

While You're Growing Strategies and Resources for Small Religious Education Programs

Betty Jo Middleton
an alphabet soup handbook Alphabet Soup

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"What are the dreams and hopes for the future of the small congregations? What does the journey of religious education look like in a small membership church? What are the obstacles which barricade the doors to change?"

-Nancy T. Foltz in *Religious Education in the Small Membership Church*

Note: Some of the resources mentioned may not be available or are available in a different form. They should continue to be maintained. However, they serve as examples of the type or resource used in

programs. The author or UUCARDS may be aware of the status of the material. In addition, new resources may be available. The Unitarian Universalist Association's online Tapestry of Faith program offers curriculum materials for mixed-age and multigenerational groupings.

From Miniscule Sunday School to Vibrant Program for All Ages

Don't even try to have a program modeled after those in large congregations who have closely graded classes and generally separate children from adults and teens from children and adults. This will lead to inevitable frustration, as you need a certain number of people to divide them up that way.. .fewer than eight is not a great number for an on-going group, as there will be many absences during the year.

Focus on what a small congregation can do really well: include the whole community in events where feasible. Have lots of all-age worship, constructive activities, fun and games. Remember these days so that when you are larger you can re-create some of these great events!

Getting Started: "Build it, and they will come"

This philosophy applies to religious education just as well as to baseball, or maybe even better. If two or more adults plan and prepare for any children who may show up on a given Sunday, when they do show up, you will be ready.

Two adults teaching one child, or three adults teaching two children, is overpowering. Try instead to make the morning one of two adults and a child learning and doing together, or three adults and two children learning and doing together. One simple strategy, often overlooked, is to sit on the same level as the child (or children) rather than standing over them. Most ages enjoy sitting on the floor, but low chairs at a table or comfortable family-room style furnishings are good, too.

At this point, you may wish to plan your own program, rather than trying to follow lesson plans in a printed leader's guide, but it is a good idea to look at several guides to help you think about what should be included. It is important to plan that each session be self-contained, as you are likely to have different children each week.

An excellent resource:

Starting from Scratch. How to Begin Your Own RE Program for Children and Youth. Revised Edition. Ann Fields et al. Unitarian Universalist Association 2002. This has 88 pages of good ideas, including lists of needed supplies, etc. Available from the UUA Bookstore at uua.org/bookstore

Be Flexible

Flexibility is one of the most important assets for your small-but-growing program. One small congregation with even-smaller space decided during the course of the church year to move from one to two services on Sunday morning, creating a need for more groupings and adult leaders in the children's program. There was some reluctance on the part of those who were already stretched to the utmost to keep the small program going. They decided to offer a mixed-age class during the first service and keep the plan already in place during the second service, when most families were expected to attend. As it turned out, most families came to the first service. Religious education leaders then decided to switch sessions for the two programs they were offering—they did, and it worked. A few more people came on board to teach.

At the year's end, the group decided to expand the program and offer a middle-school class in addition to the mixed-age class during the second session. More people came on board to teach!

Discussions about the use of their limited space led them to the conclusion that the terrific tables they had bought for their preschool class were too big and bulky for the additional use required for this space, and (despite a limited budget) thought through a plan to get even more furniture and to use what they had in different ways. Being flexible is helping them stay creative and enthusiastic as they grow!

Curriculum Planning for Small Programs

Decision-Making About Content

Many congregations, regardless of size, choose themes for all (or most) groups to focus on for a year, or for a shorter-time period, and then find or create materials that fit within that overall subject. This can be especially useful for small congregations. Obviously you can't use the same activities and stories over again every year, however, so most congregations develop a rotation of themes that takes place over the year or over a three- or four-year period. Some examples:

- * World Religions (usually using *Holidays and Holy Days*)
- * Jewish and Christian Heritages (Variety of materials)
- * Unitarian Universalism (*We Believe and other materials*)
- * Peace/Social Justice (Variety of materials, including UUA's *In Our Hands*)
- * Interconnected Web/Interdependent Web
- * Life Issues (includes OWL—the UUA's *Our Whole Lives Sexuality* curriculum, *Lessons of Loss*, etc.)
- * Nature Spirit/Environmental Stewardship (using *Celebrating Me and My World*, *Keepers of the Earth* and Dawn Star Borchelt's UU Companion to *Keepers of the Earth*)
- * Earth-centered traditions

Be sure to let newcomers know that you are focusing on a particular area but will include others as time goes by.

