

Religious Education: Course Outline, Graduate Level

Betty Jo Middleton, Editor

Developed by Roberta M. Nelson, Eugene B. Navias,
Judith G. Mannheim and Betty Jo Middleton
With the assistance of a grant from the St. Lawrence Foundation
Editorial assistance provided by Dawn Star Borchelt

December 2004

Be sure you also have the
Reader for Religious Education: Course Outline, Graduate Level
www.uua.org/programs/ministry/publications/REGradCourseOutline_Reader.pdf

Table of Contents

About This Project	3
Participants in This Project	4
Introduction.....	6
Reading List.....	8
Final Paper Requirement	11
Final Project or Portfolio	12
Assignments for Each Session.....	13
Session One: Building the Community – Part I.....	18
Session Two: Building the Community—Part II.....	21
Session Three: Creating a Philosophy of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education	24
Session Four: Social Justice Visions for Religious Education	32
Session Five: Developmental Theories for Religious Education	38
Session Six: The Congregation as an Educating Community – Part I.....	41
Session Seven: The Congregation as an Educating Community—Part II.....	46
Session Eight: Teaching and Learning in Liberal Religious Education – Part I	49
Session Nine: Teaching and Learning in Liberal Religious Education—Part II.....	53
Session Ten: Content and Curriculum Resources.....	56
Session Eleven: Curriculum Presentations	60
Session Twelve: Multigenerational Worship.....	63
Session Thirteen: Closing Session.....	65

About This Project

In March, 2000, we applied to the St. Lawrence Foundation for a grant to “design a course outline, bibliography, and other resource materials for a graduate level course in religious education toward better preparation in religious education of students for the Unitarian Universalist ministry.”

We were encouraged to pursue this work because of the substantial number of students preparing for ministry who were not attending Unitarian Universalist schools. We also saw it serving as a guide to professors and teachers in these schools who needed to know the expectations of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Ministerial Fellowship Committee. In addition we thought it would be helpful to ministers who supervise interns and to candidates working toward credentialing as Religious Educators by the UUA.

Since receiving the grant in 2000, we have met with the others engaged in this project—Eugene B. Navias and Judith G. Mannheim—four times, with each meeting lasting several days. In addition, we have exchanged materials electronically, by mail, and over the telephone. We hope that this work will prove to be useful to those for whom it is intended.

We are most appreciative to the St. Lawrence Foundation, to Lena Breen, Judith Frediani and David Hubner of the UUA (past and present) for their encouragement and support, and to Dawn Star Borchelt for editorial assistance.

—Roberta M. Nelson and Betty Jo Middleton

Participants in This Project

The Reverend Judith Geisler Mannheim is a Unitarian Universalist parish and religious education minister who has served Unitarian Universalist organizations for more than thirty years. She has served congregations in Massachusetts, Colorado, and Pennsylvania. She has been on the staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association as Dean of the Independent Study Program and Adult Programs Consultant, and served as Associate Dean for the Modified Residency Program and a faculty member at Meadville/Lombard Theological School. She has been a denominational counselor and visiting lecturer in religious education at Harvard Divinity School. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Mount Holyoke College, a Certificate of Independent Study from the Unitarian Universalist Association, and a Master of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School. She currently serves in a Boston HIV/AIDS ministry.

The Reverend Betty Jo Middleton is a Unitarian Universalist Minister of Religious Education with more than 25 years experience in the field. She is the author of religious education materials for all ages and has served eight congregations in the Greater Washington, D.C., area in long- or short-term positions in ministry and religious education. She works primarily as a consultant and writer on religious education topics. She served briefly on the Unitarian Universalist Association field staff as Joseph Priestley District Life Span Religious Education Consultant. She has served on the board and committees of the Liberal Religious Educators Association and is on the UUA's Religious Education Credentialing Committee. She is the 2004 recipient of the Angus H. MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas; a Master of Arts from George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia; and an Independent Study Diploma for the Ministry of Religious Education from the UUA. She has taught in religious education extension courses for Meadville/Lombard and lectured on occasion at Wesley Theological Seminary.

