

# Religious Exploration for Children and Youth 2010-2011



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Minister

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# Religious Exploration Calendar

As dates are subject to change, please consult the newsletter, weekly e-mail, or web pages / calendar for updates.

## September

- 12 Multigenerational Service & RE registration
- 13 RE Committee meeting
- 18 RE Teacher Orientation
- 19 RE Dedication, then Worship Circle: Being in Community, & Registration

## October

- 2 Youth Night: Lock-in!
- 4 RE Committee meeting
- 10 Child Dedication, then Worship Circle
- 15-17 Western Regional Fall Gathering (WRFG), Young Fun & Youth Conference [HERE!](#) 😊
- 17 Multigenerational Service with WRFG guests
- 21-26 Andrea away at LREDA conference
- 31 Worship Circle: Day of the Dead

## November

- RE Committee begins to plan for 2011-2012
- 1 RE Committee meeting
- 21 & 28 Children prepare for service on 19th

## December

- 5 Registration begins for Mystery Buddies
- 6 RE Committee meeting
- 5 & 12 Children prepare for service on 19th
- 19 Multigenerational Service
- 24 Christmas Eve Service
- 26 Child care only

## January

- 2 Child care only
- 9 Last day to register for Mystery Buddies
- 10 RE Committee meeting

- 16 Worship Circle: Compassion
- 23 OWL Service

## February

- 6 Mystery Buddies begins!
- 7 RE Committee meeting
- 14 Worship Circle: Pink Triangle Day  
Mystery Buddies, week 2
- 19 OWL Cabaret
- 20 Mystery Buddies, week 3
- 27 Mystery Buddies *Celebration*

## March

- 7 RE Committee meeting
- 13 Worship Circle
- 27 Child care only

## April

- 3 Child care only
- 4 RE Committee meeting
- 10 Youth-led Service
- 24 Child Dedication, then Worship Circle

## May

- 2 RE Committee meeting
- 15 Sunny Breakfast for RE Leaders  
**RE Celebration Service**  
RE Open House  
(last day of regular RE Program year)
- 18-20 Andrea away for Renaissance Module
- 20-23 CUC Conference, Young Fun & CanUUdle in Toronto, celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CUC

## June

- 5 Flower Communion

## **A Word From the Minister**

Whether you are a long-time member or a newcomer, welcome to the 2010-2011 Religious Exploration program year of First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg.

This congregation is a multi-generational learning community, for we are all called to a life-long search for truth. Through the participation of our many members and friends, we nurture spiritual and intellectual growth, blessed by a wonderful Director of Religious Exploration, Andrea James, and a dedicated Religious Exploration Committee.

We take to heart the words of William Ellery Channing, who wrote, "The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds upon the young, but to stir up their own...not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth." Our goal is to guide and encourage children and youth in the process of discovery, to nurture their inborn love of learning and holy curiosity.

I am delighted that you and your children are here! You will find many opportunities to be involved, and will find through your participation an ever-growing sense of fulfilment. It is my pleasure to share some part of your religious journey with you.

Warm blessings,  
Rev. Millie Rochester

## **...and from the Director of Religious Exploration**

At First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg, we affirm that families come in all shapes and sizes and that parents are their children's primary educators. We offer multigenerational services and intergenerational connections; worship geared specifically to children or youth; activities that invite children to explore and youth to engage; ritual; resources; and an embracing, welcoming atmosphere.

I am honoured to be part of the wonderful programming developed by the Committee for Religious Exploration, and to serve our young people and their families. We welcome your ideas and your involvement, and look forward to a year full of wonder and connection.

Peace,  
Andrea James

# Principles and Sources in Children's Language

As Unitarian Universalists, we affirm that...

- Each and every person is important
- All people should be treated fairly
- Our churches are places where all people are accepted and where we keep learning together
- Each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life
- Everyone should have a vote about the things that concern them
- We work for a peaceful, fair and free world
- We care for our planet Earth.

Unitarian Universalists find inspiration from six sources. The stories and lessons we offer in Religious Exploration programs are drawn from these foundations of our faith:

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





## Children's Theme

This year children will explore the third source from which Unitarian Universalists draw: "wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life". Children ages 5 to 7 will focus on Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism through picture books, crafts and activities. Children 8 to 11 will explore ten faiths through hands-on stations engaging different learning styles. Both groups will ground their experiences in a Unitarian Universalist context – what does this mean for us as UUs? How can this understanding help us live our values?

In addition to these lessons, children will be in community together throughout the year to worship, have fun, work on projects and prepare for multigenerational services.

## Worship Circles

About once a month, the Director of Religious Exploration leads children's worship. This is a time for children 4 to 11 to gather as a group, build community, explore a theme together, and experience worship geared for their ages.