Some Helpful Hints for Doing it Yourself As You Begin

This outline may help you to plan several simple sessions and prepare boxes, or shelves, of materials for use when the children arrive. Be sure to start by thinking about your reason for having this program...what do you want to accomplish? What is your philosophy of religious education? Have a brainstorming session with adults in the congregation about this!

Overall Theme for Sessions You Are Planning

If you are creating your own program, consider what theme you will be exploring and give it a title. This might be *The Seven Principles*, *World Religions*, *The Natural World*, or any other appropriate topic.

Ritual to Follow

This need not be complicated; it may be as simple as deciding on the order of the elements you plan to include in your program. Some of these elements might be: chalice lighting, song, story, conversation, play time, a snack, or? Be sure to include time for clean up. We do want to teach our children responsibility!

Topic for the Day

This might be a sub-topic for your overall theme. If your theme is The Seven Principles, you might choose to focus on one specific principle. The seasonal holidays are good sub-topics to pursue.

Goals for Participants

See newer Unitarian Universalist Association leader's guides for examples. Word the goals according to what you want the children to experience. For example, in *Special Times*, Goals for Session 16 "A Time to Say 'I Love You'—Valentine's Day:

- * To explore concepts of love for family and friends
- * To express love for others

Then design activities using activities suited to the ages of the children you expect to attend.

Activities

Plan activities that will be suitable for a wide age-range or that may be adapted easily and on the spot for the age children who show up. Keep in mind that people learn in a variety of ways and try to include different types activities in each session.

Materials

Keep your materials in an orderly system, perhaps in labeled boxes or on labeled shelves, so that all who may need to find them may do so.

Evaluation

Those who plan for religious education should receive input from all who teach or work with the program so there is a general awareness of how things are going.

Mixed-Age Classes

Plan for mixed-age classes until your size mandates otherwise (you might want to continue with them forever). It is more fun and more interesting to have a wide-age range with several teachers than to have several classes with one to three children and one or more teachers each. Use a centers approach where feasible; this will help you individualize activities to meet the needs and skills of each child.

Both *Holidays and Holy Days*, by Brotman-Marshfield and *We Believe*, by Ann Fields and Joan Goodwin, are excellent for classes with a wide age range, requiring little or no adaptation. It is possible to adapt many different materials by looking at the goals and thinking of activities, stories, and songs that would advance those goals for an older or different child than the material was created for. In addition, many folks are creating their own mixed-age curriculum materials, and some of those are offered for sale.

Learning Centers and Learning Boxes

The preparation of some simple learning centers and learning boxes (perhaps one for each UU principle) will be an invaluable as you are getting started and also for use on the inevitable incredibly bad weather day when only one or two children and the teacher who had planned to be there has sick children and can't make it.

For example: a box on the first principle might include *The UU Kids Book*, Peter Spiers' *People*, paper, crayons, markers, and a sheet of "Wondering Questions" such as:

What kind of hair is the right kind to have?
What color eyes are best?
What makes a person worthwhile?

And these words:

"We affirm the worth and dignity of every person."

A fruitful conversation may ensue.

Resources:

The old UUA curriculum kit program *Haunting House* is an excellent example of a program using many centers. It is out of print but many congregations have copies and you should be able to borrow one to look at.

See Jerome Berryman's *Godly Play* and website for information about one type of "learning box."

Teaching Strategies for Small Programs

Team Teaching

As you begin, you may think you need only one adult; however, it is wise to have at least two adults present at all times. As you grow, you will want to have enough adults to keep the teacher from being seriously stretched. Think seriously about keeping continuity for the children as you work out a teaching schedule.

When teachers work in teams, they are able to work out their own schedule and to contact another team member if they are unable to each on a date they have agreed to (illness, changes in family schedules, etc.)

A Fictional But Not Unrealistic Case Study of a teaching team

The Teaching Team: Jewell, Ruby, Opal, Pearl, Topaz, and Sapphire.

