.org) or 617/948-6418.



# ***Culturally Relevant Anti-Bias Resources***

***2003 GA Workshop Anti-Racism with Children***

***Compiled by Pat Hoertdoerfer***

***Children, Family, and Intergenerational Programs Director, UUA***

***Boston, MA***

## **Early Childhood Resources (preschool-primary grades)**

Abbot, Marti and Betty Jane Polk. *Celebrating Our Diversity*. (Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids, 1993)

Banks, James A. *Introduction to Multicultural Education*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994)

Bisson, Julie. *Celebrate! An Anti-bias Guide to Enjoying Holidays in Early Childhood Programs*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1997)

Carter, Margie and Deb Curtis. *The Visionary Director: A Handbook for Dreaming, Organizing & Improvising in Your Center*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1998)

Chandler, Phyllis A. *A Place for Me: Including Children with Special Needs in Early Care and Education Settings*. (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1994)

Crawford, Susan Hoy. *Beyond Dolls and Guns*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996)

Derman-Sparks, Louise and the A.B.C. Task Force. *The Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*. (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988)

Guillean, A. ed. *A World of Difference: A Preschool Activity Guide to Celebrate Diversity and Combat Prejudice* (New York: Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1991)

Hall, Nadia. *Creative Resources for the Anti-Bias Classroom*. (Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers, 1999)

Hopkins, Susan and Jeffrey Winters. *Discover the World: Empowering Children to Value Themselves, Others, and the Earth*. (Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers, 1990)

Jones, Guy W. and Sally Moomaw. *Lessons from Turtle Island: Native Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press)

Lee, E; D. Menhart; and M. Okazawa-Rey. *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development*. (Washington, DC: Network of Educators on the Americas, 1998)

Levin, Diane. *Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom*. (Cambridge, MA: Educators for Social Responsibility, 1996)

Mattiella, Ana Consulla. *The Multicultural Caterpillar: Children's Activities in Cultural Awareness*. (Santa Cruz, CA: Network, 1990)

Neugebauer, Bonnie, ed. *Alike and Different: Exploring Our Humanity With Young Children*. (Washington, DC: NAEYC, 1992)

Pelo, Ann and Fran Davidson. *That's Not Fair! A Teacher's Guide to Activism with Young Children*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2000)

Redleaf, Rhoda. *Busy Fingers Growing Minds: Finger Plays, Verses and Activities for Whole Language Learning*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1993)

Siccone, Frank. *Celebrating Diversity: Building Self-Esteem in Today's Multicultural Classrooms*. (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1994)

Thomson, Barbara. *Words Can Hurt You: Beginning A Program of Anti-bias Education*. (Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993)

Whitney, Trisha. *Kids Like Us: Using Persona Dolls in the Classroom*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1999)

Wolpert, Ellen. *Start Seeing Diversity: The Basic Guide to an Anti-Bias Classroom*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1999)

York, Stacey. *Big as Life: The Every Day Inclusive Curriculum, Volumes I and II*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1998)

York, Stacey. *Roots and Wings*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1992)

### **Professional Resources**

Abner, A; A.C. Beak; and L. Villarosa. *The Black Parenting Book: Caring for Our Children in the First Five Years*. (New York: Broadway Books, 1998)

Alvarado, C.; L. Burnley; L. Derman-Sparks; E. Hoffman; L. Jimenez; J. Labyson; P. Ramsey; A. Unten; B. Wallace; U. Yas. *In Our Own Way: How Anti-Bias Work Shapes Our Lives*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1999)

Cronin, S.; L. Derman-Sparks; S. Henry; C. Olatunji; and S. York. *Future Vision, Present Work: Learning from the Culturally Relevant Anti-Bias Leadership Project*. (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1998)

Derman-Sparks, L and C. Brunson. *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: A Developmental Approach*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997)

Gonzalez, Mena Janet. *Multicultural Issues in Child Care* (Second Edition). (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 1997)

Kivel, P. *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. (Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1996)

Nieto, S. *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*. (Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1999)

Rodriguez, G. *Raising Nuestros Ninos: Bringing Up Latino Children in a Bicultural World*. (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1999)

Stern-LaRosa, C. and E. Bettmann. *Hate Hurts: How Children Learn and Unlearn Prejudice*. (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2000)

Sutton, R. *Hearing Us Out: Voices from the Gay and Lesbian Community*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1994)

Tabors, Patton O. *One Child Two Languages: A Guide for Preschool Educators of Children Learning English as a Second Language*. (Baltimore, MN: Paul H. Books, 1997)

Tatum, B. *“Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?” And Other Conversations About Race*. (New York: Basic Books, 1997)

Zinn, H. *A Peoples History of the United States*. (New York: Harper Colophon, 1995)

### **Children’s Books**

Berstein, Joanne and Bryna J. Berstein. *Special Parents, Special Children*. (Morton Grove, IL: Whitman, 1991)

Boyd, Lizi. *Sam Is My Half Brother*. (New York: Viking, 1990)

D’Antonio, Nancy. *Our Baby from China: An Adoption Story*. (Morton Grove, IL: Whitman, 1997)

Dorros, Arther. *Abuela*. (New York: Dutton, 1991)

Elwin, Rosamund and Michele Paulse. *Asha’s Mums*. (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1990)

Garza, Lomas. *In My Family/En Mi Familia*. (San Francisco: Children’s Book, 1996)

Girard, Linda Walvoord. *At Daddy’s On Saturdays*. (Morton Grove, IL: Whitman, 1987)

Hill, Elizabeth Starr. *Evan’s Corner*. (New York: Puffin, 1993)

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems*. (New York: Scholastic, 1993)

Hudson, Wade. *I Love My Family*. (New York: Scholastic, 1995)

Jeness, Aylette. *Families: A Celebration of Diversity, Commitment, And Love*. (New York: Orchard, 1989)

Kuklin, Susan. *How My Family Lives In America*. (New York: Simon, 1992)

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Sitti’s Secrets*. (New York: Simon, 1994)

Pellegrini, Nina. *Families Are Different*. (New York: Holiday, 1991)

