

Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence Lifelong Learning Teacher's Manual for Children and Youth Religious Exploration

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based on the Teachers Manual at UU Church of Palo Alto

CHAPTER 1 – Mission and teacher job charter

Lifelong Learning Vision

By continually transforming ourselves through lifelong learning, we transform our community and our world.

Lifelong Learning Mission

We are Unitarian Universalists, with loving hearts, open minds and helping hands. We develop and strengthen these qualities within and beyond our welcoming, multigenerational community. Through lifelong learning, we support and encourage intellectual and spiritual growth for people of all ages as we work toward making our world a better place.

Lifelong Learning Statement of Values

What we hold dear

Loving hearts

- We covenant with one another to be a multigenerational community where people of all ages are celebrated and welcomed as participants, recipients and leaders in lifelong learning. We honor, empower and uniquely serve each generation.
- We commit to providing a safe and welcoming place for people of all ages
- We endeavor to create an open learning community where newcomers, friends and members experience a sense of belonging.
- We strive to offer a nurturing and supportive environment where children, youth and adults feel accepted, values and respected.
- We encourage participation in celebrations and rituals that mark life's milestones.
- We strive to create a fun and exciting atmosphere that attract and engages youth and families with children.

Open minds

- We support and encourage intellectual and spiritual growth through religious exploration, questioning and reflection, moral and ethical development and connections to our UU community and heritage.
- We recognize that parents are the principal spiritual guides for their children and we provide support and resources for the process.
- We invite people of all ages to explore how others have searched for truth and meaning and examine universal ideas found in story, art, religion and science.
- We seek to facilitate the process of lifelong learning, self-discovery and formation of individual UU identity by providing a foundation based on the seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism.
- We affirm that Unitarian Universalism binds us together by celebrating diverse beliefs and philosophies and welcoming each person's lifelong participation wherever they are in their journey.

Helping Hands

- We celebrate our rich UU heritage of passion for social justice and activism
- We engage in social action as a way for people of all ages to live their values
- We recognize that our relationship within this community provide a foundation for our service in the wider world.
- We support each individual in developing a personal framework to make life decisions informed by UU Principles.

Volunteer Job Charter: Children's Religious Exploration Lead Teacher and Classroom Helper

Time frame:

- You will be part of a team of teachers. Sunday lead teachers average 2.5 hours per week (approx. 1 ½ hrs for prep during the week and 1 hour of teaching on Sunday).
- Teachers are asked to commit to serving at least one church year (September – May)

Accountability:

- Teachers report to the Team Leader of the age group they wish to serve. The entire team is supported by the Director of Lifelong Learning, the Lifelong Learning Area Coordinator and the Lifelong Learning Council.

Responsibilities:

- Teachers help children feel they are a valued part of the UFL community
- Teachers will meet children's religious exploration goals through using appropriate curriculum resources
- Teachers will create a safe environment for learning. Safety includes emotional as well as physical safety. Teachers will read, understand and follow UFL's Safe Congregation Policy and sign the Code of Ethics.
- Teachers will pursue their own personal spiritual growth by attending worship services when possible.
- Teachers will have fun!

Knowledge, skills and abilities:

- Teachers will have a willingness and ability to do ministry with children. Teachers will typically start as a Classroom Helper with an experienced teacher progressing to lead teacher with an experienced Classroom Helper when desired.
- Teachers are encouraged to model lifelong learning and take advantage of trainings when offered and/or engage in self study of teaching in a religious education setting.

Benefits and opportunities:

- Enormous opportunity to be a positive influence in the lives of children
- Opportunity to explore the history and xx of Unitarian Universalism through stories and insightful discussions and art...because who can say it better than children?
- Impact the Spiritual, emotional and intellectual growth of children and self.

While the job description above gives a general idea of your responsibilities, below outlines specific responsibilities that will make it easier and more rewarding to serve as a teacher on Sundays. There are two listings. When you are a lead teacher, you are in charge of preparing a plan for the Sunday session. When you are a Classroom Helper, you do no preparation.

The Lead Teacher

The preceding Sunday...

- Check in with this week's teacher or team leader to see what your group did (to make sure you don't do the same thing)
- If you are using a printed curriculum, read the lesson plan for the week. Begin thinking which of the activities you 1) best fits the group of kids you may have 2) will have time to do.
- If you are creating your own lesson plan, write an outline of what you'll do.
- Check books & supplies to see what is available and what you will need for next Sunday.

During the week...

- Continue to gather book(s) and supplies.
- Review & revise your lesson plan and put it into final form
- Make sure you have back-up plans ready to go also!
- If you have any questions or problems, email your team leader or DLL as early in the week as possible.

The day you teach...

- ***Arrive at least 15 minutes early to organize room and materials and give yourself time to take a deep breath and reflect. (This is one of the hardest things to do but it makes a big impact on your morning!)***
- Greet families and children at the door with a "Welcome! I'm so glad you are with us today!"
- Take attendance.
- Teach with joy!
- Before the end of the lesson, be sure to have the children help you clean up! This is the 7th principle in action but it also gives them a sense of responsibility in and ownership of their space.
- Consider what may need to be communicated to your team leader or DLL.