Some have more experience than others; some have more time; some (yes, it is true) more commitment. They worked out their teaching rotation this way.

Sunday	Leader	Helper
First	Jewell	Ruby
Second	Ruby	Opal
Third	Opal	Pearl
Fourth	Pearl	Topaz
Fifth	Topaz	Sapphire
Sixth	Jewell	Sapphire

	Opal (extra hands needed for project)	
Seventh	Opal	Ruby
Eighth	Ruby	Jewell
Ninth	Jewell	Opal
Tenth	Opal	Pearl
Eleventh	Pearl	Sapphire
Twelfth	Ruby	Jewell
Thirteenth	Jewell	Topaz
Fourteenth	Ruby	Opal

In fourteen weeks of teaching, Jewell was in the classroom six times; Ruby six times; Opal seven times; Pearl four times; Topaz three times; Sapphire three times. During the next fourteen weeks, perhaps Sapphire and Topaz will find more time and some of the others will be able to attend worship more often.

How about giving this kind of team teaching a try?

You will have noticed that all of these volunteer teachers are gems—in this work, we meet lots of diamonds (some in the rough) but not many lumps of coal.

Experiential Learning

"Experience, reflected upon..." —John Dewey

Your program is never too small to plan for experiential learning, the bedrock on which liberal religious education is based. "Through the experiences given in class the child will experience life," says Florence Klaber in a 1958 UUA pamphlet. "The teacher...gives the child experiences which open his eyes to...wonder...She exposes the child to experiences which lead him to make discoveries." Although various models (structures and designs we create for our programs) may be used, this is our basic method.

Experience without reflection, however, is just experience. There should always be a reflective component in our planning. Robert L'Homme Miller wrote in *The Methods of Religious Education* (UUA 1952):

A proper understanding of a method of experience must include in its application the step of critical evaluation of experiences... The true culmination of experience as a method occurs when the class—teacher and pupils—pauses to reflect on their experiences together.

Think about what approaches to teaching and learning are appropriate in liberal religion: participation, conversation, cooperation and celebration come to mind. "Telling" is the least effective method of teaching.

In the shared praxis method, after a focusing activity, participants are asked to name their knowing, engage in critical reflection, hear the Community Story, engage in a dialectic of that Story with their

own and that Vision with their own, and then to make a decision for the future. For more information see Thomas Groome's *Christian Education*.

Some Participative, Experiential Activities for Religious Growth and Learning

Playing games
Working puzzles
Dramatic play and presentations
Making and playing with puppets
Creative movement
Dance
Singing
Making music/listening to music
Conversation and discussion
Expression through the arts: painting, drawing, sculpting,
Writing poetry
Cooperative projects: murals, quilts, houses
Field trips, outings
Social events
Social justice projects
Worship

Behavioral Expectations

Children and adults have a right to be treated with respect. A good reminder for all ages: Our first principle affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every human being.

Use of Appropriate Names

Use of appropriate names and designations for groups of people is an important way to put this principle into practice in the classroom. Establish a practice that helps children to learn better ways. If any child calls another names, or refer to groups by terms which could be considered derogatory, say something like: "Here we don't call anyone by a name other than their own, or a nickname they have chosen. Please say 'Tom' or 'Tommy.'" You might also say: "That is one way we show that we value each and every other person." In the case of derogatory references to any group, say something like: "Please say 'gay or lesbian,'" or whatever the appropriate term might be. At the same time, we should not be too distressed by the use of inappropriate language by young children; let's just help them learn better.

Some Tips for Teachers

- Plan for more time than you will have, then be flexible about adjusting your plan
- Shift gears if it is obvious that your group needs to discuss something other than your planned lesson
- Remember that young children cannot sit still for long— change the pace and activities several times during your session
- Sit at the same level (or near the same level) as children—don't tower over them!

- Ask open-ended questions and honor all answers; if you don't want to know what they think, don't ask!
- Answer children's questions honestly but reserve the right to privacy—you don't have to answer personal questions.
- Try to keep your space as uncluttered as possible. And remember that you need more space for each child than for each adult!

Space Needs for Children, Youth, and Adults

Who takes up the most space—adults, teenagers, or toddlers and preschoolers? The answer may seem counter intuitive; obviously adults and teens are larger, but younger children need more space in the church.

