

**CHILDREN'S PROGRAM
2009 – 2010**

**NORTH SHORE
UNITARIAN CHURCH**



NORTH SHORE UNITARIAN CHURCH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

On June 8, 2008, at a meeting of parents and connected adults, goals for our Children's Program were articulated. We hope children in our Religious Education Program will:

- feel part of an extended spiritual family that creates a community of caring
- have opportunities to explore spiritual issues and questions - the big questions in life
- develop a vocabulary for talking about spiritual matters
- gain an understanding of our Unitarian Universalist principles and how to live them in the world
- have exposure to the different religious beliefs and practices in the world, leading to acceptance and understanding
- learn that there are many different pathways of faith
- experience respect, compassion, joy, freedom of expression, acceptance of differences and fun
- learn to trust their own wisdom and develop a sense of their own self worth
- experience multigenerational connections
- develop an awe of nature and a passion to protect it

ABOUT OUR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our religious education program is a cooperative one. This means that parents and caregivers are asked to contribute to the program. Below is a list of some of the ways you can volunteer in our children's program. More in-depth descriptions are available from the Director of Religious Education at the church office.

- Children's Program Committee member
- Teacher
- Teacher's Assistant
- Musician
- Worship assistance
- Storytelling
- Tidying storage areas
- Crafts & mailings
- Snack preparation
- Photographer
- Potluck supper coordinators
- Bulletin board
- Sunday soup preparation
- Annual gift-making workshop coordinator or supplies purchaser

BIRTHDAY BOOK PROGRAM

We add children's books to our Children's Library through a Birthday Book Program. You are invited to donate a children's book on your child's birthday, and we will supply a bookplate inscribed with his/her name, the date and which birthday is being celebrated. You may have a favourite or you might want a suggestion from our Director of Religious Education. This is a loving way to celebrate a special day and one we would remember with gratitude.

Our children experience religious growth and enrichment by exposure to the diversity our members bring to this Church. The quality of our Religious Education program depends upon each one of us.

Registration and Photo Release forms are available downstairs after the service from our Director of Religious Education, Lynn Sabourin.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY PROGRAMS

All our programs coincide with the 10:30 am Sunday services. Our morning begins with the whole group sharing in a brief worship circle. We often join the congregation upstairs for the first part of the service.

A sign posted on the window to the left of the front door will indicate whether the children will be upstairs or down for the opening worship. For those children who arrive well before 10:30 there are activities and games on tables downstairs in our social hall. The children will again be involved in Thanksgiving, Christmas, Parents' Peace Day and Flower Communion Services.

NURSERY (under 3 years)

Two paid nursery staff will provide loving care to our littlest people while parents attend church services. Both are qualified graduates of the Red Cross baby-sitting course. Free play, stories, music and snack time will make the time away from parents enjoyable.

SPIRIT PLAY

(3-6 years)

Spirit Play is an innovative program which has been developed by Dr. Nita Penfold, D.Min., as a way of responding to children's wonderings about the big questions in life: questions such as



Who am I?
Where did I come from?
What is my purpose?
What are my gifts?
How do I choose to live my life?
What happens when I die?
Why am I lonely and sad sometimes?

Based in Montessori theory and growing out of Jerome Berryman's *Godly Play*, Nita has created a unique Unitarian Universalist approach.

Each week a story is presented using manipulative materials. Wondering questions are posed for the children to consider. Following this the children are free to choose their "work"; either an art activity to respond to the story or to re-tell a story themselves. The weekly story and its related materials are stored in baskets and will be available to the children. The teacher becomes a guide rather than a leader, creating a safe and sacred space for children to make meaning of their lives.

As we develop the materials for this curriculum, we have become even more conscious of the importance of the creative aspect of play. Deep play is how children learn everything that is important to them. The possibilities are exciting!

TAPESTRY OF FAITH

For our Primary, Middle and Intermediate classes we will be using the brand new *Tapestry of Faith* curricula series. Both of the latest courses are in the Seeking Truth track.