The Classroom Helper

Time frame: Classroom Helpers assist for 1 hour on Sunday. It helps to check in with the lead teacher at some point during the week prior to your Sunday of serving.

Sunday when you help in the classroom...

- ***Arrive at least 15 minutes early to check in with the lead teacher and help organize room and materials. (This is one of the hardest things to do but it makes a big impact on your morning!)***
- Greet families and children at the door with "Welcome! I'm so glad you are with us today!"
- Help facilitate the class - giving comfort to children that need extra attention.
- Yes, you CAN participate in class conversations and discussions – lend your voice to the topic.
- Before the end of the lesson, be sure to have the children help you clean up! This is the 7th principle in action, gives them a sense of responsibility in and ownership of their space.

CHAPTER 2 - How to teach

The curriculum

In the near future we will make the weekly lessons available online. The Team Leader has the entire curriculum and will distribute weekly lessons to lead teachers as teaching dates are assigned.

You should refer to this curriculum plan as you plan your classes. The plan suggests a lesson for each week that is part of a larger ‘map’ of which provides an expanding source of knowledge and experience for our children in Unitarian Universalism and UU Identity.

The team leader for your age group will enter your teaching dates on your team teaching calendar.

YES – you may diverge from this curriculum plan to accommodate your talents, interests and skills as well as the interests of your class! However, if you choose a different lesson or if you create your own, you will want to make sure you don’t cover material that has already been covered or will be covered this year or next. Talk/email your team leader or DLL.

If you want to plan your own lesson, take time to discuss your idea with the Team Leader or DLL. We have a blank session plan form for you to use as you think about what you will present and how. This plan/outline could also be helpful in understanding lesson planning, even if you use lessons straight out of your curriculum book.

Setting the Stage

What you do in those first 2-5 minutes as some of the children tear into your room (and others slowly drift) is important.

These early minutes set the stage for a wonderful, cooperative session that’s enjoyable for teacher and children alike. It is important to engage the attention of the children at the VERY beginning of a session. Here are 10 ways for you to ‘set the stage’ for a dramatic opening to your session:

1. Greet each child as she or he arrives “welcome! I am glad you’re here!”
2. Enlist the help of the early arrivals in getting ready for others.
3. Have ‘straggle-in’ activities ready to engage interest and energy...something to DO!
4. Have a new picture on the wall or an interesting object....something to SEE!
5. Play a recording of music or speech...something to HEAR!
6. Begin with a startling statement or question..."How do you think that...or 'What if I told you that..." Something to WONDER ABOUT!
7. Begin with a mystery or puzzle...something to FIGURE OUT!
8. Have things to pick up and handle: a chalice, a menorah, a prayer rug...Something to TOUCH!
9. Begin with a game that gives everyone a chance to meet everyone else....Something to PLAY!
10. Start with a song...Something to SING!

(Adapted from material from Ann Fields)

All of this sets the stage. But remember that children are ritualists. So begin each class with an opening ritual...

The Opening Circle

Please begin every class with a check-in / sharing opening circle. There are several reasons for doing this:

- Like joys and concerns in the adult setting, this ritual of “awesome and not so awesome” becomes an age appropriate worship experience. You may also include a short reading to make it feel more like a worship experience. Children like the sense of stability in having the same thing happen each week, even if the teachers change or the child has missed several weeks, it is nice to come back to something familiar.
- Everyone has an equal chance to be heard in the sharing circle. This can improve group dynamics by helping children to affirm the personal concerns of each other. Despite our best attempts, statistics continue to reveal that girls are given as much time to be heard as boys.
- The sharing circle can be a calming center after the mad dash to get out of the house, in the car, to church and the RE room. Calm children tend to be better behaved, so by starting each class with an opportunity to get ‘centered’ with the group, you may lessen disruptive behaviors later in class. Also, by listening to the important concerns of the children in your class, you will be better able to understand weekly changes in behavior.
- Finally, sharing circles foster a sense of community among the children.

How to lead a sharing circle

Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. You may use carpet squares. If you are working with older children, they may feel more comfortable sitting in chairs around the table. (It helps to settle the children in if the carpet square/chairs are already in a circle when they arrive to your room). In the middle of the circle, place an unlit (battery) candle.

Invite all children and adults to participate (Adults participating in the children’s sharing circle helps build a truly intergenerational community).

Say the opening words for UFC chalice lighting:

XXXX I think there are 2 versions.... One for Littles class one one for Bigs? I see different version on the white boards....

“Light” the candle.

As group leader, state the rules for the sharing circle each week:

Something like.... “We will begin today by going around and each person will get a turn to speak. When it is your turn, say your name. Then you may tell us an “awesome” or “not so awesome” of something that has happened to you this past week. You CAN choose to pass but please tell us your name. Only one person speak at a time please.”