These special dates are:

September 20	Being in Community	February 14	Pink Triangle Day
October 10	tba	March 13	tba
October 31	Day of the Dead	April 24	tba
January 16	Compassion		

## Child Dedications

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, we celebrate the birth or adoption of a baby, and welcome children into our community through a ritual of dedication. Both parents and congregation affirm our interdependence, the congregation as a whole celebrates the children by name, and we welcome these young people wholeheartedly into our community.

In this congregation, the ritual of child dedication is available to all member families. There will be two dedications this year: October 10<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup>. If you are considering participating in either ceremony, please contact Rev. Millie at 474-1261 or [minister.uuwpg@mts.net](mailto:minister.uuwpg@mts.net).

## Youth Group

Our Youth Group meets with Youth Advisors and Allies on Sunday mornings, from 10:30 to 11:45/noon. They may begin in the Sanctuary or in the youth rooms downstairs, depending on their programming (check the Order of Service, or the RE main door in the foyer).

In addition to faith development, youth groups aim to provide community building, social action, worship, youth – adult relations, and leadership development (see the next page for more on these program elements). Sometimes the group will meet outside of Sunday mornings as well.

The Youth Group will have a **Lock-In on Saturday, October 2** – activities and a sleepover at the church.

There are also opportunities to **travel** to Youth Conferences, connecting with the regional or national youth movement. Youth are accompanied by adult advisors, and funds are raised throughout the year to support this. Possibilities this year include:

Western Region Fall Gathering Youth Conference, HERE! – October 15-17

Basic Youth Advisor Training, HERE! – a weekend in early 2011

CanUUdle in Toronto - May 20-23

Goldmine Youth Leadership School - one week, summer 2011

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Building Community in Youth Groups *(adapted from the Ministry with Youth Renaissance Module)*

- Ⓢ Bonding – establishing a relationship of trust within the group
- Ⓢ Opening Up – moving towards revealing hopes, fears and dreams
- Ⓢ Affirming – sharing appreciation of and affirming each other
- Ⓢ Stretching – going beyond normal comfort level, actively caring for each other
- Ⓢ Deeper Sharing – willing to take risks together
- Ⓢ (Notes: ongoing respect for individual and group boundaries; when new members join, the group goes back to “step 1”; the focus is on an understanding of where the group is, rather than a race to Deeper Sharing)

### **Worship**

**Red is for worship; the heart, compassion, and love we share together.** Don't forget, the "R" in YRUU is for "religious." YRUU is a spiritual and religious home for youth. Worship is an important and sacred part of many UU youth events. Youth worship tends to be interactive and non-traditional. It often takes place in a circle, with sharing as a focus. Many youth groups also put on Youth Sunday worship services in congregations. Worship is a time and place where we can share YRUU spirituality and caring with the larger community.

### **Youth-Adult Relations**

**Orange is for the warmth of the bond between youth and their elders,** essential to youth empowerment. YRUU communities where youth and adults work together and have power with each other have huge potential. Intergenerational environments encourage all of the other components of youth programming. Youth and adults can learn from each other, experience youth worship, build community, empower each other to lead, and make a difference in the world through social action.

## **The Six Components of a Balanced Youth Program**

### **Community Building**

**In literature, yellow is the color of memory and reminiscence.** It honors our friends and loved ones, and the social aspects of youth programs. Community building, or socializing, is a time for people to get to know one another, time devoted to "hanging out." Some of the most valuable experiences in YRUU happen during social activities. This is the time to bond together, share values, establish trust, generate intimacy, and practice acceptance. Community building is the time to share our liberal religious values by getting to know one another.

### **Leadership**

**Purple, the color of royalty, represents leadership and self-governance.** One of the biggest contributions YRUU makes to our denomination is the development of youth leadership. YRUU is primarily a youth-led organization in which youth have the opportunity to learn and practice their leadership skills. Leadership in YRUU is different from other models of leadership in our culture. In YRUU, leadership is about learning how to work together, facilitate, reach consensus, foster cooperation, and make sure every person gets heard.

### **Social Action**

**Green is the color for treating the earth and each other responsibly.** Green is for social action. Because youth have passionate opinions about social issues, the youth in this denomination have been at the forefront of social action activities. YRUU is a place for youth to express and explore our values, to put action behind our concerns. Social action projects are an important way for YRUUers to put hands and feet on our principles while having fun.

### **Learning**

**In some eastern philosophies, blue represents intellectual growth and mental energy.** Almost every aspect of YRUU can provide learning experiences for youth. RE curricula are great resources for learning in YRUU. However, curricula do not provide the only learning opportunities for youth. YRUU is a great place for discussion — sparked by the topic of a guest speaker, movie, or from youth's own experiences. YRUU is a safe place to expand our horizons and to learn more about the world around us.

## Shared Ministry in the RE Program

Sharing in ministry with children, youth, and families can be deeply rewarding. There are many ways to get involved – from teaching/advising to shelving books - and finding the fit that's right for you is important to us.