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*. (New York: Simon, 1988)

Rosenberg, Maxine. *Living In Two Worlds*. (New York: Lothrop, 1984)

Simon, Norma. *All Kinds of Families*. (Morton Grove, IL: Whitman, 1987)

Skutch, Robert. *Who’s In A Family?* (Berkeley, CA: Tricycle, 1995)

The Kindergartners at Cheltenham Elementary School. *We Are All Alike...We Are All Different*. (New York: Scholastic, 1991)

Willhoite, Michael. *Daddy's Roommate*. (Boston: Alyson Wonderland, 1990)

### **Children's Music**

Fink, Cathy and Marcy Marxer. *Nobody Else Like Me*. (A&M, 1994)

“Everything Possible”

“May There Always Be Sunshine”

“Twins”

Hartmann, Jack. *Make A Friend, Be a Friend*. (Educational Activities, 1990)

“It's Not Your Fault”

Hinojosa, Tish. *Cada Nino/Every Child* (Rounder, 1996)

“Siempre Abuelita/Always Grandma”

Music For Little People. *Peace Is The World Smiling*. (Music for Little People, 1989)

“Make Peace”

Pirtle, Sarah. *Two Hands Hold The Earth*. (Gentle Wind, 1984)

“May There Always Be Sunshine”

Shih, Patricia. *Big Ideas!* (Glass, 1990)

“Daddy's Song”

“First, Middle, Last, Only”



# ***Four Goals of Anti-Bias Education***

***Louise Derman-Sparks  
Anti-Bias Educator  
Equity Alliance***

**Goal One: *Nurture each child's construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-identity and group identity.***

This means creating the educational conditions in which all children are able to like who they are without needing to feel superior to anyone else. It also means enabling children to develop bi-culturally and helping children and families resolve the problems faced when a person has to operate in more than one culture.

**Goal Two: *Promote each child's comfortable, empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.***

This means guiding children's development of the cognitive awareness, emotional disposition, and behavioral skills needed to respectfully and effectively learn about differences; comfortably negotiate and adapt to differences; and cognitively understand and emotionally accept the common humanity that all people share.

**Goal Three: *Foster each child's critical thinking about bias.***

This means having the cognitive skills to identify "unfair" and "untrue" images (stereotypes), comments (teasing, name-calling), and behaviors (discrimination) directed at one's own or other's identity (be it gender, race, ethnicity, disability, class, age, weight, etc.) and having the emotional empathy to know that bias hurts.

**Goal Four: *Cultivate each child's ability to stand up for herself or himself and for others in the face of bias.***

This "activism" objective includes helping every child learn and practice a variety of ways to act: (a) when another child acts in a biased manner towards him/her, (b) when a child acts in a biased manner towards another child, and (c) when an adult acts in a biased manner. Goal Four builds on Goal Three: Critical thinking and empathy are necessary components of acting for oneself or others in the face of bias.

These four goals are for children across all age groups. They are also for adults who raise and teach children. The content and specific objectives for each child/adult and group of children/adults must be chosen within a developmentally appropriate and a contextually appropriate framework.

**Resources:**

*That's Not Fair! A Teacher's Guide to Activism with Young Children*  
by Ann Pelo and Fran Davidson (St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2000)

**Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: A Developmental Approach**

by Louise Derman-Sparks and L. C. Brunson (NY: Teachers College Press, 1997)

[www.RootsforChange.net](http://www.RootsforChange.net) Early Childhood Equity Alliance organization and resources

# *Of Many Colors: Portraits of Multiracial Families*

*Interviews by Peggy Gillespie, Photographs by Gigi Kaeser*

*Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997*

*Review by Pat Hoerl*

*Children, Family, and Intergenerational Programs Director, UUA*

*Boston, MA*

Based on an award-winning photo exhibit *Of Many Colors*, this book documents the feelings and experiences of Americans who live in multiracial families. The stories of thirty-nine families who have bridged the racial divide through interracial marriage or adoption are told in the voices of parents and children. The black and white family photographs are natural and the interviews allowed families—children and parents—to reflect on their lives, their relationships, and the ways they have dealt with issues of race.

The number of multi racial families in America is steadily rising but interracial marriage remains a controversial issue that often divides families and strains friendships. Many of the families in this book testify to this fact. For centuries, America has depended on perceived racial categories for its social, political, and economic organization. And the current debate over the inclusion of a "multi-racial" category on census forms illustrates the extent to which the deeply embedded construct of race continues to divide this country. In fact the first exhibit was called *OTHER: Portraits of Multiracial Families* because many members of these families had to check the racial category "Other" on official forms.

Transracial adoption has also generated fierce controversy and debate. Similar to the case of racial categories, the discussion of transracial adoption reflects the ever-changing social standards. Thirty-five states as recently as 1987 still had laws prohibiting the adoption of black children by white families. However, in 1996 President Clinton signed a bill making it illegal to prohibit adoptions based on race.

When viewed with historical context, the images, experiences, and insights of each family in *Of Many Colors* provide a clearer picture of how mixed-race families are challenging racism, contradicting stereotypes, and demonstrating that people of different races can live together in harmony. And the families in this book speak courageously to every Unitarian Universalist.

These families—whether by marriage or adoption—have made a commitment to love and cherish one another in spite of society's disdain. And these families have much to say about the most intimate form of integration and familial love. As Ifecoma J. Nwokoye writes in the Afterword of the book: "All humans are confronted with an identity crisis. Biracial children, too, must go through it, and for them it is a greater challenge because it is doubly hard. In America, people are often unwilling to accept the idea of a biracial person. In our everyday lives we are constantly confronted with situations in which we must define who we are. I know that I must ignore the limitations and labels society places on me, and realize that I am an individual with unique insight, able to encompass the best of both worlds. As my mom said I have *mixed blessings*."

This beautiful book belongs in every UU family's library and every UU congregation's library!