The Reverend Roberta M. Nelson, DD is Emeritus Minister of Religious Education of the Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda, Maryland. She has also served congregations in Needham, Massachusetts; and in Oakton, Virginia. She was the 1975 recipient of the Angus H. MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education. She has served the UUA on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, the Panel on Theological Education and as president of the Liberal Religious Educators Association, as vice-president of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, and is a member of the Meadville/Lombard Theological School Board. She has taught religious education courses at Meadville/Lombard and at the Pacific School of Religion. She served as chair of the Sexuality Education Task Force that envisioned the *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education curriculum. She is a coauthor with her husband Christopher Nelson of the curricula *Parents as Resident Theologians*, *Parents as Social Justice Educators*, and *Parents as Spiritual Guides*. They also train teachers for leading all levels of the *Our Whole Lives* curriculum.

The Reverend Eugene B. Navias attended St. Lawrence University, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1949 and its (Universalist) Theological School, graduating with a Masters of Divinity degree in 1951. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Meadville/Lombard Theological School in 1992. At St. Lawrence he studied religious education

with Angus MacLean. He was the 1977 recipient of the Angus MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education. Gene served the First Unitarian Church, Cleveland, and the Unitarian Church of Concord, N.H., before going to the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1963. Once there he held a progression of positions—he was a roving religious education field consultant, headed curriculum demonstration, administered the Accreditation Program for Religious Educators, founded the Tiny School RE Conferences and the Continental Conclave of District RE Chairs, and Directed the RE Department. After retiring from the UUA, he became Associate Minister of the Arlington Street Church, 1993-1999, which named him Associate Minister Emeritus. In 2001 Gene represented the 50 year ministers at the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association preceding the General Assembly. Now Gene engages in a variety of volunteer labors for his church, the UU R.E. History Group, the Boston Interfaith AIDS ministry, etc., and performs a new diversity of marriages and preaching engagements. Gene and David Johnson wrote and presented *Singing Our Vision of Justice*, one of the major programs at the 2003 General Assembly. At the 2004 GA, he gave a paper on “Religious Education Moves West.”

Introduction

This syllabus and course outline is intended for a graduate level introductory course in liberal religious education. Religious education, in the broadest sense, is one of the most important aspects of the Unitarian Universalist faith. In our congregations, and wherever our ministries extend, we look to ways that our principles may be envisioned. People preparing for our ministry are required to study religious education regardless of what area of ministry they hope to practice. Helping people to find meaning in their lives, to encourage the development of strong intergenerational communities, and to have the tools for work in social justice are some of the goals of religious education.

The course has been developed by experienced Unitarian Universalist religious education ministers who have worked in many different forms of ministry. Several of us have taught in theological schools. We have worked with students preparing for ministry. We have outlined a course designed primarily for those students for whom this will be the principal or only course in religious education. We therefore stress breadth rather than depth, with suggested further readings and work to deepen knowledge in each area.

It has come to our attention that a majority of students preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry do not attend one of the denominational theological schools. Nevertheless, these students are expected to have at least one course in religious education. They are required to read liberal religious education materials and be familiar with some curriculum. They need to know something of our religious education history and its evolving philosophy. Ministerial formation includes an understanding of human development including faith development, as well as various intelligences and learning styles. Students need enough background to assist in developing religious education programs in congregations and to apply good educational principles in other work settings.

This course may be used by religious education faculty at non-Unitarian Universalist schools, to gain an understanding of the denominational requirements for Unitarian Universalist students in the field. It may be used by Unitarian Universalist ministers and professional religious educators who are asked to provide such a course. It also may be used by students preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry as a guide to expectations of their learning. It is valuable for many students, not only Unitarian Universalists. It presents opportunities to consider current thinking by outstanding writers in the field, and to explore ways in which we can bring people of all ages closer together in faith communities in a fractured and dissonant world.

The format is a seminar, with much participation expected of students. Our belief is that experiencing good educational practices will encourage students to become comfortable in using them wherever they work. Dr. Elizabeth Caldwell reminds us that “the role of the teacher and learner are influenced by our experiences of being a learner.” Recognizing this, we have designed the course using a variety of educational methods congruent with our religious education vision.

Ideally, this outline will be used for a class of twelve to fifteen students. There are suggestions in several places for dividing larger groups. If a student is attempting to do the work alone, it is

imperative that she or he be able to discuss readings and philosophy with an experienced religious educator.

Particular sessions may need to be adapted to embrace events that are current in students' lives and in the world. We acknowledge, where possible, diversities including those of sexual orientation, race, class, and abilities, and assume that classes may add to this.

Readings are from Unitarian Universalist, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish sources. Others may be added at the discretion of the class and leaders. We recognize that one brief course cannot provide in depth exploration in all the areas of religious education. We hope that students will be interested enough to pursue further work through workshops and trainings, and reading material from the recommended list in the bibliography.

