

RE Calendar 2018-2019

9/16	RE Lesson 1
9/23	WCW
9/30	RE Lesson 2
10/7	WCW: Communion (holiday wknd)
10/14	RE Lesson 3
10/21	WCW
10/28	PK-5 th World Religion workshop at 10:30
11/4	WCW: Communion
11/11	WCW: Leaf Raking (holiday wkend)
11/18	RE Lesson 4
11/25	RE Lesson 5
12/2	WCW: Communion
12/9	PK-5 th Group/Holiday Lesson
12/16	WCW: Christmas Pageant
12/23	PK-5 th Group/Holiday Lesson
12/30	PK-5 th Group/Holiday Lesson
1/6	WCW: Communion
1/13	RE Lesson 6
1/20	WCW
1/27	PK-5 th Social Justice workshop at 10:30
2/3	WCW: Communion
2/10	RE Lesson 7
2/17	WCW (holiday wkend)
2/24	RE Lesson 8
3/3	WCW: Communion
3/10	RE Lesson 9
3/17	WCW
3/24	RE Lesson 10
3/31	RE Lesson 11
4/7	WCW: Communion
4/14	RE Lesson 12
4/21	WCW: Easter Service (holiday wkend)
4/28	PK-5 th World Religion workshop at 10:30
5/5	WCW: Communion
5/12	RE Lesson 13
5/19	PK-5 th Group Lesson
5/26	WCW (holiday wkend)
6/2	Group Lesson- RE Sunday Prep
6/9	WCW: RE Sunday & Picnic Celebration

*** “WCW” = Whole Congregation Worship**

On these Sundays all ages remain together for the entire worship service.

*** “RE Lesson”**

On these Sundays, all youth (including MS & HS) will meet with their designated grades.

Getting Started...

Children can be registered for the program beginning Sunday September 9, 2018 and any time after that.

Classes start Sunday September 16, 2018 and run through June 9, 2019.

Visiting friends and relatives may always join in with age appropriate classes. We ask that families complete a registration form before dropping their child(ren) off in RE class.

RE Committee:

Jen Scarano (chair)

Kara Mason

Juliana Merlino

Jenn Smagula

AJ Ryan (YG Advisor)

Nicole Tracey (RE Director)

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Welcome to Religious Education A Cooperative Program

@ First Parish Church United
Westford, MA

Program Overview 2018-2019

Here at FPCU, we delight in the lifelong journey of spiritual growth & development. In addition to worship, fellowship, outreach and committee activity, we offer Religious Education (RE) programs. Our program for Nursery Care through High School is a cooperative one, classes are facilitated and assisted by volunteers that include high school students, parents to children in the program, and other adults who love to work with children.

Please sign up!

Curriculum Philosophy & Overview

FPCU is affiliated with both the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association. We believe RE classes should present religious content and knowledge with sensitivity to the diversity of belief that is present in our congregation. We encourage families to discuss the lessons with their children and help them to see the lesson through the family's own belief structure. The Religious Education Committee is committed to providing meaningful lessons that educate our total church community (children, teens and adults). Our liberal RE program embraces the three threads that weave our program together:

- 1. The Judeo-Christian Heritage:** Taught in the primary grades through Bible stories and exploration of important holidays. The primary grades also include a study of our denominational affiliations- the UUA and the UCC.
- 2. Comparative World Religion:** Our Youth Group program spends some time focusing on the many religions in the world today. By examining and comparing various religions, and visiting local places of worship, students are able to expand their understanding of others and of themselves. Our primary grades are also introduced to a world religion each year through workshops and various activities.
- 3. Social Consciousness:** Church and community outreach projects provide children with the opportunity of putting their faith into action. These range from local needs (e.g. leaf raking & food pantry donations) to supporting global organizations (e.g. Heifer Project & Habitat for Humanity) in an effort to relieve suffering around the world.

Sunday Class Time

RE classes for children in PK through Grade 12 meet approximately two Sundays a month, during the worship hour. Everyone gathers together at the start of worship in the Sanctuary, and then children are invited to leave for RE class during the second hymn. Adults should walk their child to class, and pick them up once the service is over. Lessons are non-sequential, so students don't need to attend every class to keep up.