# *Our Family Book of Days; A Record Through the Years*

by Kathleen Finley

Denver, CO: Morehouse Group, 1997

Review by Pat Hoertdoerfer

Children, Family, and Intergenerational Programs Director, UUA  
Boston, MA

October 17

*How do you record important family events? How do you remember your family's special heritage? How do you celebrate family birthdays? Unitarian Universalist holidays? National holidays? World community events? Famous people? How do you recognize family memories and milestones, such as moving day or first tooth cut or graduation day or wedding anniversary or vacation trip or welcoming a foreign houseguest?*

Isabella's birthday  
Survived hurricane Hugo

Black Poetry Day  
LaLeche League formed  
International Fair

Hindu festival of  
Navaratra Dashara

This book is designed as a tool to help your family remember and celebrate more easily your family's heritage and traditions. *Our Family Book of Days* offers a guide for becoming aware of all the lives that touch your own, while remembering and celebrating your family's own unique ceremonies and sacred moments. The structure for the book is one that every family reads—the calendar.

Each month in this calendar book begins with an introduction filled with suggestions for family rituals to celebrate important days of the month, moveable religious feasts, and nature's seasons. Every day of the month lists birthdays, religious festivals, national holidays, and important events connecting a family to the greater religious and political world. Birthdays of famous people (authors, political leaders, musicians, sports figures) offer an invitation to explore their work and contributions to our culture. Religious feasts suggest celebrating our own traditions or learning more about the heritage of others in our multicultural world.

No family will want to celebrate all the events or ideas in this book, but the multiplicity of suggestions invites every family to find the ideas it needs to create the rituals and traditions that become a part of their lives. Let this book become part of your lives as a way to deepen your awareness of the days and months of your family heritage. As Unitarian Universalists, we are rediscovering a deep hunger in all of us for tradition and roots in our family, in our UU congregations, in the world community, and on our planet Earth.

Holy events are happening every day in our families. We may be too busy with the constant buzz of family life to recognize the sacred in the ordinary days of our lives, but take out the family album, the box of snapshots, the slide projector or video and look back. Remember and recall together the events and people in your pictures. Name the values and glimpses of the holy that marked your lives and the celebrations that identified what your family stands for and your people stood for. Give this book to every child leaving home or every new family beginning a new life together or every new family celebrating membership in your congregation.

# ***Creative Resources for the Anti-Bias Classroom***

***By Nadia Saderman Hall, Delmar Publishers, Albany, NY: 1999***

***Reviewed by Jacqui James***

***Co-editor, UU Faith Works***

***Boston, MA***

This excellent resource covers the entire age range from infancy to age 11. Included are:

- Key Developmental Goals and Anti-Bias Goals
- Application of Anti-Bias Skills in Curriculum Planning
- Letters to Families
- Sample Anti-Bias Implementation Approaches Synopsis Chart
- Teacher Supports: The Physical Environment
- The Social Environment: Guidelines for Teacher Interactions
- Webs of Anti-Bias and Developmental Skills for Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers and Kindergartners, and Elementary School Children

Each section includes activities, resources, action rhymes and songs. Books are incorporated into each session and its activities. Activities “reflect a progression from simple exposure to the different facets of diversity to working through meaningful and relevant experiences that foster a deeper understanding of human similarities and differences.” Developmental benchmarks provide best practice for infants/toddlers and planning for early childhood and elementary groups.

*Creative Resources for the Anti-Bias Classroom* offers experiences that are developmentally grounded and respond to the wide differences in the developmental continuum of children’s learning and growing.

The Appendix includes reproducible charts, an annotated literature resource list, a Braille guide, and teacher resources.

There are more than 300 activities in this book; many of these make great additions to existing religious education curricula. This is a highly recommended resource to help strengthen children’s awareness of and comfort with diversity.

***Nobody Else Like Me***  
***Activities to Celebrate Diversity***  
***By Sally Moomaw, Redleaf Press, St. Paul, MN: 2002***  
*Reviewed by Jacqui James*  
*Co-editor, UU Faith Works*  
*Boston, MA*

This creative resource is a collaborative effort between Redleaf Press and musicians Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer. This is the final book of a series of three that accompany Cathy and Marcy's CDs. The other two are *Help Yourself* (2001) and *Changing Channels* (2002). These are written to help people use the music on the CDs to help children and families think critically about and appreciate differences and similarities among people.

This musical celebration of diversity gives teachers and children a joyful way to begin talking about the ways people are alike and different. Sheet music accompanies most of the songs from the CD. All activity sections include a list of materials needed, directions, discussion ideas and variations for even more activities.

Each section of the book focuses on one of the songs on the CD. Activities help explore the topic of each song with children three to eight. The activities are designed for a wide age range of children and may be adapted as necessary to make them work for the children's developmental level.

*Nobody Else Like Me* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Rounder Records, 1998) is available as a CD or cassette from Redleaf Press, 800-423-8309.

Activity/Song sessions include:

- Hello, Hello, Hello
- Kye Kye Kule (a traditional call and response song from Ghana)
- Nobody Else Like Me
- Special Kids
- A Little Like You and a Little Like Me
- I See with My Hands
- Twins
- A Kid Like Me
- May There Always Be Sunshine
- Walking on My Wheels
- Harry's Glasses
- Everything Possible

This book and the CD (or cassette) are wonderful resources for adding more music and movement to your program. Many of the activities in the book also contain adaptations for children with disabilities.

***Big as Life***  
***The Everyday Inclusive Curriculum, Volumes 1 and 2***  
***By Stacey York, Redleaf Press, St. Paul, MN: 1998***  
***Reviewed by Jacqui James***  
***Co-editor, UU Faith Works***  
***Boston, MA***

*An exciting new curriculum resource that reflects and honors the lives of children, their families, and their communities.*

Big as Life offers an early childhood curriculum for those who wonder how to integrate anti-bias and multicultural activities into the natural flow of class sessions. This approach draws on children's observations and questions to bring the real issues of their lives into the classroom and to create a curriculum that supports pride, self-confidence, and critical thinking in all children.

