

## **First Unitarian Church of Des Moines RE Curriculum 2008-2009**

### **Preschool: Chalice Children**

**10:30 am (9am Preschool children go to childcare)  
Ages 3-4 (Children must be potty-trained)**

*Chalice Children* is designed to help young children learn about their church and their congregation through rituals, rhymes, chants, stories, and activities. The experiences and messages of the curriculum are intended to affirm young children in their spiritual growth, creativity, and connection to our congregations.

### **K-1: A Discovering Year**

**9 am**

A Discovery Year is based on the philosophy that young children learn about religion through relationships. What is a person? Who am I? How am I related to others? How do I treat other people? What are my responsibilities? What kind of world do I live in? These are religious questions that children begin to answer as they become acquainted with themselves, other people, and their environment.

The fundamental objectives are for young children to:

- feel support and affirmation for their individuality,
- experience a sense of belonging and importance as members of a group, and
- begin learning how to help make their classes a peaceable and friendly place

### **K-1: Creating Home**

**10:30 am**

This program helps children develop a sense of home that is grounded in faith. Together with your group you will ask questions about the purpose of having a home and the functions a home serves, for us as humans and for other animals. The program speaks of home as a place of belonging and explores the roles each of us play in the homes where we live. The program introduces the concept of a "faith home" — your congregation — which shares some characteristics with a family home. Like a family home, a faith home offers its members certain joys, protections, and responsibilities.

### **Grades 2-8: Journey for the Planet**

**9 am**

Send your kids on an "adventure to create an Earth-friendly life." Based on the book by David Gersham, this hands-on class will teach children how to walk more lightly on the Earth while earning "Earth Hero" points (sort of like scouts). They will also learn how small changes can add up to big differences in our effect on the environment. Imagine elementary school fire safety ("stop, drop, and roll!") replaced with environmental protection ("stop wasting water, drop those incandescent bulbs, and roll that bottle into the recycling bin!"). For more information, please contact Jon Knapp McAlister at 961-2524 or jandjmaclister@hotmail.com.

## **Grade 2: Free To Believe**

**10:30 am**

The *Free to Believe* curriculum is an experiential program designed to nurture the emotional, social and spiritual life of children. Through a variety of activities related to many of the different intelligences, children will experience meditations, rituals and opportunities to explore the wonders of nature. The curriculum is centered on our seven Unitarian Universalist principles and seeks to increase children's sense of religious identity. The children will also focus on some of life's "big questions" such as:

- Is there a God?
- What are different images of God?
  - Why do people and animals die?
- Where do people and animals go when they die?
  - How did life begin?

The year ends with the children considering ways in which we can live our lives consistent with our UU principles and what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

## **Grade 3: Moral Tales**

**10:30 am**

Every day our children go forth into a complex world where they are often faced with difficult decisions and situations. Moral Tales attempts to provide children with the spiritual and ethical tools they will need to make choices and take actions reflective of their Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values. As Kevin Ryan and Karen Bohlin suggest in their book, *Building Character in Schools* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), stories such as the ones woven throughout Moral Tales can activate and inform children's learning about how to make moral choices.

## **Grades 4-6: Neighboring Faiths, Bibleodeon and Philosophers Club**

**10:30 am**

As our children reach pre-adolescence they begin to think more critically. We continue our earlier voyage into the bible and begin to expand our understanding of its importance and relevance in modern times. By the end of this term, our 5th graders should:

- Be familiar with a range of well-known Bible stories.
  - Know how to find their way around the Bible
- Have a basic understanding of the Bible's history and power.
- Understand the importance of the Bible to millions of people.
- Recognize the relevance of the Bible stories to contemporary life.
  - Have an expanded sense of spiritual feeling and practices

## **7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade: OWL - Our Whole Lives**

**10:30 am**

*Our Whole Lives* is a positive, comprehensive, and age-appropriate educational program that promotes sexual health and is informed by the guidelines of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). The curricula are based on four primary goals: to provide accurate, developmentally appropriate information; to increase self-esteem and understand relationships with and responsibilities toward others; to develop interpersonal skills including communication, decision making, and problem solving; and to teach responsibility for personal health and safety