These are programs and resources, for all ages that nurture Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual growth, transforming faith and vital communities of justice and love. The programs are on-line, down-loadable and available to everyone.

The programs are comprehensive, giving adult guides (teachers) the goals, learning objectives, focus stories and discussions, preparation suggestions and even spiritual preparation before class begins. There are activities that alternate between sedentary and active with suggestions for including children who are challenged physically or behaviourally. Every session has suggestions for long or short term social action projects called "Faith in Action." There are "Taking It Home" sections to connect parents to what their children are doing, a brief description of what each session was about with suggestions for extending the lesson and possible follow-up activities. These will be sent to parents via email and/or available in print to be picked up following the class.

We are excited about this series and welcome questions and feedback.

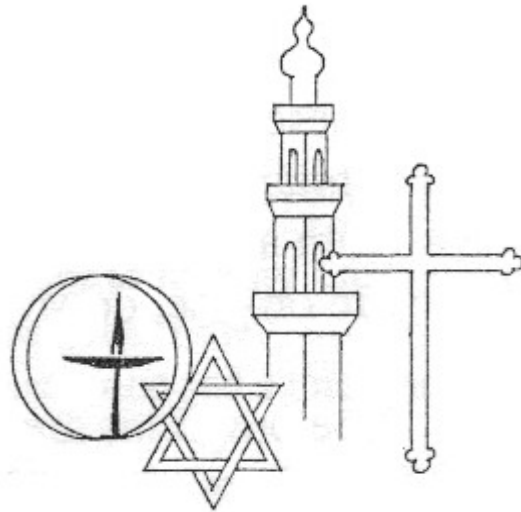
PRIMARY GROUP

(7-8 years)

HOLIDAYS AND HOLYDAYS – FALL UNIT

A favourite old curriculum has been updated and written into a version compatible with the Spirit Play method.

In this experiential curriculum the children will learn about the origins and meanings of holiday and holyday celebrations of other world religions and cultures occurring in the fall. They will also relate their learnings to our Unitarian Universalist principles and values.



TAPESTRY OF FAITH: SEEKING TRUTH: FAITHFUL JOURNEYS

Interacting with stories about contemporary Unitarian Universalists and stories from our faith heritage, children build their UU identity and explore ways to use their personal agency in service to UU Principles. Children learn how UU faith helps us empathize with others and affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. They learn to translate our faith into life choices and everyday actions that can affect positive change in the world. All sessions include hands-on activities, games, guided discussion, reflection and self-expression including music.

MIDDLE GROUP

(9-10 years)

TAPESTRY OF FAITH:

SEEKING TRUTH: WINDOWS AND MIRRORS

Through a lens of UU faith and justice, children look inward at themselves (mirrors) and outward at the communities to which they belong, especially their congregation (windows). How do they experience true affiliation with others who may, at first, seem very unlike themselves? How do we acknowledge our own perspectives and respect the perspectives of others? How do we move out from “me” to “we?” We hope to guide participants to identify and respect their own values, views and needs as well as those of others in a variety of contexts – to do so is a faith practice. An ongoing project is to create their own Window/mirror panel that will illustrate their interpretation of the concepts of each Sunday’s session.

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INTERMEDIATE GROUP

(11 & 12 years)

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TRADITIONS WITH A WINK

Teaches an understanding of our Unitarian Universalist faith. We come from a long tradition of questioning, searching, loving kindness and good works. We have powerful stories of visions of hope to share with our Intermediates as they begin the process of shaping their own faith.