Volume 1 looks at the philosophy behind the curriculum, offers a detailed explanation of the characteristics, goals, and objectives of the curriculum, followed by eight comprehensive curriculum units. These units are:

1. Bodies
2. Boys and Girls
3. Communication
4. Families
5. Feelings
6. My People
7. Our Class
8. Planet Earth

Volume 2 contains eight more curriculum units as well as a guide to planning your own inclusive curriculum. The units in this volume are:

1. Animals
2. Community
3. Foods
4. Friends
5. Heroes and Sheroes
6. Money
7. Senses
8. Work

Activities are included for creative development, critical thinking, emotional development, music, science, social development, human rights, community service, and diversity. Each unit contains lots of activity ideas, you can choose what fits your programs needs and leave the rest.

A complete list of resource and reference information gives you the information you need to put this innovative curriculum to work for you.

This is a wonderful, practical resource for beginning to integrate anti-bias/multicultural education into religious education programs.

# *The Morality of Abstinence-Only Sex Education*

*Rabbi Barry H. Block  
Temple Beth-El  
San Antonio, Texas*

Often, after the High Holy Days, a congregant will ask me: Who tells you Rabbis what to talk about in your sermons? The question arises, when people who have attended services at various congregations speak to one another, and find that their Rabbis have offered messages on similar topics. My answer is always the same: Everybody tells Rabbis what to talk about in our sermons! The real question is whether any Rabbis pay attention to what they are told.

I am solely responsible for the topic of tonight's sermon. Nobody asked me to talk about sex from the *bimah* of Temple Beth-El. I would venture a guess that some of you are hoping, despite the topic printed in your Order of Service, that I will not really talk about sex.

Seriously, the subject makes us squirm. We do have children in the congregation tonight. Thank God, we always do. We have guests of other faiths with us this evening. Blessedly, we always do. I ordinarily avoid topics that make people very uncomfortable. I am not eager to discuss a subject that might be inappropriate for such a diverse congregation with a variety of sensibilities.

So let me offer the following introductory comments: My sermon tonight will be about sex. My sermon will not be terribly graphic, and certainly not pornographic, but I do plan to speak frankly about Jewish sexual values. I will be mentioning the names of some sexually transmitted diseases. I will offer Reform Jewish perspectives on the morality of sexual activity between persons who are not yet married, views that are different from what one would hear in some other houses of worship, but which are echoed in many other synagogues and churches. I do not think it necessary for children to be removed from the Temple for this sermon, but if anybody does wish to leave now, or to take their children from the Sanctuary at this time, you are free to do so.

I am addressing this subject, not because I am eager to stand on this pulpit and talk about sex. I am speaking about sexual values, because it is a matter of life and death.

Specifically, my subject tonight is "abstinence-only sex education." The idea, lavishly funded by the United States government, is that teenagers should be instructed not to have sex, and should be taught nothing else about the subject. The rationale seems to be that teenagers will stop having sex, if their teachers will tell them the dangers of sexual activity. The proposition seems plausible. After all, teenagers have no business being sexually active. The risks are enormous.

We all know about AIDS, but HIV is only one of a host of sexually transmitted diseases plaguing our nation and the world. Chlamydia is spreading at epidemic rates. Syphilis and gonorrhea have not gone the way of small pox and polio.

The emotional pitfalls of teenage sexual activity are also serious. Young people can be badly scarred by having sex before they are ready. Unhealthy sexual relations during the teen years may hinder the development of healthy relationships in adulthood.

Most of all, teenagers should be abstinent, because teenagers have no business becoming parents. Certainly, we all know girls who got pregnant too young, and went on to happy, productive, full lives with normal, healthy children. And yet, the reality in America is devastating. Teenage pregnancy kills dreams. Teenage pregnancy leads to poverty and dependence on welfare. Teenage pregnancy too often ends girls' education. Teenage

pregnancy frequently results in a child who will become a teenage parent. Teenage pregnancies sometimes end with abortion, possibly the best choice among bad options, but almost always a tragedy.

Certainly, Judaism teaches teenagers that they should not engage in sexual intercourse. Responsible Jewish leaders, including the Rabbis and teachers of Temple Beth-El, encourage teenagers to be abstinent. Our instruction is founded in the traditions surrounding marriage.

In our faith, marriage is called *kiddushin*, a word that means "holiness." I have often taught young people, as well as adults, that the standard for deciding whether a couple is ready to have sexual relations is *kiddushin*. Holiness must abide, for sexual relations to be appropriate. *Kiddushin* requires, among other important considerations, that there must be love between the partners. Their decision to engage in sexuality must be mutual. Both partners must be entirely faithful; the only holy sexual relationship is one that is absolutely exclusive. Significantly, in order for *kiddushin* to exist, both partners must have the ability to make adult decisions. They are required to engage in open and honest conversation about contraception and health protection, with all proper precautions taken. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, couples who choose to have sex must be ready to co-parent, should pregnancy result. Incidentally, *kiddushin*, the holiness required in Reform Judaism for two people to have sex, does not require that they be of opposite genders.

However, if *kiddushin* does not exist, if holiness does not abide in the relationship, Judaism requires abstinence. If there is no love, there is no *kiddushin*; abstinence is required. If there is not full mutuality in the decision to have sex, abstinence is required. If both parties are not fully faithful, abstinence is required. If either party is not adult, abstinence is required. If the couple does not discuss and act upon decisions about contraception and health protection, abstinence is required. If the couple is not prepared to become parents together, abstinence is required.

At the same time, Judaism proclaims another law. The greatest *mitzvah*, the highest commandment in Judaism, is *pikuah nefesh*, saving a life. We are obligated to set aside the performance of other good and positive deeds, and even to perform a host of negative ones, if we are able to save a life in the process. Therefore, we are religiously enjoined to teach the life-saving benefits of contraception, even to those young people who should be abstaining from sexual relations. Yes, we must teach abstinence. Yes, we must provide medically accurate sex education.

"Abstinence-only sex education" kills.

