

A spiritual community begins with the knowledge that there is a place in the world where we are spiritually at home:

A place where memories are rooted,
Where mysteries are pondered,
Where dreams are nourished,
Where love is freely given,
Where failures are owned & accepted,
Where sorrows are transformed,
Where lives are deepened,
challenged, and uplifted.

Let this be such a place.
Here let heart and mind, reason and intuition, come together.
Here let us be at home, centered...
Together once again.

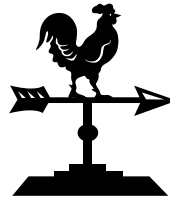
~David E. Bumbaugh, adapted

The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but rather to stir up their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own; not to impose religion on them in the form of arbitrary rules..... but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment, so that they may discern and approve for themselves what is everlastingly right and good.

— William Ellery Channing, 1837

This pamphlet addresses the philosophy of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education, and specifically the philosophy of this church's RE programming.

For more information about our program, please seek out additional pamphlets related to the current RE offerings for children and youth, and the *Family Guide to Religious Education for Children And Youth*, which gives an overview of the RE program. Or please feel free to contact Beryl Aschenberg, our Director of Religious Education, at 414-273-5257 or beryl@uumilwaukee.org



The congregation of The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in our activities without regard to race, color, gender, physical or mental challenge, sexual identity or orientation, age, class, national origin, or ancestry. Indeed, we are interested in actively promoting more diversity within our congregation.

OUR PHILOSOPHY of Religious Education for Children and Youth



The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

1342 North Astor Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
414 273-5257
www.uumilwaukee.org

Beryl Aschenberg
Director of Religious Education
414 273-5257 ext. 130
[Beryl@uumilwaukee.org](mailto:beryl@uumilwaukee.org)

Our Philosophy of Religious Education for Children and Youth

WELCOME

.... to the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee. Our church community is committed to the lifelong process of religious growth and learning. In our Sunday School classes, we work to provide a loving and nurturing environment where children and youth are able to explore their beliefs, deepen their understanding of the sacred and enrich their religious lives. We strive to create a supportive atmosphere where our young people can be themselves while learning to acknowledge, accept and affirm differences in others.

Our vision for the religious education of children and youth encompasses a holistic relationship to the life of our congregation and community, which includes, but goes beyond, classroom instruction. Curriculum is only one part of the church's religious education program — worship, social life, service and social action are just as important to the religious being and becoming of Unitarian Universalists.

For Unitarian Universalists, religious education includes all of the ways that children, teens and adults grow toward their potential as compassionate, ethical and fulfilled human beings. Our RE program is grounded in our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources, and in our relationships with one another. We welcome you to our shared journey.

Beryl Aschenberg,,
Director of Religious Education

The foundation of the First Unitarian Society's philosophy towards

religious education can be found in the Principles and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association. These affirm and promote:

- ◆ The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- ◆ Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- ◆ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.
- ◆ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- ◆ The rights of conscience and the use of the democratic process.
- ◆ The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- ◆ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

Our living tradition draws from many sources:

- ◆ Direct experiences... which move us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life...
- ◆ The words and deeds of prophetic men and women...
- ◆ Wisdom from the world's religions...
- ◆ Jewish, Christian, and Humanist teachings which inspire us to ethical and spiritual life, to love our neighbors, to heed the guidance of reason...
- ◆ Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature...

Within a safe and nurturing environment, we will endeavor to provide programming in which participants can:

- ❖ Achieve a sense of belonging, and have opportunities to contribute to our multigenerational religious community.
- ❖ Develop and express their spirituality, religious identity, and humanity.
- ❖ Understand and begin to internalize our Unitarian Universalist Principles.
- ❖ Learn Unitarian Universalist heritage, traditions, and history.
- ❖ Discover and gain respect for other religious and cultural traditions.
- ❖ Explore issues of social awareness, and have opportunities for meaningful social action.
- ❖ Build a foundation for moral and ethical decision making.
- ❖ Celebrate life's meanings and mysteries
- ❖ Have fun together!

We do not divide experiences into compartments and say, "These are religious; those are secular. These problems are in the realm of ethics; those have no ethical implications." Life becomes religious and ethical 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 ... The function of the church is to teach us how to put religious and ethical qualities into all kinds of experiences.

~ Sophia Lyon Fahs