In *The Church's Educational Space: Creating Environments for Teaching and Learning*, J. Cy Rowell says that toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarten children need 30 to 35 square feet per person, while adults need only 12 to 20 square feet per person. Children ages six to twelve need 25 to 30 square feet each, and teenagers only slightly less: 20 to 25 square feet. This useful book also suggests needed materials and equipment for religious education programs—appropriate sized furniture, large blocks for young children, housekeeping toys through kindergarten, classroom sinks, and so on.

Rowell urges us to consider these three basic questions after having identified the mission of the congregation and objectives for the educational program:

1. What are the learning environments or "education spaces" in the church?
2. What is to occur in each space?
3. What should that space look like?

The importance of clean, uncluttered learning environments with sufficient floor space for a variety of activities cannot be overstated.

How Many Youth Do You Need for a Youth Program?

How many do you have? If there are only one or two, develop a mentoring program, have a bridging ceremony when they graduate from high school to show younger kids what awaits them in the future. If there are three or four, plan outings—movies with discussions following, bowling, skating, pizza places, district youth conferences. Include them in planning services and discussion groups. Start out right by having permission slips signed by parents, screening the adults who accompany them on trips (and asking them to sign the UUA Code of Ethics), and always having at least two adults involved. Training for youth advisors is available on the district and continental levels.

When teens want a more formal program, remember these five components of balanced programming for youth:

Leadership development
 Social responsibility/action
 Learning opportunities

Social events/community building
Worship/reflection/spirituality

Resources: UUA Youth Office, District Staff.

Adult Programming in the Small Congregation

There are many different models for adult education programs in our congregations. Among them are: the Sunday School, Sunday morning forum, Adult School (evening and Saturday classes and workshops), weekly evening of classes, lecture and/or film series, adult retreats, and participation in multigenerational groups. The practice of establishing small covenant groups is of growing significance in Unitarian Universalism. These groups may be especially helpful in small congregations that are growing, helping to maintain the feeling of being part of a small group of individuals one knows well.

"Congregation as Theological School" was the theme of a Meadville/Lombard Winter Institute several years ago. Rebecca Parker of Starr King School for the Ministry and William Murry of Meadville/Lombard Theological School proposed that "adult education work in our congregations be more deeply theological, more intellectually engaged in cultural criticism, more profoundly supportive of the fullness of being human, more transforming of dehumanizing social structures, more grounded in and faithful to our tradition of humanistic concern and love for the world."

Murry speaks to the importance of being "attentive to the community context of learning," asking: how does each of our educational efforts fit into the mission of the congregation? Does each enhance the community as well as serve the individual?

Parker suggests a model for congregational learning based on social action as an educational practice, with these steps:

1. Pose a question that expresses a problem to be solved or addressed.
2. Make a group decision regarding the question.
3. Conduct an investigation into the question.
4. Prepare to take action.
5. Take action.

This approach ideally results in new questions arising from each action and an ongoing involvement in social justice issues.

A small congregation will not be able to offer many learning opportunities at one time. As you plan, consider the ages and interests of possible participants and the fact there is a mix of newcomers and old timers in the congregation—plan for both.

Models for Multigenerational Learning

James W. White, in his book *Intergenerational Religious Education* (Religious Education Press 1988), discusses six basic paradigms for multigenerational programming:

1. Family group (see uua.org/clf for suggestions)

2. Weekly class (Sunday morning—folks are there anyway)
1. Workshop or event (many congregations have holiday craft workshops, for example)
2. Worship service (most small congregations worship this way, at least part of the time)
3. Worship-education program (where all begin the service together and then separate into age-appropriate learning groups)
3. All-congregation camp (or retreat or week-long institute)

All of these are important learning opportunities for children, youth, and adults.