Let me explain. Imagine a teenage girl, in a federally funded "abstinence-only sex education" program in her public school. She raises her hand and says: "I understand that the best way to protect myself is abstinence, but suppose that I do have sex; how can I protect myself from getting chlamydia or gonorrhea or syphilis or HIV or pregnant?" The teacher's legally mandated response is that only abstinence will work. The instructor may only discuss contraception by describing various methods' failure rates. Sadly, though, these teachers may not mention the rampant failure rate of abstinence. One night, our "abstinence-only" student may get drunk, and let down her guard. Perhaps she makes a whimsical, albeit foolish and immoral, decision to have a one night stand. Maybe, despite all of her teachers' pleas, she and her long-term boyfriend will decide, after much discussion and consideration, that they are ready for a sexual relationship. If so, her so-called "sex education" will have failed her, by not having taught her how to keep herself from getting chlamydia or gonorrhea or syphilis or HIV or pregnant. "Abstinence-only sex education" kills. It is absolutely immoral.

In my experience, young people do not always do whatever their teachers, or even their Rabbis or preachers, tell them. And yet, I do think that we adults have a responsibility to tell our youth what we believe. Young people do listen to the adults they respect. We must tell them the truth. We must give them the information they need. We must not naively convince ourselves that they will refrain from sexual activity, just because they should. But we must also communicate a clear moral message. Here at Temple Beth-El, we do teach our Confirmation



students about *kiddushin*, and therefore about abstinence. We also give them medically accurate information about how to protect themselves if they choose to have sex anyway.

Living as we do in a pluralistic society, the messages of different faiths vary. Judaism teaches that sexuality is a beautiful, natural part of life. Even those who would argue that Judaism permits sexuality only within marriage would acknowledge that Jewish tradition regards human sex drives as normal and healthy. Procreation is not the only purpose for sexual relations. In fact, traditional Jewish marriage law requires a husband to satisfy his wife's sexual needs. (Interestingly, the wife has no such obligation to her husband!) Sexuality is understood to play a role in enhancing the relationship, even if we are not intending to be fruitful and multiply at the time.

We Jews realize and respect that other faiths' teachings are different from ours. And yet, we should be outraged that, in our public schools, our young people's lives are imperiled, because of religiously motivated, federally mandated sex education that does not teach our kids how to protect their lives when they act irresponsibly. We certainly do not expect our religious convictions about appropriate sexual behavior to be taught in government-supported programs. That's our job in the Temple. We suffer no delusion that our views possess some kind of inherent, objective superiority. But we may not stand idly by, while extremists, who think they are right, exercise their undue influence on the current government to kill young people with sexual ignorance in the name of abstinence.

Yes, we must talk about sex. Even if the topic makes us squirm, we must confront it. Even if we know that our views differ from one another, we must share them. And especially, even while we have absolutely no desire to see our own particular religious beliefs codified in American law, we must make clear that we do hold strong values about sexuality, and about abstinence.

Let America know: We will not cede the moral high ground on sexual matters to those who would put the power of the state behind their own particular religious teachings.

Let America know: Protecting our young people from disease and from unwanted pregnancy is not just a Jewish teaching, it is the highest American family value.

Let America know: "Abstinence-only sex education" kills. May America choose life.

Amen.



***The Umbrella Story***  
***UU Principles: Story for All Ages***  
*Merry Stockwell*  
*Director of Religious Education*  
*Congregational Society of Peterborough, NH*  
*Peterborough, NH*

*I have used this little story about our UU Principles as a Story for All Ages in church on Sunday morning or as a story for one of my Children's Worship. Most recently I used it at RE Week on Star Island as an introduction to a series of children's chapels about our principles and how we live them.*

Our religion (Unitarian Universalism) is different from most other religions because we do not insist that you must believe certain things. It is not that we do not believe anything; Unitarian Universalists have very strong beliefs. However, we say it is important that we think for ourselves and decide for ourselves what we believe.

**Then what do we have in common? What holds us together?**

Our seven principles hold us together. These are not actually beliefs. These are values. In 1984 Unitarian Universalists voted to declare that these principles are important to us. We say we affirm them, which is sort of like giving our stamp of approval to them. We say that we will promote them, which means that we will try to live by them and to help others to know how to live by them. These values are what hold us together, give us our identity— and they are what draw others to join us.

I picture it this way. It is as if our values are a big tent and other people who like our values, who want to work for them and want to be with others who share those values, are drawn to this tent and take shelter in it too. I can't lug a tent so I brought an umbrella to show you what I mean.

*(I open an umbrella, from which are hanging the numbers 1-7 and hold it over my head. I hang the cardboard numbers with safety pins and fishing line.)*

You see under this umbrella of values, or, inside one of our UU churches, we are welcome to believe what we choose to believe. Unitarian Universalists have many different beliefs and opinions about such things as God, Jesus, prayer, television, or what they choose to eat, but they would not choose to belong to our church unless they agree that our principles are important.

I end the story there if I am using it as an introduction to a series on our principles. However, if I am using it as a story on its own, I would then run through what the seven principles are and conclude with the umbrella over my head reminding them once more that these principles are like values that draw us together.

For a complete copy of the seven chapels, please print and send your full name, mailing address, and a check for \$7.95 to:

Merry Stockwell  
 405 Middletown Road  
 Roxbury, N.H. 03431

## *Coming of Age Chalice Lighting Words*

*First Parish  
Bedford, MA*

At First Parish, Bedford, Massachusetts, the Coming of Age participants not only compose credo statements, they write chalice lighting words to be read in the culminating all-church service. Here are a few samples from that congregation's eighth-graders.

This light unites us.  
This light unites us with our neighbors,  
Our friends and our enemies.  
Most importantly,  
This light unites us within ourselves.  
Our hearts,  
Our souls,  
Our spirits.  
This light unites us.

*Rebecca Pankhurst*

We light this chalice  
To symbolize our unity and diversity.  
Just as the flame in this chalice has patterns and differences,  
So do we have patterns and differences with each other.  
Just as the base of this chalice forms a solid foundation for the flame to grow on,  
So do we form solid foundations for others to grow on.  
And just as the fire in this chalice creates light and warmth for all around it,  
So do we create light and warmth through love and friendship for all around us.

*Natty Smith*

As we light this chalice  
We take those little sparks  
Glowing within all of us  
And combine them to create this flame.