Some Unitarian Universalist traditions taught in this curriculum include:

- our principles and purposes
- our roots in Judeo-Christian culture
- our music and hymns
- the place of science and reason
- the different ways UU’s create community

One of our hopes is that our kids will also have fun and stay enthusiastic about their Church experience.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE

Our Children's Program has been designed to provide children with a stimulating and spiritually nourishing environment. Our volunteer teachers and staff are committed to the safety and well-being of the younger members of our community. To this end we have some structures in place for the protection of both children and their adult guides:

- Each classroom has a window in the door so that classroom activities can be viewed from the hallway, thus lowering the risk potential for all parties.
- A first aid kit is located in the hallway for emergency situations and there is a telephone in the first classroom, Room 302 and in the Daycare Room 313.
- The Director of Religious Education (DRE) and Assistant circulate through all the Religious Education spaces during the morning program.
- Children 7 years and younger are picked up after the service by their parent/guardian and are under their care from that point on.
- Each class develops their own covenant or class rules for being together.
- There is zero tolerance of any behaviour that may cause bodily or emotional harm.

Classroom Management and Discipline (cont.)

While we encourage children to solve their own problems and grow towards self-control, there are times when staff or volunteers must intervene. When handling a discipline problem, we try to start with simple solutions. Sometimes ignoring an isolated or unobtrusive breach of discipline is best. Looking at the child and calling his or her name gently, moving near to the child, changing seating arrangements or having a private conference with the child will result in a change of behaviour. Often a time-out from the classroom with the DRE is necessary. When those steps are unsuccessful, the teacher and DRE can have a discussion with the child and parents/guardians, describing the unacceptable conduct as well as the expected behaviour. The DRE will document in writing the proceedings of this meeting.

If unacceptable behaviour continues, the DRE may, with the approval of the Children's Program Committee, suspend a child. The length of suspension would be determined on a case by case basis. This is an extremely rare occurrence at North Shore Unitarian Church.

Because of our aim to uphold our first principle, the dignity and worth of all people, once a child is welcomed back, it is with the understanding that he or she has a fresh start and, hopefully, a positive relationship in our Church community.

SUGGESTIONS TO PARENTS

- Try to bring your children to church school on time and pick them up promptly after the service.
- While each lesson can stand alone, regularity of attendance enhances both understanding of the curriculum and rapport with classmates.
- Encourage your child to express ideas, feelings, values and beliefs and accept them as legitimate and important.
- Respond to questions which lead your child to explore. We have books in our library which may be borrowed.
- Share your feelings, ideas, values and beliefs.

Although we know parents bear the major responsibility for the religious education of their children, we offer an exciting program which will enrich their religious growth and learning.

Lynn Sabourin 604-926-1621
Director of Religious Education

Cara Elrod, Assistant 604-929-4858

NORTH SHORE UNITARIAN CHURCH
370 Mathers Avenue, West Vancouver, BC V7S 1H3
Ph.604-926-1621
Email: nsuc@telus.net

Proposed Children's Program 2009-10 CALENDAR

Dates to be confirmed, please check your newsletter
Other events to be announced when scheduled.

Class Sleepovers:

Intermediate Group	Fri. Sept.18 - Sat. Sept.19
Middle Group	Fri. Sept.25 - Sat. Sept.26
Primary Group	Fri. Nov.6 - Sat. Nov.7

Secret Buddies Program

Sun. Sept.20, 27 - Sign-up
Sun. Oct.4, 11, 18, 25, & Nov.1st - Secret Buddies exchange
Sun. Nov.1st - Identities revealed at Potluck

Teachers' Retreat at Zajac Ranch - Oct.2 - 4

Sun. Oct. 4 Thanksgiving Multigenerational Service

Sat. Oct.17 Sing-a-Long *Mama Mia* fundraiser
for Teachers' Retreat 7:30-10pm

Sun. Nov.1 Halloween Potluck and Haunted House
made by the Youth Group 5 – 7:15pm

Sun. Nov.22 Gift Making Workshop 2 – 5pm

Pageant Rehearsals:

Sun. Nov.29 Noon – 1:30pm

Sun. Dec. 6 “ “

Sun. Dec.13 “ “

Sat. Dec.19 3 – 5 pm Dress Rehearsal

Sun. Dec.20 Christmas Multigenerational Service with Pageant

Sun. June 20 Flower Communion Multigenerational Service