Curriculum

Your curriculum book contains lesson plans that can be very useful, but there are some tips that will help:

1. Use the sharing circle as your “opening activity”.
2. Sunday children’s Religious Exploration classes are 60 minutes. Many curriculum books are designed for 90 minutes, so pick out the activities you think will work best for your group. How long an activity takes depends on the size of the group you have and how engaged they become, prepare for your activity but also prepare to be flexible! If they are engaged and having fun – don’t break the activity to move to something they may not get into.
3. After sharing circle, either go directly into reading/telling the story that comes with the lesson or do a short activity that is not too energizing to get some wiggles out.
4. If the children are engaged in a project that is fairly calm (art/drawing) you can read or tell the story while they are working.
5. A useful rule of thumb: the attention span of the group is equal to the age of the youngest member. (if you have 5 year olds in your group, you may need 6 different 5-minute-long activities to fill the main lesson time. These can be as simple as singing a song or silly faces game. You could even divide the story into parts if needed.)
6. Clean-up with the children! The children should help out.

A basic class schedule looks something like this:

- **9:30-9:45 welcome, attendance and opening sharing circle**
- **9:45-10:15 activity/story/activity**
- **10:15-25 clean-up and games**
- **10:25-10:30 closing circle**

While you should take time to plan your lesson during the week (keeping in mind the uniqueness of the children that you often have in your class), do not worry if during the course of Sunday morning, you diverge from your plans. What we are trying to do each Sunday is find the sweet spot that occurs when you balance fun and learning. We want our children to enjoy coming to the UFL and want them to come back next week. (Wouldn’t it be amazing if kids woke up on Sunday and asked their parents if today was the day they got to come to UFL?)

A DRE from the First Unitarian Society in Columbus Ohio wrote: “The most important think that happens in our religious education program is the interaction of adults and children. If you don’t get to the planned lesson because the children were very involved in discussing something important to them, great! Our children are more important than our curriculum.”

The closing circle

Remember kids are ritualistic and like adults, like to have a formal closing.

A closing circle gives you and the children a chance to examine what the morning was about. It is an opportunity for you to ask the children to tell you what they learned...thus giving you feedback on how well they absorbed the lesson.

The closing circle ritual also gives you and the children an opportunity to say the same unison benediction that is used each week in the adult service – thus lifting up the sense of community throughout our building.

Everyone stands in a circle.

- You can ask each (or one, depending on time left) to show something they did and explain how or why they chose this.
- You could review the main point of the lesson by asking a question to the group. For example, “What did we learn today? Who was the person we learned about? John Murray?, right! And what did he do? Got stuck in a sandbar, right!”
- Help the whole group say the unison benediction that is said each week in the adult service.

**May a song of peace be yours,
May a song of hope be mine,
May a song of love be ours,
Until we meet again.**

Oh Dear!

For reason unknown to the most experienced teachers, sometimes lessons do not go as planned. If this happens, you will leave Sunday feeling more relieved and accomplished if you have an emergency back-up plan. Here are some ideas:

- Active games (these are a great way to build community)
- Singing – either with a CD or a cappella
- Reading aloud
- Drawing
- Guided meditation
- Quick scavenger hunt outdoors

CHAPTER 3 – About teaching and learning

**The following information is from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto Teacher Manual*

~~ Scroll down for a chart summarizing some ways to think about developmental stages in Sunday school. ~~

What are developmental stages? Anyone who has spent time with children knows that they change as they grow older. Developmental stage theory says that certain developmental changes take place at somewhat the same age, on average.

Jean Piaget did the groundbreaking work in developmental psychology. Piaget said we could predict with a fair degree of accuracy when most children would gain certain cognitive abilities. Since cognitive ability is only one of the areas we work on in church school Piaget is of limited use to us, but is widely used in weekday schools.

There are a number of models for psychosocial development. While models by Erik Erikson and Robert Kegan have proved to be useful in church school settings, no model of psychosocial development has sufficient experimental proof to be considered a well-established theory, and substantial debate continues in this area.

There is one model of so-called “faith development.” While it is used by some religious educators, including the UUA’s Department of Lifespan Faith Development (formerly the Religious Education Department), I’m not convinced by the evidence accumulated so far. James Fowler is the originator, and best-known proponent, of faith development.

Religious education scholars like Gabriel Moran and Robert Pazmino have been critical of any developmental theory as applied to religious education. Pazmino and Moran argue that anyone, of any age, can have direct experiences of God (or, as we might say, of the transcendent mystery of the universe). Moran has also argued that the very concept of development leads to the uncomfortable sense that children aren’t fully “developed,” and therefore may not be fully human.

In another criticism, a number of scholars have argued that any developmental theory should be able to accurately predict developmental changes. Yet since all developmental theories are really designed for large, statistically valid, groups of individuals, it is not clear whether developmental theories can be usefully applied to individuals.

In spite of the criticisms, developmental theory can be a useful tool for Sunday school teachers. It can be useful to have a general idea of what to expect from different age groups. And developmental theory can help us to understand which types of activities work best with which age groups.