Congregations as Learning Communities

An even broader concept for multigenerational learning is that of the congregation as a learning community. Charles Foster's book *Educating Congregations* is one of several published in recent years on the possible use and impact of this approach in congregations. Foster suggests that Christian education (let's translate that as religious education) be designed around preparation of events in the life of the church, such as worship, Christmas, Easter, and others—all congregations have a rhythm of events and celebrations throughout the year. The four kinds of events Foster discusses are the paradigmatic, the seasonal, occasional, and unexpected events. The paradigmatic events Foster discusses include baptism and communion, but Unitarian Universalist congregations might include dedication of children and infants, coming of age ceremonies and membership Sunday. "The education of a community around the events that give structure and momentum to its life involves three movements," he says. These are "preparation for participation, engagement in the event, and mutually critical reflection...The structure of an event-full education is not complex, but if taken seriously, it could radically alter the way congregations order their educational ministries." (pages 40-49)

"Some teaching/learning groups may be organized by age. Many will be intergenerational," says Foster, (page 139). In a section on "Making Decisions about Educational Structures for Event-Full Education," Foster says that "traditional educational structures need not be eliminated...if re-directed to equipping people to participate in significant church events" and further "classes that are not recast as times of preparation for specific events of worship and mission may become occasions for enriching the education people receive elsewhere in the life of the congregation" (page 15). Other writers on the congregation as educating or learning communities are not specific about structures but focus on the concept, as a philosophy of, or approach to, religious education. This attractive philosophy may seem difficult to put into practice in most congregations.

"Our convictions about education affect the way we structure congregational life. For example, with a focus on action and mission, educational leaders organize projects where people minister. By engaging life problems, people reflect on what they have learned about faith, others, themselves, life, and ministry. With a focus on faith community, educators attend to learning by participating. They are concerned with how church and community powerfully teach values and ways of living. With a focus on instruction, leaders are concerned about teachers and the content (curriculum) that they teach. They also attend to how this content is mastered and how persons connect it to living. With a focus on the person, people are helped to integrate the faith within their own life stories and continue to grow in faith."

—Jack L. Seymour in *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning*

Worship for Multigenerational Groupings

While opportunities for worship, or "consideration of things of worth," will occur at various times during your program, planned worship will often be intergenerational, during the first part of the worship service. (Other options include: children's service, entire Sunday morning worship service, family service at a time other than "the service.") Here are some tried-and-true guidelines (gleaned from many sources over the years) for making that portion of the service meaningful and appropriate:

1. Establish rituals for the framework of the service (lighting a chalice, repeated affirmations (sung or spoken), joys and concerns)
2. Make music a big part of the service, both singing and listening to music
3. Plan the worship setting to include a visual focus
4. Think carefully about whether children sit up front (if they are to participate in telling a story, for example) or sit with their parents (when they may need emotional support, perhaps in a service about death)
5. Have hands-on objects for passing around, or in processions (Wooden animals for an ark, seeds, plastic Easter eggs, etc.)
6. Use lots of stories—tell them, have children (and adults) act out, project pictures from storybooks. In a small, intimate setting, showing the pictures is fine.

For the Child in Each of Us

This segment of the service is intended to appeal to children, youth, and adults. Remember that it is a worship experience and should have serious intent yet need not be solemn!

The story, conversation, activity, or reading should:

- Be consistent with the principles of Unitarian Universalism and the mission of the congregation.
- * Have a clear, simple message with one or two points
- * Relate to the overall theme of the service when possible
- * Take five minutes or less, as a general rule

Suggestions:

- * Avoid playing to adults, especially for laughs.
- * Don't ask questions if you don't want to hear the answers.
- * Don't ask questions with only one right answer, and that one known only to you.
- * Try to tell stories rather than read them.
- * The use of concrete objects is appealing to children.
- * Don't depend on the illustrations in a picture book to carry the story.
- * Be sure to consult with the worship leader ahead of time so you are clear on your responsibilities and time availability.

Some Concerns in Small Programs

Major concerns and problems in small religious education programs occur due to insufficient space, the small numbers of volunteers available, and lack of funds to buy needed curriculum materials.

Problems arise when the classrooms are too small, too full of furniture, and too crowded to allow participants and leaders to move around. When rooms are set up for other purposes religious education groups may have to contend with too many distractions and too little sense of ownership of their space.

Make every effort to have large enough rooms and to keep them attractive to children and teachers alike.