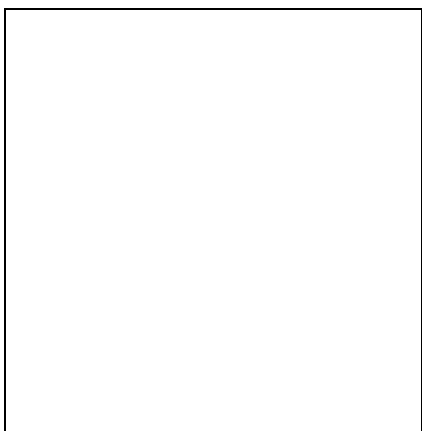
*Jamie Dorer*

Slowly,  
With the start of a thin match  
We fill this room with light.  
Slowly, with the flicker of hope from inside  
We fill ourselves with light.  
Slowly,  
With this chalice  
With ourselves as a match  
We kindle others' flames  
Never dying  
Forever passing our light to others  
We fill this world with light.

*Marianna Ballou*

This is a light of love,  
A light of happiness,  
A light that brings people together,  
A light of friendship,  
A light of compassion,  
A light of truth,  
A light that clears a path in the world of darkness.  
A light of hope,  
A light of peace,  
A light of sorrows that will be made better.  
This light is a light of love.

*Elliot Rabinowitz*



We light this flame as a beacon of hope for those who are lost,  
As a binding of friendship and love for all people,  
And as a center for our own circle of friends.

*Marissa Jones*

Burning Chalice, bright with light,  
Help us all find our internal light  
Let the light from each of us glow.  
With the light from people everywhere,  
Let it grow.

*Chris Wilkins*

We light this chalice for the memories of the past,  
The dreams fulfilled today,  
And the hopes that keep us moving.

*Andrew MacRobert*

The flame sparks, then grows to give off light.  
A child is nurtured by family and grows  
To an adult to share the light of love.

*Laura Townsend*

In the light of day  
In the darkness of night  
No matter where we are  
This light unites us.

*Katie Southard*

# *Where My Fears Are Planted*

*Rebecca Pournoor  
Director of Religious Education  
Unity Church Unitarian  
St. Paul, MN*

## **Children's Worship: Remembering 9/11**

This is a story of a girl named Sara who is about your age. She likes soccer, school, Saturday morning cartoons and vanilla ice cream with lots of hot fudge. Lately though Sara's life has not been going so great ...she is afraid. She is afraid of monsters under her bed, afraid of what she hears on the news, afraid of how her parents sometimes whisper about war and afraid that something bad might happen to her family. Sara carries all these fears with her. Everywhere.

Mr. Watson lives next door to Sara. He has a large, beautiful garden filled with flowers, vegetables and trees all bordered by rocks of all sizes. Some rocks are so large you can even climb up on them, lay back and bake in the sun.

One day Sara's Mom shoed her out into the backyard to play. Sara didn't feel like playing alone, she didn't feel like playing with friends, she didn't feel like playing period. And so she walked over to Mr. Watson's garden where he was cutting fresh flowers to place on his kitchen table. Mr. Watson could see that Sara was troubled so he invited her to sit at a low bench and he asked, "How are you doing Sara?" Sara knew she could tell him anything, she had known Mr. Watson all her life. She knew he wouldn't laugh or share her secrets with anyone and so she said, "I've been kind of afraid lately. I'm afraid of monsters, of planes, strangers, war, losing my parents and even of dying." Fears flew out of Sara's mouth and seemed like a list a mile long and when she was done talking she took a big breath and sat there looking at her feet.

Mr. Watson leaned over and picked out a rock that bordered some tulips. He held the rock in his hands, almost like he was warming it up and turned to Sara and said, "Imagine that this rock is FEAR, all your fears put together are right here in this rock ...try to imagine that." Mr. Watson handed Sara the rock. It was warm from his hands and the earth and was as heavy as a brick. Mr. Watson said, "If you want to hold on to your fears you must carry them around in this stone where ever you go for one week. In a week's time come back to my garden and we'll talk again."

And Sara did just that, she carried the rock to school in her backpack, she brought it in to the bathroom while she brushed her teeth, the rock rested on her pillow while she slept ... and each day it became heavier and heavier. It seemed to be absorbing all her fear until a week later when she saw Mr. Watson she could barely carry it. As a matter of fact it had become so heavy that she had to roll it on the ground over to Mr. Watson's garden because she couldn't carry it one more step.

"Mr. Watson, I don't want to carry this fear around anymore, it's too heavy. The rock gets in my way, it doesn't let me play with my friends, I can't ride my bike with it, I can't even play soccer anymore! Can I let go of it now?" Sara asked. Mr. Watson picked up the rock and fit it back in the border where he first picked it up from. "Sara," he said, "this rock used to be my fear of driving, after an accident a couple of years ago, I was afraid to drive again so I found this rock and held on to it for a while until it got too heavy and I started driving again. See that large rock over there? That rock held all my fear of living alone after Mrs. Watson passed away." Sara turned to look at Mr. Watson's face and she could tell he was serious. "That green rock over there? That rock was my fear of storms. Instead of throwing the rocks away I plant them in my garden, surround them with beauty, and pick them up once in a while to remind myself that life goes on."

Sara leaned back taking all this in. This beautiful garden was a place where fear is planted, carried around and finally let go. She reached out and patted her stone. "Thank you, Mr. Watson," Sara said. "I don't need to carry it around anymore. I think I'm ready to play with my friends again."

Mr. Watson smiled and said, "We all have fears once in a while, you did the right thing in facing yours and now you can replace the fear that was in you with whatever you like. Replace it with happiness, love or playing with your friends ... you can choose."

A smile spread across Sara's face, she looked up at Mr. Watson and with her arms wide gave him a huge hug. She then took off back to her own yard, towards the sound of other kids playing.

## *If the Ugly Duckling Had Been a Unitarian Universalist*

*Rev. Darcey Laine  
UU Church of Palo Alto  
Palo Alto, CA*

I think most of you probably know a story about a family of ducks, where all of the children were yellow and fluffy, except one, that was sort of a subdued earth tone with a long skinny neck. He was not very attractive by duck standards; so they called him ... yell it out if you know!

