

BROOKFIELD
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
Children's Religious Education Program
2007-2008

September 2007

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in our Children's Religious Education Program (RE) at the Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church.

Unitarian Universalism: Walking the Walk, Talking the Talk is the foundation of our children's program. Based on the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes, our children experience Unitarian Universalism through worship, discussion, activities, community service, and fun. Each year we expand on our foundation theme in a chosen direction and this year we will look more deeply into Unitarian Universalist Identity.

Along with developing a Unitarian Universalist Identity, our program seeks to inspire awe and wonder, empathy and compassion and to foster a sense of "church as home," a place of safety and comfort and belonging. As in our wider church community, Church School offers a safe place to question and a flexible, creative place to learn and to have fun. It offers the children opportunities to contribute in a relevant manner and to be appreciated for those contributions.

The children are an important part of BUUC community and we strive to care for the ministerial relationship between our children and Rev. Sara Ascher. Rev. Sara will offer several worship services based on RE themes and has scheduled several Sundays to be with the children in RE. The members of the BUUC recognize the importance of a strong RE program and support it through their pledges and their spirited volunteerism. Every effort is made to offer a safe environment for our children.

Parents are welcome to visit classes and are encouraged to contact me with questions, ideas or concerns. I ask that parents keep me informed of any situation that may impact your child's learning or behavior. I am available

to meet with parents before and after worship/church school and other times by appointment. And volunteer – RE's an awesome place to be!

In faith,
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MISSION STATEMENT (written and voted on by Brookfield UU Church School members, February 1992)

Our Church School is a place where we come to talk, listen, learn, sing, read, think, play and have fun together so that we can better understand ourselves, each other, the world and the Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Church.

WORSHIP: We believe it is important for families to have the opportunity to worship together. We ask that all children sit with their families (about 15 minutes) until children's recessional at which time children leave to continue their church experience in an age accommodating manner. Children are welcome to remain (quietly) in the sanctuary for continued worship if the family chooses.

CHURCH SCHOOL area is in the basement of our building and, upon our 'sing out' from worship, the children divide into age defined groups. Our age/grade guidelines for our young children are flexible as we feel that children should be accommodated according to their own particular spot on their maturational path and their life experiences. RE groups are dismissed by 11:45.

ALL COMMUNITY WORSHIP: People of all ages have the opportunity to participate in All Community Worship Services by offering readings, music, ushering or greeting. All children are offered the choice to participate in these services which are scheduled seven times this year. Families are encouraged to have all children remain in the sanctuary for the

entire service but the Nursery will be staffed for young children who may need a break!

BUUC RE GROUP DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES 2007-2008:

This year our RE focus is Our Unitarian Universalist Identity. Pillars (themes) for the year include UU Basics, Spiritual Practices, What Do You Believe In? (Winterim), UU History, and UU Sources that will lead into World Religions for church year 2008-2009.

In our **Nursery**, children through age 3 (or 4) are cared for in a secure and comfortable place by Katie, their very gentle caregiver. Although this group of children does not follow a curriculum, they are learning independence, sharing and developing the sense of church as home. Watching older children move on to the preschool classroom prepares them for their own eventual transition. If more time to acclimate the child makes their transition from parents easier, parents of nursery aged children have the opportunity to bring their child to the nursery room before the worship service begins.

Our **Explorers Group** (preschool – 5 years) will learn by doing with the UU curriculum Chalice Children. Stories, activities and simple ritual are a part of each week's plan accommodating the developmental needs of this age group. Children transitioning from the Nursery are welcome to visit back as they are comfortable.

The **Searchers** (K-Gr. 2) and **Seekers** (Gr. 3-5) Groups are working together in our Spirit Play Class. Parents may hear the phrases "getting ready," (quieting oneself), "wondering time," (open-ended questioning) and "doing work" (self-chosen and self-guided supporting activity.) The session begins with a story, discussion, activity, check-in and closing. Spirit Play is a new model for us and the program will be created as we watch how it works!

Junior Youth (Gr. 6-8) will finish the UU curriculum Compass Points exploring their selves, their beliefs, their UU faith and their relationships with others and the world. They are scheduled into worship and will travel

to several other UU churches as well. An overnight at church is being scheduled. Established guidelines for BUUC Youth Groups require elements of Worship, Service, Pertinent Content, Fundraising and Fun Raising.

Senior Youth (Gr. 9-12) have lots of options and dynamic, enthusiastic adults who are ready to help create the program. The Clara Barton District, through the efforts of Deb Levering, CBD RE Program Consultant and the Youth Adult Committee (YAC), is revamping district youth events and there are exciting leadership opportunities available.

MULTI AGE GROUP ACTIVITIES:

P.U.L.S.E. Groups (*People Understanding through Learning and Sharing Experiences*):

PULSE weeks are scheduled throughout the year and may be used for learning activities, service projects, discussion and celebrations and offer the opportunity to form relationships beyond our typical age groups (preschoolers through adults).

Winterim: Throughout January and February, RE will depart from our regular Church School format for Winterim. This year's theme is "What Do You Believe In?" which will be reflected in our Winterim Worship Service on February 24, 2008.

RE NUTS AND BOLTS

Registration: Please fill out the brief registration form for each child attending the RE Program. This acknowledges that you desire your child to participate in the BUUC RE Program, enables us to plan for special dietary requirements, to purchase adequate supplies and to reach families in the event of changes in plans and schedules. It is very important to include any learning or behavioral considerations so we can make necessary accommodations.

Registration Fee: At the BUUC there is no registration fee for Church School. Children's Religious Education is funded through your pledge to the BUUC General Fund. Please be generous.

Attendance: There are no mandatory attendance requirements to participate in the RE Program but children who come to church regularly will gain a sense of community with other children and adults. Most of the curricula we choose offer sessions that stand alone but your child will feel more connected to their group and be more willing to participate if your attendance is consistent.

Sophia Lyon Fahs (1876-1978), Unitarian Religious Educator said,

“Life becomes religious whenever we make it so: when some new light is seen, when some deeper appreciation is felt, when some larger outlook is gained, when some nobler purpose is formed, when some task is well done.”