	Social skills	Cognitive abilities important in regular schools	Skills and abilities important in UU congregations	Religious experiences	Good choices for Sunday school activities
Babies	Focused on self and parents	Begin to talk	Love and joy	Security, love	Loving care
Young children (age 3-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parallel play develops towards real friendships Family very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strong division between reality and fantasy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing simple songs Listen to stories Sit in some worship services Ask to go to church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lots of questions about "God" and other big religious issues Probably have transcendent experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play Hear stories Learn how to be in a group Ask questions and be listened to seriously
Primary (ages 5-7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer friendships Imaginary friends Boys and girls strongly separate Church and school as institutions begin to be important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of reading and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know songs and hymns Sit in worship services Guided meditations Memorize things (e.g., congregation's covenant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transcendent experiences, including direct experiences of "God" or similar Early understanding of what it means to be part of a religious community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play Hear stories Guided meditation Simple yoga Ask questions and listen to answers
Elementary (ages 7-11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best friends important Self-sufficiency and competence Institutions and persons held to standards of fairness and justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can read and write easy texts Can listen to lectures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in meetings Understand worship services and sermons Know facts about religion Ask good questions about fairness and justice Initiate social action projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience religion as institutional Experience common worship and other communal experiences as communal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play group-building games Hear stories Discussions about <i>their</i> questions Social action projects Learn facts Perform plays

Intermediate (ages 11-14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and institutions begin to become secondary to shared internal experiences with peers and trusted adults • Girls and boys begin to mix again • Sexuality re-emerges as a powerful force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Concrete operational” thinking — understand complex concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question things that are “givens” • Understand and act on feminism • Come to terms with homophobia • Do social justice • Open to new ideas and concepts • Speak in public • Basic leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience the religious dimensions of friendship • Experience the religious dimensions of sexuality • May have profound religious experiences that they want to make sense out of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation • Check-in • Questions and question boxes • Social education, social service, and even direct action • Group-building games and initiatives • Worship services • Spiritual practices
High school (ages 14-19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive social separation from family of origin • Progressive integration into peer group and (ideally) wider community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full abstract thinking develops: “formal operational thinking” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve on committees • Participate fully in worship • Hold their congregations to high standards (Essentially same as adults) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above, same as adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building community • Worship and spiritual practices • Leadership development • Classes and discussions

Learning styles and multiple intelligences

For many years, educators recognize that individuals differ in the ways they find it easiest to learn, and we say that people have different learning styles.

Howard Gardner, a psychologist at the Harvard School of Education, has done research into learning styles over the past two and a half decades. Gardner started out interested in assessment, or testing. Most assessment has been done with paper-and-pencil tests, but Gardner started to question whether paper-and-pencil tests were always effective. For example, if you ran a baseball team and were trying to find the best pitcher for your team, would you give potential pitchers a paper-and-pencil test to find out how good they were — or would you ask them to throw some pitches at your best batters? Similarly, if you were the conductor of a symphony orchestra and you needed a new flutist, would you give a paper-and-pencil test to potential flutists — or would you ask them to play a piece of music for you in an audition?

From asking these questions, Gardner began to grow interested in the different ways people learn. He began to research brain physiology, and he looked at experts in a variety of fields. Gradually, he came to believe that there are at least eight “intelligences” that human beings can have, rather than the one so-called intelligence that is tested by the usual paper-and-pencil intelligence tests. According to Gardner, each of us can have a different mix of strengths among these eight intelligences. He began to talk about “multiple intelligences,” and it is through this term that his theory is best known. His theory has been widely criticized for lack of experimental evidence, yet at the same time his theory has been embraced by practicing educators who find it a useful model to help understand how different people learn in different ways.

The eight intelligences that Gardner believes he has identified are listed in the table on the next page, along with a brief description of each intelligence, an example of an expert who rates high in that intelligence, and some activities that educators can use to reach persons strong in that intelligence.

Howard Gardner's theory is useful for those of us who are Sunday school teachers. Most Sunday school teachers will be personally strong in two or three of the multiple intelligences. For example, Mark, a Sunday school teacher I worked with some years ago, worked as an architect, and he had particularly strong spatial, linguistic, and interpersonal intelligences. Yet Mark was less strong in musical and bodily/kinesthetic intelligences. Not surprisingly, Mark did lots of art projects in Sunday school, and he also liked discussions and group activities. Multiple intelligence theory helped Mark understand that he tended to neglect musical and bodily/kinesthetic intelligences — yet there were children in his group with very strong bodily/kinesthetic and quite strong musical intelligences. He was then able to plan activities that would play to the strengths of those children. For the bodily/kinesthetic children, he planned building projects that involved manipulation, and he also planned active games that promoted cooperation — thus combining his strengths with the strengths of those children. He felt he was absolutely hopeless at music, so he made a point of inviting another adult to visit his group and sing some songs.

The net result for Mark was very positive. He came to realize that some of the behavior problems he was having were with the children who had strong bodily/kinesthetic and musical intelligences. When he helped them use their strengths in church school, they became much more involved and created fewer behavior problems. Second, he felt he was doing the right thing. We Unitarian Universalists say we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and using multiple intelligence theory can be a way of valuing the peculiar strengths of each child in your church school group.