Well, I can't help but wonder what would have happened if those ducks had gone to the kind of church where the children's teacher might have heard the mean things they were saying to that different looking duck, and said:

"You don't have to be yellow to be beautiful;

A long skinny neck is just as beautiful as a short, thick one.

But more importantly, Dave, the one you call the ugly duckling, is caring and funny and helps take care of the lake he lives in.

His outsides don't really tell you much about who he is.

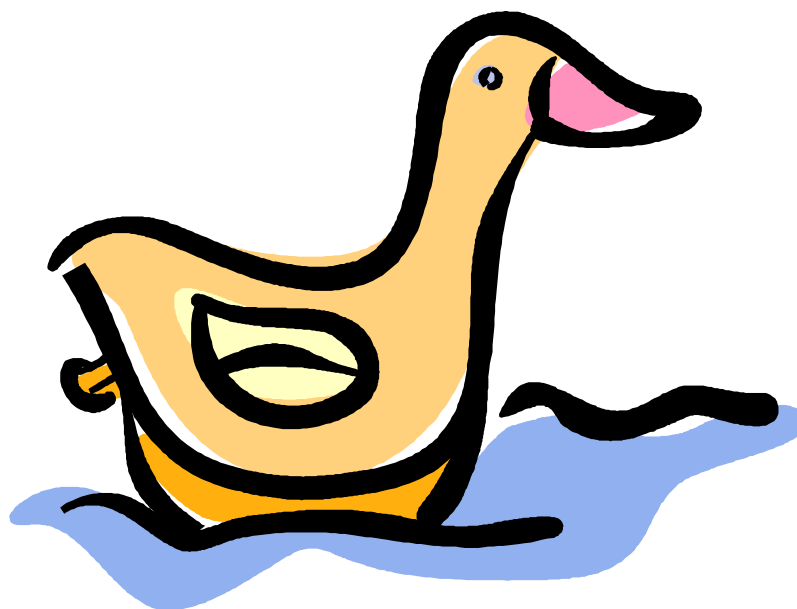
And even though all of you are yellow and fluffy,

That doesn't mean you are all the same inside.

Why don't we share something that makes us different and special."

And maybe then the ducks would have understood how important it is that each person is unique.

The moral of my story was best said by one of my professors, Elis Farajaje-Jones, "We want to create a world where everyone is able to discover and define and live by who they are, who they are becoming, with the option to change several times throughout the course of their lives. Now that's revolutionary religious education!"





# *Tao of Aging*

*Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa  
Tampa, FL*

*This GA 2003 workshop invited participants to reflect on the diminishment as well as the blessings of aging. After discussing images of elders from various spiritual traditions and cultures, participants were invited to experience a guided meditation on the Seasons of Our Lives. The meditation evoked poignant memories and these memories were shared as participants reflected on the seasons of their lives. The Fifth Season was the closing refrain to the workshop written by Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley.*

## **Ecclesiastes 3 / "The Fifth Season"**

**To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under the heaven**

*All the seasons have now come and gone;*

**A time to be born, and a time to die**

*I have lived and died and now it is the fifth season;*

**A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted**

*The crops have been sown and harvested, the promise fulfilled;*

**A time to kill and a time to heal**

*Suffering and salvation—paradoxical rhythms of reality's heart.*

**A time to break down, and a time to build up**

*The shantytowns and the skyscrapers have come and gone;*

**A time to weep and a time to laugh**

*My tears have filled the oceans, my laughter has covered the earth;*

**A time to mourn, and a time to dance**

*Mourning heals the soul. Let the dance of life fill your spirit;*

**A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together**

*The smooth and the heavy stones have each strengthened me, and now it is time to roll the stones away;*

**A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing**

*I have known the joy of the human touch, I have known the pain and the necessity of letting go;*

**A time to seek and a time to lose**

*We seek that which we think of as necessities, but we lose what are mere desires of the heart.*

**A time to keep, and a time to throw away**

*The spirit eliminates that which does not nourish the soul and that which does not support life.*

**A time to tear and a time to sew**

*New possibilities abound, the source unknown;*

**A time to keep silence, and a time to speak**

*Grant us the wisdom to hear the silence and to speak your power through us*

**A time to love, and a time to hate**

*Do not cease to cultivate love, for it blots out all our failings.*

**A time of war, and a time of peace**

*Even in times of war, may you find a nugget of peace in your spirit.*

***And in the fifth season, the time of the unknown mystery, may life always follow death.***

***Flags of Hope***  
***Art From Around the World: Tibet***  
***A Classroom or Community Art Project***  
*Developed by Claudia Chapman*  
*World Music Press*

*Art From Around the World* is a series of multi-cultural projects for educators, community leaders, and families developed by Claudia Chapman, art director for World Music Press. In these projects she takes “multi-cultural understanding through music” one step further, combining traditional forms of visual expression with music and social studies. The *Flags of Hope* kit contains a string of authentic hand printed Tibetan flags, cultural context, patterns and instructions, lesson plan, and a CD of Tibetan music.

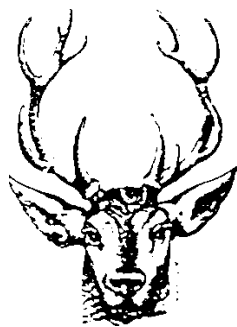
The hoisting of Prayer Flags to ensure good fortune is one of the many customs within the nomadic communities of Tibet that have changed little for several thousands of years. *Lung Ta* or Wind Horse according to Tibetan belief carries the message of “compassion for all living things.” They say the Wind Horse carries their message on the wind. When the wind touches the flag, the prayerful message is dispersed in the area where the flags are hung—over rivers, across mountain passes in the Himalayas, on fire escapes in Manhattan, in the deserts of NM, and many other places around the world.