- ♥ If you are new to the church, we encourage you to take some time to just get to know our community before volunteering in RE.
- ♥ While your child is registered in RE, we hope that you will find a way to help that suits you, for some portion of every year.
- ♥ If you don't have a child currently registered in RE, we invite you to support this vital program. A strong and active RE program is one sign of a healthy congregation.

Following are some brief descriptions and timelines for the opportunities available.

Religious Exploration or OWL Oversight Committees: Collaborate with the DRE to plan and implement programming. Ideally, our committees should look like a cross-section of the congregation, so all are welcome. *They meet monthly, or as needed, throughout the year.*

RE Teachers: Explore with children as they learn about UU values, world religions, personal growth, the environment, ethics, and more! *Child Abuse Registry check must be completed. Working within a team, co-lead about seven Sundays between September and mid-May. Attend Teacher Orientation.*

Youth Advisors: Engage with young UUs (12 and up) who are tapped into a broader youth movement: work within a team framework in one or more of the six components of a balanced youth program, as suits your interest. *Child Abuse Registry check must be completed. September to mid-May. Attend the weekend workshop Basic Youth Advisor Training, early 2011.*

Mystery Buddies: Act as a mail carrier and/or plan an event to celebrate the Buddies as they reveal their true identities to each other. *February, 2011.*

Book Wish List: visit the Religious Exploration for Children & Youth page on the church's website, under Programming, to find a link to our book wish list, which grows throughout the year. Books donated to the RE Library will receive a label honouring the donor or a person of the donor's choice (like a child having a birthday). We are so grateful for donations that support our programs!

Please contact Andrea James, DRE to find out more, or offer your time: [dre.uuwpg@mts.net](mailto:dre.uuwpg@mts.net)

## Connect with us!

There are several ways to learn about our Religious Exploration programs, as well as what else is happening in the church, and other UU news.

### Church Website

You can find information regarding children, youth and families at [www.uuwinnipeg.ca](http://www.uuwinnipeg.ca). Go to the Programming tab, then click on Children & Youth. You'll also find Andrea's Blog under that tab.



You can find and "Like" our Facebook Page, at [www.facebook.com/UUWinnipegRE](http://www.facebook.com/UUWinnipegRE). Updates will appear in your News Feed.



You can follow us on Twitter @UUWinnipegRE. ([www.twitter.com/UUWinnipegRE](http://www.twitter.com/UUWinnipegRE))



You can subscribe to the Blog and/or the RE News on the church website, by clicking on the "Add RSS feed" link on that page. (*Hint: you can subscribe to other areas of the website this way too!*)

### Communication from the Church

In order to receive the weekly news e-mail, have a personal mail folder set up in the foyer, and/or receive the monthly newsletter electronically, contact the Church's Administrative Assistant, Lee Hoskins, at [uuwpg@mts.net](mailto:uuwpg@mts.net) or 474-1261.

Our newsletter, *The Communicator*, is also available in print and on the church website, and always includes a page of RE News and columns from Rev. Millie and DRE Andrea.

### DRE Andrea James

Office hours are Tuesday to Thursday, 9:30 to 3:00, and Andrea is at church most Sundays.

**474-1261 • [dre.uuwpg@mts.net](mailto:dre.uuwpg@mts.net) • [www.uuwinnipeg.mb.ca](http://www.uuwinnipeg.mb.ca)**

*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.*

*Sophia Lyon Fahs*

## **Registration & Guests**

Registration forms must be completed for all children and youth in our programs. Forms are available online and in the foyer. Newcomers are always welcome.

When visiting, please complete a Visitors Form so that we know who is in the building. This is a safety issue, but the form also provides guests with an opportunity to request more information about the church and our programming.

## **What to expect on Sundays**

Children up to 11 begin most Sundays in the Sanctuary with the rest of the congregation. Youth Group may begin either upstairs or down, depending on their programming. Information about where to go is posted in the Order of Service and in the window of the main RE door at the back of the foyer.

Young people are often invited forward for Story Wisdom. After the story, the rest of the congregation sings as the young people are accompanied to the Religious Exploration area. Please ensure your child has shoes on while in church, as part of our Fire Safety procedures.

At times children will be in community all together for their own worship, or for multi-age activities or child care.

Following the service children return to the Sanctuary for social time and refreshments with the rest of the congregation. At that point, children are in their parent's care again. Children in the nursery should be picked up by 11:45.

## **Western Region Fall Gathering (WRFG)**

Every fall, congregations and fellowships from Thunder Bay to Alberta gather to learn together, get to know each other, discover what's happening in our Region and throughout the Canadian Unitarian Council, and experience worship together. This year's gathering will be hosted by us, October 15-17. There will be programming for adults, a Youth Conference (12-20), Young Fun for children 5-11, and childcare for infants and toddlers. This is a wonderful opportunity to engage more deeply, and widen your circle of UU friends. For more information or to register, pick up a brochure in the foyer, or visit [www.uuwinnipeg.mb.ca/uu-home/gathering](http://www.uuwinnipeg.mb.ca/uu-home/gathering).