Name of intelligence	Brief description of this intelligence	Experts who rate high in this intelligence	Activities to use in UU Sunday schools
Linguistic	“sensitivity to spoken and written languages, ability to learn languages, capacity to use language”	Lawyers, speakers, writers, poets	Tell stories, lead discussions, ask questions, give children opportunities to speak (in worship, in front of class)
Logical / Mathematical	“capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, investigate issues scientifically”	Mathematicians, logicians, scientists	Use worksheets and puzzles, offer logical presentations of materials, count things, argue
Musical	“skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns”	Musicians	Sing songs, listen to music, compose songs and raps, play rhythm games
Bodily / kinesthetic	“the potential of using one’s whole body or parts of the body (like the hands or the mouth) to solve problems or fashion products”	Dancers, athletes, actors, craftspeople — To some extent also: surgeons, mechanics, bench-top scientists	Play active games, use dance and creative motion, act out skits, manipulate or make objects

Spatial	"the potential to recognize and manipulate the patterns of space"	Navigators, pilots, sculptors, chess players, graphic artists, architects	Do art projects (e.g., make drawings), explore church buildings, make forts or hiding places, draw maps
Interpersonal	"a person's capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people, and consequently to work effectively with others"	Salespeople, teachers, clinicians, religious leaders, political leaders, actors	Group problem-solving and initiatives, group games, diversity or anti-racism activities, worship services
Intrapersonal	"the capacity to understand one's self, to have an effective working model of oneself"	(Religious leaders?)	Meditation, worship services, silence, personal growth activities
Naturalist	capacity in "the recognition and classification of the numerous species — flora and fauna — of his or her environment"	Naturalists, biologists, hunters, anglers, farmers, gardeners, cooks	Plant seeds or bulbs, cook starting with basic ingredients (i.e., not from packaged mixes), watch animals, go outdoors

How to use games, songs, movement, and more

Multiple intelligence theory (see above, section 2-B) suggests that teaching must be more than lectures and discussions. Lectures and discussions are great for people with a strong linguistic intelligence, but lectures and discussions may not reach children with, say, strong bodily/kinesthetic or naturalist intelligences.

Since different people have different strengths when it comes to learning, the best church school teachers will plan a variety of activities over time. With that in mind, below is my list of the top five most-neglected teaching methods in church schools today. Try some of these, and see what a difference it can make with children.

- 1. Acting, skits, and plays — When you act out a story or skit, you can reach just about every one of the multiple intelligences. Since we can't always assume children can read, the church school teacher can narrate the skit or play, or children can memorize simple lines.
- 2. Play cooperative games — I like *The New Games Book* best, but it's now out of print (try your local library). Any cooperative game book will do though. Cooperative games work well at developing interpersonal intelligence, and can also feed bodily/kinesthetic, spatial, logical/mathematical, and other intelligences (depending on the game).
- 3. Sing songs — 40 years ago, music used to be a central part of Sunday school, but it has become neglected. Many of the standard curriculums have songs included, or ask me for suggestions. If you can't sing, find an adult who can help you out.
- 4. Do creative movement — You don't need to be a dancer to do movement with children. You can do silly hand motions with songs, create weird dances together, take stretch breaks. Most children like to move.
- 5. Go outdoors — Unitarian Universalists claim to value the interdependent web of all existence, so go outdoors and experience it with the children. Please stay on church property unless you get field trip permission slips signed by all parents.

CHAPTER 4 – Policy and Procedures

Substitutes for Lead Teachers and Classroom Helpers

If you need a substitute at the last minute please check with other members of your teaching team first to see if they can fill in for you. Call them/text or use an online chat...something where you can get an immediate response. Also notify your team leader. If you can not get anyone, send an email to me – ufl.dll@gmail.com.

A Safe Congregation Policy for the Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence Kansas

The Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence is committed to promoting a safe and welcoming environment. We want to ensure that children and adults who visit us, or participate in our activities, are safe from sexual abuse and physical abuse. At the same time, we also want to affirm the dignity and worth of all persons, even if someone has interacted inappropriately with other people. These dual goals lead us to the following policy:

(I) PROCEDURES FOR UFL ACTIVITIES

The following procedures will be used, to ensure the safety of children and youth during UFL activities:

- Teachers in the Religious Exploration (RE) program must have participated in UFL activities for at least four months prior to teaching. (Recent participation at another UU church or Fellowship can be substituted.)
 - Two adults should be present with UFL children or youth during RE activities or outings. But if that is not possible, the door must be left open, or it should be in a public setting where other adults are present.
 - Parents are welcome at any time to remain with their children at the UFL.
 - Teachers are not allowed to spank or hit a child during UFL activities.
 - If a person was substantiated by SRS or DCF (the Department for Children and Families, formerly called SRS) for child abuse, or was convicted of a sex offense against a child, he or she cannot be a RE teacher or be alone with children during UFL activities.

 - Prospective RE teachers must sign the Code of Ethics and Disclosure Form. (See Appendix.)
 - The Director of Religious Exploration (DRE) should read each signed form.
- At least every 3 months, the DRE should see if teachers' names are on the Sex Offender and Child Abuse Registry. The DRE should tell the Minister and Chair of any resulting concerns.
- The DRE should put the names of RE teachers in the newsletter periodically.
 - People who supervise UFL youth should be aware that the UFL does not condone sexual contact between youth during UFL activities. See Section VIII.