Other resources from World Music Press ([www.worldmusicpress.com](http://www.worldmusicpress.com)) are:

- ❖ *Sing and Shine: On An Innovative Guide to Leading Multicultural Song* by Nick Page is a 192-page handbook on the power of singing, teaching multicultural songs, and celebrating the necessity of music.
- ❖ *Let Your Voice Be Heard! Songs From Ghana and Zimbabwe* by Abraham Adzenyah, Dumisani Maraire and Judith Tucker is a 154-page book that includes musical transcriptions, story songs, and game songs. A companion audio CD included.
- ❖ *Silent Temples, Songful Hearts: Traditional Music of Cambodia* by Sam-Ang Sam and Patricia Campbell is a 144-page book with transcriptions of instrumentals, songs, dances, children’s games. A companion audio CD included.
- ❖ *Pandemonium Rules! Orff Instrument Arrangements of Steel Band Music* by Deborah Teason and Gage Averill is a 20-page booklet with cultural and historical background of Latin America and transcription for songs and instruments. A companion audiocassette included.
- ❖ *When the Earth Was Like New: Western Apache Songs and Stories* by Chesley Wilson, Ruth Wilson and Bryan Burton is a 128-page book with Apache historical and cultural background and transcriptions of social, traveling, and game songs. A companion audio CD included.
- ❖ *My Harvest Home: A Celebration of Polish Songs, Games, Dances and Customs* by Andrea Schafer is a book with Poland and Polish-American community background, musical selections for all ages, and folk art projects. A companion audio CD included.

This kit (and others) published by World Arts are excellent multi-aged children, or intergenerational projects for UU camps, conferences, and congregations.

Contact Claudia at [ArtandMusicKits@aol.com](mailto:ArtandMusicKits@aol.com).



## *Meditation on Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*

*By The Rev. Edward Harris, Emeritus Minister  
All Souls Unitarian Church  
Indianapolis, IN*

What can we say about Rudolph?

He was excluded by other reindeer. They did not let him play with them. We may feel confident that they made fun of him and his red nose.

It is possible that they hurt poor Rudolph. He was on the outside. The other reindeer had a special relationship with Santa Claus. They were the elite: Dancer, Dasher, Prancer, Comet, Blitzen, fine names, sturdy names, bespeaking solidarity, stability, education, training, ability, access to the very best. These reindeer were strong and fast.

Rudolph was smaller and his only distinctive feature was a shiny red nose. It seemed to have a glow about it. It made the young Rudolph a figure of fun. "See Rudolph the Red-nosed. Ha! Ha! I'd rather be dead than red in the nose," they'd say.

Still he may have been content to be red-nosed by himself. He probably muttered more than once, "I don't care. Let them have all of the fun. I can have fun by myself."

Did Rudolph wish to be included? We don't know? Probably he did, for it is the deepest wish of all creatures to belong and be accepted.

So what happened?

On a foggy Christmas Eve, Santa realized Rudolph could make the difference in guiding the sleigh. Rudolph could lead them through. Rudolph's special trait was his ugly, shiny, red nose. It was this nose, this trait that was needed.

So Santa goes to little Rudolph and asks him to guide the sleigh. Actually to lead it. He would be in front of the other reindeer. Because their mission of getting Christmas to the boys and

girls of the world was so important, it became necessary to rethink past practices.

When Rudolph was asked, what did he say? We don't know; it's not recorded. We know he did not say: "I can't. I'm too little." He didn't say, "Me? The others always make fun of me." He didn't say, "Now you ask me, I've got something else to do. It isn't fair."

He didn't say spitefully, "Get somebody else. Let Dancer do it." He didn't say, "I hope you crash, you and all the others."

So we have a classic story of the insiders excluding the newcomer and making fun of his special traits. It happens all of the time in schoolrooms, playing fields, classes, society.

We say: "They just don't have it. And if they do, well we got here first and don't have to let them in our group, our company, our church, our country club, our political party, our games."

He just did it. He led the sleigh through. He did the job. It was a hard job but he did it. Then all the reindeer loved him.

What does the little story, the bit of doggerel mean? What is its moral?

Some possible meanings: Anybody can serve; we need everyone to be part of the team; even the ugliest (or what we label ugly) and smallest has a special contribution to make; the mission is more important than personalities.

There are perhaps others. (Can you think of some?) Remember them when you hear the song.

## *Some Words for Christmas Worship*

*Collected by Jacqui James  
Co-editor, UU Faith Works  
Boston, MA*

God of love and hope

We stand unshielded, as shepherds in the night.  
Surrounded by dark hillsides, alert to all who might need us,  
Aware of the pitfalls that our patient watchfulness prevents.

We would be dazzled anew by your presence in our lives.

We would remember the Christmas story  
When we travel through dark spaces in our own lives;  
Remembering that even the shepherds, those hilltop guardians of the weak,  
Were comforted by companions who traveled with them towards beckoning promise.

May we commit ourselves to journey together through the night,

Moving with courage, faith, love, and eager openness to all we will encounter.

May our ability to be a companion in the darkness increase as we allow others to be companions to us.

For in the trust of this supportive wholeness, we both express—and know—your love. Amen.

**Lucinda Steven Duncan**

Beatitudes of Christmastide

On this blessed day let us worship at the altar of joy, for to miss  
the joy of Christmas is to miss its holiest secret.

Let us enter into the spiritual delights which are the natural  
heritage of child-like hearts.

Let us withdraw from the cold and barren world of prosaic fact if only  
for a season.

That we may warm ourselves by the fireside of fancy, and  
take counsel of the wisdom of poetry and legend.

Blessed are they who have vision enough to behold a guiding star in  
the dark mystery which girdles the earth.

Blessed are they who have imagination enough to detect  
the music of celestial voices in the midnight hours of life;

Blessed are they who have faith enough to contemplate a world of  
peace and justice in the midst of present wrongs and strife.

Blessed are they who have greatness enough to become at  
times as a little child;

Blessed are they who have zest enough to take delight in simple things;

Blessed are they who have wisdom enough to know that  
the kingdom of heaven is very close at hand, and that all  
may enter who have eyes to see and ears to hear and  
hearts to understand.

**David Rhys Williams**