One of the major problems in Unitarian Universalist congregations of all sizes (and especially our smallest) is the lack of time for volunteer teachers to become sufficiently familiar with the material they are using and the time and opportunity for orientation to make it possible for them to use the broad range of possible teaching approaches. Make gatherings of teachers occasions for worship and meaning-making. Provide assistance to those who are teaching so they won't feel too pressed. Provide childcare for training opportunities or team meetings so that teachers will feel prepared and confident.

Get together with other small congregations for teacher education programs (possibly led by district staff), purchase materials together or borrow from another, and share problem solving techniques.

Congregants often fear that they will lose their closeness and sense of being part of the group if they grow too much; develop small groups (formal or informal) to keep everyone in touch with other people.

Growth Workshops and Conferences

Take advantage of opportunities to attend growth workshops and conferences. These are often offered through UUA District structures. Here are some ideas pertinent to religious education, gleaned from many conferences and workshops attended:

- * Plan ahead: even if you have no children, have a plan for them when they do come
- * Publicize beginning of the year plans for children and youth, not only in the congregation, but in local newspapers and on neighborhood bulletin boards. Include offerings for children and youth when you advertise. (Makanah Morriss posted on the electronic Ireda-1 a story about the congregation that grew after it put up a large banner on its building saying "Children Welcome Here." She expressed the wish that many UU congregations might hang such a banner!
- * Welcome families and learn the names and ages of children
- * Keep attendance records even when your program is small
- * Organize religious education workshops with several other small congregations; their needs will be similar to yours
- * Give teachers an opportunity to attend services on occasion. Provide them with copies (or tapes) of services when they cannot attend.
- * Wear UU t-shirts when working in community service projects—children can create designs for these themselves
- * Take advantage of the materials and services available from the UUA, Church of the Larger Fellowship, and your District office.

Curriculum Materials for Mixed Age Classes

While many materials may be adapted for use by mixed-age groups, most of these were developed for, or have been adapted for, such groups.

A to Z. The Unitarian Universalist Alphabet by Helen Zidowecki introduces preschool and early elementary children to Unitarian Universalism through stories of special people from history and their own church community and involves their own church environment. Suggestions have been added for use with older children and multi-aged groups.³² Stevenstown Road, Litchfield, Maine 04350. 207-582-5308. hzmre@mint.net, hzmre.com, uucards.org..

Chalice Club II by Connie Dunn is a social justice/social action projects and club template. conniedunn@hotmail.com www.sagecreekproductions.com nostresspress.

Dr. Seuss and Unitarian Universalists by Helen Zidowecki includes revised and new lesson plans, 36 in all. Stories relate to our lives as Unitarian Universalists and include references to the Principles. Sessions can be used with ages 3 and up. See contact information above.

Experiences with the Web of Life by Marjory Donn, Abby Crowley, Jean Raskin, Carla Miller, Charles Tompkins and Penny O'Brien of the Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church includes 48 sessions. Children explore ways that specific living things relate to the rest of life. A closing ritual at the end of each session helps them internalize learning. 301-474-1353 mbdonn@mindspring.com. uucards.org..

Holidays and Holy Days by Charlene Brotman, Barbara Marshman, and Ann Fields provides an introduction to religions of the world through celebration of holidays. Year long program. Brotman-Marshfield Curriculum. 148 Hills Beach Road, Biddeford, ME 04005. 207-282-4539. brotmfcurriculum@aol.com

Honoring Our Mother Earth: Experiences in Native American Spirituality and *Caring for Our Planet Earth* by Tirell Kimball are for elementary-age children. Green Timber Publications 207-926-3146 PO Box 3884, Portland, ME 04104. rkimbal4@maine.rr.com uucards.org.

One Family by Mary Ann Moore is a set of 29 lesson plans to accompany stories in *From Long Ago and Many Lands*. The stories, from a variety of countries, traditions, and religions, promote the theme "Under the Sky All People Are One Family." Also included a new story by Moore. 2296 W. Post Oak Dr., Prescott, AZ 86305. 928-771-0546. guerrymooe@cableone.net uucards.org .

Under the Wisdom Tree by Connie Dunn is a story-based curriculum and includes the stories, written by Dunn. See contact information above.