(II) REPORTING OF SUSPECTED ABUSE ON UFL GROUNDS OR DURING UFL ACTIVITIES

If you suspect that a child or youth under age 18 has been physically or sexually abused on UFL grounds, or during UFL activities, you should immediately give details to the UFL Minister or Chair. This may be done by phone or e-mail or in-person. Safe congregations, page 2

The Minister and/or Chair will help that person make a report to the Lawrence Police, and the Child Abuse hotline (800-922-5330). If the Minister and Chair are not available, then the Chair-Elect, or Director of Religious Exploration should help with the report. Incidents will be reported in accordance with Kansas law. The person who makes the report does not determine if abuse has occurred. Instead the Department for Children and Families (DCF, formerly called SRS) or the police decides if there is or is not abuse.

Definitions:

Sexual abuse is when an adult or older teen fondles a child sexually or has sex with a child, or indecent exposure to a child. Although most abusers are adults, sexual abuse may be committed by someone under age 18 when that person is either much older than the victim, or has power or control over the younger child (e.g. a babysitter), or uses force or coercion.

Physical abuse is when an adult or older teen hits the child so hard that it causes a bruise, or injures the child on purpose. If an adult whips a child with a belt, or slaps a child with force in the face, it is likely to be physical abuse. But a light spanking over a clothed buttocks, or a light swat on a hand, is not abuse. If an adult injures a child while disciplining the child, this is still abuse even if the adult did not mean to hurt the child.

After an incident is reported, the Minister or Fellowship Chair will have the Abuse Response Team perform a risk assessment. The suspected abuser will be asked to sign a form so the Fellowship can obtain information from DCF or authorities. Also:

- The Minister or Chair will act as a caring role model and try to ensure that the accused abuser is not subject to harassment or name-calling from members.
- The Minister or Chair will give the accused abuser and the victim the names of community resources for treatment.
- The Minister or Chair will ask the alleged abuser to limit his or her contact with UFL children until more information is obtained.

(III) CERTAIN ADULTS NEED PROTECTION

“Vulnerable adults” also need protection. A vulnerable adult is an adult who cannot make their own decisions, or who needs other people’s protection. Examples include someone with advanced Alzheimer’s Disorder, or severe mental limitations, or a severe handicap.

Please notify the Minister or Chair if you suspect that a UFL vulnerable adult has been abused on UFL grounds or during UFL activities. Information will be provided about making a report to Adult Protective Services (a part of DCF). The procedures that are cited throughout this policy about children will also apply to vulnerable adults. Safe congregations, page 3

(IV) ABUSE RESPONSE TEAM

The Board will determine the membership of the Abuse Response Team. It should ideally consist of 3 to 5 members who have some expertise in protecting children.

The Response Team will be asked to conduct a risk assessment under these circumstances:

- When there is an incident at UFL or towards a UFL child of suspected abuse, or suspected inappropriate sexual or physical behavior.
- When someone had past inappropriate sexual or physical behavior towards children, but did not tell that to the UFL.
- When someone wants to participate in UFL activities who was convicted of a sex offence against a child, or who has been substantiated for child abuse.
- Other situations on a case by case basis.
- The Response Team will review information about the alleged abuse, any SRS findings, and other relevant information. The Response Team will then make recommendations to the Board. These recommendations might address how to:
 - a) Limit the suspected abuser’s future contacts with UFL children.
 - b) Ensure that youth behave appropriately to each other in UFL activities.
 - c) Ensure that people are treated with dignity and compassion in UFL activities.
 - d) Propose consequences, if someone does not follow the Safe Congregation policy.
- The Board will consider the recommendations, and implement as appropriate.

(V) PRIVACY

The UFL wants to handle incidents of suspected abuse discretely, in order to protect victims, and the rights of the abused. However, under some circumstances, the Board may tell the congregation of specific steps being taken to protect children.

(VI) CAN THE MINISTER REPORT ABUSE?

What if a UFL member tells the minister that he or she has abused a child? Are such discussions “confidential?” The answer is that even though ministers are not “mandatory reporters” in Kansas, we must ensure that all UFL children are safe. Thus, it is recommended that the UFL Minister should take one of these two steps:

- a) Either the Minister should tell every person at the start of counseling with herself, that she will report suspected child abuse to DCF or police, regardless of where the suspected abuse occurs; Safe congregations, page 4
- b) Or the Minister should, upon hearing a confession of abuse, ask the abuser to self-report himself or herself to DCF or police. In the latter case, the Minister should listen as that person makes the DCF/police report.
The goal is to start a process to help the abuser become a better person, and also ensure that the Fellowship is a safe place for everyone.

(VII) SUSPECTED ABUSE THAT IS OUTSIDE UFL GROUNDS OR ACTIVITIES

The UFL expects that anyone who observes or suspects that child abuse has occurred in the home or community will:

- Notify the Child Abuse hotline or police or DCF.
- In addition, the Minister or Chair should be told, if the suspected abuser is a UFL Sunday school teacher, or interacts with children during UFL activities.