While the required reading for this course may not include all of the religious education reading requirements of the Unitarian Universalist Association's Ministerial Fellowship Committee, it is assumed that students will familiarize themselves with those requirements and fill any gaps on their own.

Reading List

Required Reading

Reader for Introduction to Liberal Religious Education. A Graduate Level Course for Unitarian Universalists. Online. www.uua.org.

Essex Conversations Coordinating Committee. *Essex Conversations*. Boston: Skinner House 2001.

Foster, Charles R. *Educating Congregations*. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1994.

Groome, Thomas H. *Christian Religious Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1995, 1999.

Harris, Maria. *Fashion Me a People*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press 1989.

Journey Toward Wholeness Sunday Handbook. Most recent edition. (Online at www.uua.org)

Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee. *Continuing the Journey, Report and Recommendations to the 2001 General Assembly*. (Online at www.uua.org--search "journey").

Myers, William and Myers, Barbara. *Engaging in Transcendence*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992.

Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

White, James W. *Intergenerational Religious Education*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press 1988.

Recommended Reading

Coles, Robert. *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Wilmington, MA: Houghton-Mifflin 1991.

Groome, Thomas H. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. The Way of Shared Praxis*. San Francisco. HarperCollins 1991.

Hawkins, Thomas R. *The Learning Congregation: A New Vision of Leadership*. Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1997.

Kroeger, Otto, and Oswald, Roy M. *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*. Baltimore: Alban Institute, 1988.

Moore, Mary Elizabeth. *Teaching From the Heart*, new ed. Harrisburg: Trinity Press 1998.

- Nieuwejaar, Jean. *The Gift of Faith*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books 1999.
- Osmer, Richard Robert. *Teaching For Faith*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992.
- Palmer, Parker *To Know As We Are Known*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Ratciff, Donald and Blake J. Neff. *The Complete Guide to Religious Education Volunteers*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press 1991.
- Seymour, Jack L., ed. *Mapping Christian Education*. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1997.
- Shaefer, Dr. Charles, and DiFeronimo, Teresa Foy. *Ages & Stages: A Parent's Guide to Normal Child Development*. New York: John Wiley & Son 2000.
- Vogel, Linda. *Teaching & Learning in Communities of Faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1991.
- Westerhoff, John, rev. ed. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* Harrisburg: Morehouse, 2000.
- Wickett, R.E.Y. *Models of Adult Religious Education Practice*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press 1991.

Recommended, out of print, may be available from ministers or in church libraries:

- Farber-Robertson, Anita, and Spencer, Leon. *Journey Toward Wholeness: The Next Step*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association 1996.
- Frediani, Judith, ed. *Curriculum Mapping: A Guide to Unitarian Universalist Curricula*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association 1996. Updated, available online at www.uua.org.
- Gilmore, John, ed. *Unitarian Universalist Selected Essays 1996*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association 1996.
- Harris, Maria. *Teaching and Religious Imagination: An Essay in the Theology of Teaching*. San Francisco: Harper & Row 1987.
- Hollerorth, Hugo J., Editor. *Stone House Conversations*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association 1979.
- Liberal Religious Education Journals
- McCullough, Charles R. *Heads of Heaven, Feet of Clay*. New York: Pilgrim Press 1983.
- Report of the Religious Education Futures Committee to the UUA Board of Trustees*. Boston

Unitarian Universalist Association 1981.

Rosen, Harold. *Religious Education and Our Ultimate Commitment: An Application of Henry Nelson Wieman's Philosophy of Creative Interchange*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America 1983.

Other Online Resources

Check current offerings at the UUA website www.uua.org:

Accessibility

Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay, and Transgender Issues

Anti-Racism

Faith Works

Worship

Final Paper Requirement

This paper is to be 10 -12 pages, typed double spaced, on one of the following topics:

1. Compare and evaluate the religious education philosophy of the MacLean, Fahs, or Hollerorth eras with that expressed by Harris, Foster, or Myers and Myers, including aspects you would like to develop in a congregation or community setting.
2. Using at least one of the required texts and one from the recommended list, compare and critique the writers' positions, and describe what you find useful for a UU congregational or community setting.
3. Using Foster and White as resources, design a plan for moving a congregation to a deeper understanding of the educating community, or design an intergenerational or multiage program, including rationale.
4. Compare and critique the philosophies of Foster and either Harris or Palmer as expressed in their books on the reading list. What elements do you find useful for a UU congregation or community setting, and why?
5. Using Myers and Myers, and at least one other author in the resources, evaluate some of the religious education programs in a congregation with which you are familiar.
6. Describe fully your current philosophy of religious education and ways in which you would seek to implement this in a congregation. Cite references that influence you.
7. A topic of your choosing, which must be approved by the faculty.