Walking the Rainbow Path. Celebrating All the Colors of Love by Laurie Bushbaum is a K-3 curriculum (with suggestions for expanding at either end of the age range), including two full years of material. It attaches each color of the rainbow to one of the seven UU principles. It provides children with a framework on which to build awareness and understanding of their own religious experiences and their place in religious community. It covers basic topics in spiritual and moral growth. Contact RevLBushbaum@visi.com for ordering information.

We Believe. Learning and Living Our UU Principles, by Ann Fields and Joan Goodwin includes activities, stories, worship materials, game board and cards, music and handouts. It has 22 sessions and works with all ages. Available from the Unitarian Universalist Association Bookstore uua.org bookstore 1 -800-215-9076.

Worth and Dignity of All People by Marjory Donn is a five-session curriculum for grades 1 through 8 in four age-level components. It covers such topics as building a caring group, understanding people with disabilities and understanding and overcoming racism. See contact information above.

Yet to Come

Home Planet (now in field test) and *Learning About the Bible* (still in development) by Betty Jo Middleton, from Alphabet Soup, 203 West Glendale Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301-2452 Anticipated publication date 2004. bimmre@aol.com uucards.org.

The Sabbath Year by Shari Storm of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, Inc. celebrates the Wheel of the Year for UU children from grades 1 through 6. It is based on the *Circle Round* by Starhawk, Diane Baker and Anne Hill. Anticipated publication date 2004.

Other Resources

Adapting Small Group Ministry for Children's Religious Education, by Gail Forsyth-Vail, Director of Religious Education at North Parish, where the materials have been used, is an implementation plan with thirty-one sample sessions. Contact North parish of North Andover, Unitarian Universalist, 190 Academy Road, North Andover, MA 01845. DRE@northparish.org, uucards.org.

Only a Few Children: Beyond the Teeny Tiny Church School is a workshop designed by Cheryl Leshay and Helen Zidowecki for teams who are trying to create and run a quality religious education program when attendance is less than thirty children. The materials may be purchased and the developers are available to lead the workshop as well. Rev. Cheryl Leshay revunit@aol.com and Rev. Helen Zidowecki at hzmre@hzmre.com, uucards.org.

Relational Religious Education: A Small Group Ministry Model by Helen Zidowecki gives an overview of Small Group Ministry in the church community and applies this to children while small groups meet. See contact information above.

Which Lesson? Unitarian Universalist Curriculum Content Finder by Virginia G. Steel is useful when you would like to find a certain game, song, meditation, or ritual, or if you are seeking a lesson on a particular person. 22 Sylvan Way, Wayland, MA 01778. 508-358-7517. irginiauiit he steels, com. uucards.org.

Unitarian Universalist Association

The UUA's Church of the Larger Fellowship offers a religious education curriculum plan for use at home online at uua.org/clf. Other resources from CLF include the Resources page in *Quest*, the children's magazine *uu&me*, the CLF library, and online resources such as *Between Sundays*. Betsy Hill Williams' book , published by CLF, is available from the UUA Bookstore.

The mailing address for the Unitarian Universalist Association is 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108-2800. Telephone number is 617-742-2100. The UUA website is uua.org; type "faith development" or "religious education" in the Google Search Box on the home page for quick access to information you need. The staff groups you are most likely to want to contact are Faith Development and Ministry and Professional Leadership. (You can type either of these into the Google Search Box also.) Most UUA

staff persons can receive email sent to them by first initial last name @uua.org, but there are exceptions.

Your District staff can be helpful to you as well.

The Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) has membership categories that enable any interested person to join. For information see uua.org/lreda.

While You're Growing: Strategies and Resources for Small Religious Education Programs is the second in a series of handbooks by Betty Jo Middleton, published by Alphabet Soup, 203 West Glendale Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301-2452. \$7.50, plus \$2.50 shipping and handling. It includes ideas for starting a new program and for helping a program that is already in place thrive and grow.

The Reverend Betty Jo Middleton is a Unitarian Universalist Minister of Religious Education, living in Alexandria, Virginia, and working as a religious education consultant. She serves the Unitarian Universalist Church of Loudoun County, in Leesburg, Virginia, as consulting religious educator. She has served seven other congregations in long- or short-term positions in ministry and religious education and has served on the UUA Field Staff as Joseph Priestley District Lifespan Religious Education Consultant.