(VIII) SEXUAL CONTACTS BETWEEN YOUTH

What if an 18-year old has sex with a 15-year old girlfriend or boyfriend, or a youth has sexual contact with a partner who is within 4 years of their age? This is sometimes called a “Romeo and Juliet” situation. According to Kansas law, an older teen could be accused of a sex offense in some circumstances. However, that fact is little known, and parents themselves have diverse opinions about sexual contact between teens.

- The UFL believes these topics should be discussed, such as during OWL (Our Whole Lives Curriculum), or planning for any overnight UFL activity, or as part of the RE curriculum.
 - The Fellowship does not condone sexual contacts between youth during UFL activities, and adult supervision will be provided for UFL youth activities.
- However, supervisors cannot be everywhere at every moment. For example, on a UFL overnight trip, a supervisor might be asleep in the middle of the night. Parents must consider this, and their own values, when deciding if their youth will attend overnight UFL activities.

--Parents and youth may want to be aware of Kansas laws on sexual contact between people. These state it is a crime for anyone to have sex or sexual relations with a child under age 16. If the offender is under age 19, and no more than 4 years older than the victim, and victim is at least age 14, then this is a low grade felony called unlawful voluntary sexual relations. It would likely result in presumed probation and carries no sex offender registration requirement. However, if the offender is age 19 or older, or if the victim is younger than age 14, this is either rape or aggravated indecent liberties with a child, both of which result in presumed imprisonment and require life-time sex offender registration. Safe congregations, page 5

(IX) OTHER ISSUES

What if there is a Court order on two people's contacts with each other, that could apply at the UFL? For example, what about a Protection from Abuse order, or a divorce order on who can transport a child, or an anti-stalking order? If there is a Court order that would apply to your life at the Fellowship, please give a copy of it to the minister or DRE. You should also contact the police right away if someone violates that order. It is the job of the police (not the UFL) to enforce a Court order. Also, please tell the minister or DRE if any sexual harassment occurs at the UFL. Other conflicts between people may be addressed by the UFL's Conflict Management Policy.

CHAPTER 5 – Taking care of yourself

Spiritual Growth as a Teacher

People who do religious education with children and youth should also attend to our own spiritual needs. *We are role models to the children in our classes* and one of the best things we can do is show them that living our faith brings us joy and pleasure. For many, teaching on Sundays or serving as a youth advisor is in itself a form of spiritual growth. One thing many teachers say when asked why they teach is they want to get to know the kids at church. If you can make that one of your spiritual goals, play games together, talk together, have fun together, spend time getting to know each other. You will most likely never know when something you say or do has touched a young person in a deep and significant way – a way that directs them to a different path or plants a seed that at some future time germinates and takes root. But they most likely will remember you.

Take time for yourself outside of class! Whatever you do to grow religiously and spiritually will come through to the children and those around you, because you will be close to your spiritual center.

While curriculum and content are important, it's most important that you and your class live your faith together, rather than just talk about your faith. If it's a gorgeous day, it may make sense to take the class outdoors. How about lying down in the grass and looking up at the clouds and imagining cloud figures while having a conversation, or taking one square foot of space and examining it VERY closely to see what you find different in each space?

For safety reason, if you go outside and go beyond fellowship property, it is crucial to let the DLL or someone else know where you are going. Any car travel requires forms...

APPENDIX

Forms

At the back of this manual in the appendix are the forms used at UFL in the Lifelong Learning Program.

They also will be available online.

- 1 Accident/Injury Form
- 2 Transportation of Children and Youth (Driver)
- 3 Medical Release/Parent Responsibility
- 4 Photograph Release
- 5 Child and Youth Participation Release
- 6 Youth Group Registration
- 7 Children's Religious Exploration Registration

INJURY/ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Child's Name	Date and Time of injury/accident
Location where injury/accident occurred	Part of body involved
Description of how injury/accident occurred	
Corrective action needed to prevent reoccurrence	Treatment given & by whom
Name of parent notified & time notified	Person who notified parent
Signature of caregiver	Date
Signature of Parent	Date

Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence
1263 North 1100 Rd
Lawrence KS 66047

Transportation of children & Youth

First Driver's name _____

First Driver's address _____

Driver's license # _____

State of issuance _____ expiration date _____

Auto insurance carrier _____

Policy number _____

I (circle) have have not been convicted of a moving violation within the past 3 years.

Description of vehicle:

Make, model & year of vehicle _____

License plate number _____ state _____

Number of seatbelts? _____

Passenger side airbag? YES NO

Insurance card in vehicle? YES NO

Second Driver's name _____

Second Driver's address _____

Driver's license # _____

State of issuance _____ expiration date _____

I (circle) have have not been convicted of a moving violation within the past 3 years.

