

MEANING, TRUTH AND UU WAYS!

Religious Education Sunday

For Unitarian Universalists, the most important thing is often, if not always, our search for meaning. If we came to this tradition as adults, it usually is because we were not satisfied with the religious answers that were given to us in other traditions. Even if we accept some or most of the beliefs in another tradition, we have likely come to Unitarian Universalism because we have found here a path more suited to our own beliefs. I believe that the human condition, the self-conscious awareness that we each have, sets us on a journey seeking meaning and truth. If we are fortunate enough to be born into a Unitarian Universalist family, we have the advantages of the acceptance of many paths, the encouragement to seek and discover our own truth, and a community always ready to include and accept us no matter where we might wander in our journey.

Children do not always benefit as much as they might from our religious education programs, because UU families do not come to church every week. Some of our families are so busy that they come only occasionally, but they are always warmly welcomed and encouraged to come whenever they can. Our Religious Education programs for children and youth have the goals of teaching about our own Unitarian Universalist traditions, teaching about other religious traditions from which we gain wisdom, and encouraging children and youth to explore, discover, and journey upon their own pathways of wisdom, meaning, and truth.

In our Adult Programs of Religious Education, we also try to offer an array of classes over time to help adults continue the search for truth and meaning. These classes may be based in interesting books or adult curricula that are prepared for UUs. These classes also help to encourage friendships and a deeper awareness of each other.

Another very important part of church life for Unitarian Universalists is in the community we find, build, and support together. To be in a place where we can look into another person's eyes and tell them our truth as we listen to their truth is an amazing gift. We can be "out" in many ways in our UU community as we often cannot be anywhere else. We don't need to hide what we believe, whether we believe in God, the Goddess, the Interconnected Web of all being, the Force, the Flying Spaghetti Monster, or nothing beyond the visible world. We will be accepted in UU Community for who we are and what we do, as long as we treat each other with respect and do our best to live by the values of the Unitarian Universalist Principles.

Many of us don't know along the way what we will become or what we will accomplish in our lives. We all need hugs, respect, and support to live the richest life that we can. We also need encouragement to continue on our quest for meaning, to progress on our individual journeys. As our youth move toward adulthood, we particularly want to take time to wish them well on their journeys as well as to invite them to come back and tell us what they have discovered along the way.

As we get older, many of us reach points where we are comfortable, perhaps not as motivated to keep searching out meaning and truth. The journey can be exhausting, sapping our energy so that sometimes we just need to take time to rest in a safe welcoming accepting community. Sometimes we need to take time to explore our artistic and creative sides in ways that we may not have taken time for earlier in our adult lives. As Unitarian Universalists, we are free to explore and discover all aspects of our lives and the universe, and we never need to stop wondering, exploring, discovering, or progressing on our journeys.

Our UU community affords opportunities for growth and learning at all ages and stages of life. We practice Lifespan Religious Education and we invite everyone to get involved, to learn and to lead, to share ideas and beliefs and talents and to encourage others to explore their ideas, beliefs, and talents. This is what UU Religious Education is all about.

Today, as we celebrate Religious Education Sunday, we appreciate all those who have helped to lead classes. We celebrate all those who have participated. We invite everyone to get more involved in coming months as new classes, programs and groups begin in the fall.

The quest for meaning may be a uniquely human characteristic, or in this vast universe, perhaps not. The quest for meaning certainly is a key aspect of our Unitarian Universalist religion and this community.

Whether we climb pillars or mountains, or sail vast seas, or explore the wisdom of the various religions and philosophies of the earth, or travel elsewhere in the universe, we who are seekers will always have more to learn, more to understand, further to go. Even as we journey to the farthest reaches of human endeavor physically, spiritually, and in the mind, may we always know that we will always have in Unitarian Universalism a community of fellow searchers and sojourners.

So may it ever be! Amen!