We value family worship time and plan Whole Congregation Worship services throughout the year. At these times we are blessed by the enlivening presence of all ages for worship!

Special Programs

There are approximately 3 WORKSHOPS each year; two focusing on a World Religion and one focusing on Social Justice. There are also a number of group lessons and holiday lessons planned throughout the year. Group Lessons & Workshops allow for inspiring hands-on learning, cooperation and community building with all youth.

* The **World Religion Workshops** focus on the world religion of the year; introducing children to the different traditions, customs and the beliefs of that religion. Through stories, visual aids, activities and crafts the children learn about the ways of others; making connections to their own lives while recognizing and appreciating the differences as well.

This Year's World Religion Focus: Chinese Religions: Taoism, Confucianism & Buddhism.

* The **Social Justice workshop** focuses on applying UCC & UUA values, recognizing current issues/events, helping others & making a difference. The lesson that takes place helps the children gain a better understanding of the issue/event at hand and helps them to appreciate the importance of values-theirs and those of others.

* **Group Lessons** are flexible and fun. The lessons revolve around a theme, usually seasonal based-not necessarily religious-focusing on the time of year.

* **Holiday Lessons** are based on a specific holiday and focus on how that holiday is celebrated. Holiday Lessons may include: Advent, Hanukkah, Christmas Around the World, Easter and Passover/Seder.

RE Highlights

Christmas Pageant: (12/16) RE students and willing adults, dress up and act out the magical story of Christmas.

RE Sunday: (6/9) RE students lead worship, sharing everything they learned in RE classes throughout the year.

RE Offering

A collection basket is passed around at the start of each RE class. The RE offering is separate from the Church offering, as the RE students get to vote on where their offering goes! The offering is split 50/50, between an out-reach program and an in-reach gift for the church. Out-reach programs have included The Heifer Organization, Lutheran Services for New Americans: Backpack Drive, Habitat for Humanity, and Lowell Wish Foundation. In-reach gifts include the swing and slide in the nursery room and currently we have been saving our in-reach money for granite benches to enjoy outside the church. You're continued support is greatly appreciated.

Pre-School & Pre-K Curriculum Info

Continuing this year, PS & Pre-K students will be using the UU curriculum **Chalice Children: A Tapestry of Faith Program for Children**. This curriculum introduces the

basic tenets of our UU faith to young children and their families. Those tenets are our love, our covenantal community, our celebration of diversity, a personal sense of wonder and awe, and our hope and work for a better world. **Chalice Children** is based on the belief that preschool children gain a sense of belonging to their religious community and the UU faith when they have concrete experiences with its people and places. Young children learn about their congregation's people and explore the physical building and surroundings that the congregation calls "home." **Chalice Children** is also based on the philosophy that a child's spiritual development is related to the child's own direct experiences. They question and wonder most vividly when in contact with real phenomena through touch, sight, or sound. Children learn the worth of other people when they encounter other children, experience conflicts in play, and discover that others have feelings, too.

K-2nd Grade Curriculum Info

The curriculum for grades K-2 is based on Bible stories. Children will become familiar with stories from both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures (Old and New Testaments.) The focus is to gain a basic understanding of the story and characters, as well as exploring possible interpretations of these stories. Bible stories are taught as meaningful stories, but "what to believe" is left to parents-and, later, children themselves- to determine. Bible stories are taught using the UU based curriculum **Picture Book Bible Tales**. This curriculum is fun, friendly and concise with teachable moments that introduce classic Bible Tales to young elementary children, taught through the UU lens of cultural and historical context. This program will encourage children to be wise and informed decision makers in their journey toward spiritual maturity. It will acquaint them with tales that are part of our culture and guide them how to find universal messages of inspiration and hope. Each lesson is complete with a specific book that illustrates the classic Bible tale, using age appropriate language for young children. Each story highlights a specific UU principle, identity and belief.