Medical Release, Disclosure, Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Medical Care Authorization: Should my minor youth require emergency medical treatment as a result of an accident or illness arising during a field trip or regular youth meeting, I consent to such treatment. I acknowledge that The Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence does not provide health and accident insurance for class or field trip participants and I agree to be financially responsible for any medical bills incurred as a result of emergency medical treatment. I will notify the leader in writing if my minor child has medical conditions about which emergency personnel should be informed.

Disclosure: I understand that an adult supervisor will accompany my child/youth/teen on all activities. I also understand the supervisors are volunteers and are not trained professionals. I acknowledge that there are certain risks inherent in field trips/class and that all risks cannot be prevented. I represent that my minor child is physically able, with or without accommodation, to participate in this class or field trip and is able to use equipment/supplies necessary. I understand that the church does not accept responsibility for any bodily injury incurred during the school year.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility: I will make certain that my child/youth/teen is properly prepared for all activities, including having proper clothes and equipment and will inform supervisor in writing of any physical, emotional, social or other concern of which the supervisor should be aware.

Parent/Guardian signature_____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian signature_____ Date _____

Photography Release: There may times at the UFL that we celebrate and document the children's activities with digital photographs on our brochure, website or facebook page. WE NEVER USE CHILDREN'S NAMES – FIRST OR LAST. While we feel that this practice sidesteps any potential for our internet presence being a threat to children's safety, we offer families the option to opt out of having photos of their children on the internet. Please indicate whether or not you give your consent for photographs of your children engaged in church activities to be used on The UFL website or facebook page.

Parent's name _____

Children's name(s) _____

Check one:

I consent to pictures* of my children being used on UFL internet sites.

I do not consent to pictures of my children being used on UFL internet sites.

Note: No names will be used.

Child and Youth Participation Release

I, _____ represent that I am the parent or legal guardian of all the minors listed on the reverse side of this document, and I grant permission for such minor(s) to participate in the Religious Education programming of I agree and hereby do release and hold harmless Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence and/or any and all supervisors, teachers, volunteers, or employees for the activities of the Religious Education program, from and for any and all liability which may arise for damages, loss or injuries, either to person or property, which the minor may sustain while engaging in the activities conducted, except as to such injuries or damages arising from the intentional conduct or the sole negligence of UFL and/or its supervisors, teachers, volunteers, or employees, except that this release shall not apply to any damages, loss or injuries covered by liability insurance of UFL.

I further agree to assume responsibility for any liability which may arise for damages, loss or injuries, as described herein which may be caused or contributed to by the minor to the person or property of others.

Parent or Guardian's Signature _____

Credit to: Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church.

Youth Group Registration Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence

Name _____

Birth date _____ Grade in School _____

School you attend _____

Allergies _____

Medications _____

Your cell # : _____

Your Email: _____

The best way to reach you is: call cell text cell email other _____

Family Information

Please give us contact information for your family:

Adult Name: _____

Address: _____

Best phone contact: _____ Email: _____

Adult Name: _____

Address: (if different) _____

Best phone contact: _____ Email: _____

The Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence
Religious Exploration Registration
Fall/Spring Year _____

<p>Child/Youth Name: _____ Birthdate _____ Grade _____</p> <p>Allergies _____ Medications _____ Special needs (social/emotional, food/health, learning/structure, passions etc): _____ _____ _____</p>	<p>Child/Youth Name: _____ Birthdate _____ Grade _____</p> <p>Allergies _____ Medications _____ Special needs (social/emotional, food/health, learning/structure, passions etc): _____ _____ _____</p>
<p>Child/Youth Name: _____ Birthdate _____ Grade _____</p> <p>Allergies _____ Medications _____ Special needs (social/emotional, food/health, learning/structure, passions etc): _____ _____ _____</p>	<p>Child/Youth Name: _____ Birthdate _____ Grade _____</p> <p>Allergies _____ Medications _____ Special needs (social/emotional, food/health, learning/structure, passions etc): _____ _____ _____</p>

Family Information

We know families come in different forms. Please give us contact information that will help us support your family:

Adult Name: _____
Address: _____
Best phone contact: _____ mail: _____
Adult Name _____
Address: _____
Best phone contact: _____ Email: _____

Registration for Religious Exploration at The Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence



Learn Grow Teach Bloom

At the Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence, we draw from our deep heritage and assist all to learn and grow – while developing our own sense of faith, value and identity through of spiritual explorations and meaningful experience.

Vital to our success is our cooperative approach to religious exploration and adult enrichment. By volunteering to lead classes, or assist in RE programming, we live through our principled commitment to teach and mentor. We believe that the UFL community shares responsibility for each child's physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. In turn, this strengthens each of our connections and results in all of us finding a true 'home' in our congregation.

As parents/guardians, we understand that we are a partner in the work of religious exploration, we agree:

- To strive for regular participation**
- To respect starting and ending times**
- To stay informed via the website and publications**
- To volunteer time to the RE program**
- To inform the volunteer RE teachers &/or the DLL of concerns/praise**

We welcome you to our Religious Exploration program for children and youth. Please notify Bonnie Blosser, Director of Lifelong Learning at ufl.dll@gmail.com with any special needs or concerns so that we may ensure your child will have a positive and meaningful experience in our program.