3rd Grade Curriculum Info

3rd grade RE lessons continue to build on the foundations of Bible Stories learned in earlier grades and also take a closer look at what our church and faith deems important. Students will delve into well known Bible stories/characters as they go

through the Bible from Adam & Eve to Jesus in chronological order, interpreting, reflecting and discussing the history and geography of the world.

Lessons are planned by the DRE and specific topics are inspired by the students. Religious Education in 3rd grade marks a special milestone at FPCU, as students spend the year exploring Bible stories and prepare to move onto UU curriculums. At the end of the RE year, 3rd grade students will receive 2 special books:

1. The *Newly Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Gift & Award Bible*

A Bible that speaks in words that are used in everyday language, making it easier for young people to read and understand. *Personalized as a keepsake.

2. *Unitarian Universalism is a Really Long Name* by: Jennifer Dant.

"Simple language and appealing illustrations offer children accessible answers to commonly asked questions such as: Who are we?"

4th & 5th Grade Curriculum Info

4th & 5th grade alternate between two UU curriculums. This year **Toolbox of Faith** will invite students to reflect on the qualities of our UU faith, such as integrity, courage, and love, as tools they can use in living their lives and building their own faith. Each of the sessions uses a tool as a metaphor for an important quality of our faith such as reflection (symbolized by a mirror), flexibility (duct tape), and justice (a flashlight). Reflecting on the qualities (tools) of our faith, children and leaders gain insight into what makes faith important in their own lives and how they can grow within that faith. In the **Toolbox of Faith**, students will learn how to play the 'Cloak and Dagger' game, how to use a compass and how to make a duct tape lunch bag. The students will hear intriguing, thought provoking stories about some of the important qualities of our faith, and have Council Circle discussions to reflect on how we live our UU faith in our everyday lives.

4th & 5th graders are all invited to help with each communion service (1st Sunday of each month). We ask that you arrive 15 minutes early on these Sundays and meet with the deacons for direction.

Youth Group Information

Our older youth in Middle School and High School (6th-12th grade) will begin working on building a strong and lasting youth group that will have powerful impacts on the lives of many students. Focus this year will be on laying the foundation for this through various bonding experiences: open discussions, team building activities,

community outreach, and service projects. This year we are excited to embark on a new journey, with a hired Youth Group Advisor!*

Hello all, my name is AJ Ryan and I'm so excited to be able to call myself your new Youth Group Advisor! This is a new experience for me, but I'm confident it will be a joy filled one as I get to know you more and more throughout the year.

A little about myself... I'm 23 years old, from Lowell, MA. I'm currently working toward a degree at Middlesex Community College in psychology and early childhood education. I'm also currently employed as a preschool teacher at KinderCare in Westford. Before that I was teaching preschool for a program called Jumpstart, where I also had the opportunity to lead older youth in the teaching of preschool. I have plenty of experience with younger children, as well as with older youth through my own family! I am a very high energy person, so I love being active and just having fun! My interests include: reading, writing, singing, & dancing! I'm excited to learn some new things, as I embark on this new journey with the youth here at First Parish Church United. I love including everyone and making sure that everyone can learn and have fun at the same time! I believe that hands-on experiences are best to learn through and I look forward to getting the older youth active in the church community and beyond!

-Youth Group will meet in the cozy corner on all "RE Lesson" Sundays. Students will also have opportunities to help lead group lessons and workshops for the PK-5th graders!

-Any outings/field trips will be announced as they are planned, and will require chaperones and drivers!

-We will be looking into a City Reach trip for March!

SPECIAL THANKS...

***This new position was made possible by a gifted amount of money from the church and one of its members. The RE Committee thanks you for your support and contribution!**

Religious Education

Grade Specific Curriculum Info

PS & Pre-K	Chalice Children	Room #2
K-2 nd	Picture Book Bible Tales	Room #1
3 rd	Bible Review	Room #3
4 th /5 th	Tool Box of Faith	Room #4
6 th -12 th	Youth Group	Cozy Corner

***Nursery information is printed in a separate pamphlet**