Final Project or Portfolio

Students may choose to do a project or to complete a portfolio documenting their learnings instead of writing a final paper. Discuss this with the instructor early in the course.

Assignments for Each Session

For Session One: Building the Community – Part I

Reading: “A Short History of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education” by Eugene B. Navias, in the *Reader*.

For Session Two: Building the Community—Part II

Reading: Begin reading *Essex Conversations*, with particular attention to chapters assigned for early sessions.

For Session Three: Creating a Philosophy of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education

Reading: Four chapters from *Essex Conversations*: “Educating for Faith,” by Barry Andrews; “Making Sure There is a There There,” by Judith Frediani; “Spreading the Good News,” by Susan Harlow; and “Seven Reminders,” by Tom Owen-Towle.

Optional: Remainder of *Essex Conversations*, if not previously read.

Other (In teams):

(1) Each team read and analyze one essay for foundational aspects of a religious education philosophy, using Thomas Groome’s criteria where present:

A. What is religious education? What are we doing in people's lives when we are doing it? On what religious tradition, on what faith, on what values does our religious education rest?

B. Why? What are the purposes behind what we do in religious education?

C. Where? What is the context of religious education in the community of the church or the fellowship? What is the nature of our church/fellowship as a teaching community?

D. When? To the best of your knowledge what does human development theory have to tell us?

E. Who? Who are the co-partners in the R. E. enterprise?

F. How? If religious education needs be at least good education, how do we go about it? What is the place of method, content, etc.?

[Groome used these criteria in a course at Boston College attended by the writer.]

(2) Prepare to present responses to the class for Session Three.

For Session Four: Social Justice Visions for Religious Education

Writing: Write your philosophy of religious education as you understand it now and for the first stage of your ministry (three or four pages).

Reading: *Journey Toward Wholeness Sunday Handbook*. Most recent edition. (Available online at www.uua.org.)

Continuing the Journey, Report and Recommendations to the 2001 General Assembly from the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee (available online at www.uua.org.)

Information about accessibility issues (search “Faith in Action”) and Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender issues (available online at www.uua.org – search “justice issues”)

“For the Generations to Come,” by Susan Suchocki Brown, in *Essex Conversations*.

“Choosing a Social Justice Project,” by Jacqui James, in the *Reader*.

For Session Five: Developmental Issues and Religious Educator Presentations

Reading: “Gabriel Moran’s Theory of Religious Education Development,” by Makaanah Elizabeth Morriss, in the *Reader*.

Students who have little knowledge of or experience with children may wish to read *Ages & Stages: A Parent’s Guide to Normal Childhood Development* by Charles Shaefer and Teresa Foy DiFeronimo before this session.

Other: In groups of two or three, prepare presentations on the philosophy of one Unitarian Universalist religious educator. Schedule of presentations to be worked out with instructor.

Questions and issues to be addressed in student presentations:

- What is the person’s theological perspective?
- What is her or his philosophy of religious education?
- What program changes does she or he advocate?
- What insights about religious education did you gain from this

person?

Prepare questions for class discussion.
Presenters need to bring their own supplies.

Suggested list (not inclusive) of UU religious educators—if your class is interfaith, students should have the option of choosing persons from their own religious tradition:

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Baker
Rev. Dr. Hugo Hollerorth
Dr. Angus MacLean
Dr. Dorothy Spoerl
Rev. Sophia Lyon Fahs

Also, see the *Futures Committee Report*, *Stone House Conversations*, and *Essex Conversations* for names of additional Unitarian Universalist educators.

For Session Six: The Congregation as an Educating Community – Part I

Reading: *Educating Congregations*, by Charles Foster.

“Outside the Box,” by Susan Davison Archer and “Margin and Center,” by Tracey Robinson-Harris, in *Essex Conversations*.

Other: Bring copies of church newsletters you may have.

For Session Seven: The Congregation as an Educating Community—Part II

Writing: Write two to three pages comparing and critiquing *Educating Congregations* or *Engaging in Transcendence* with the *Essex* readings.

Reading: Complete *Educating Congregations*, by Charles Foster.

Engaging in Transcendence, by William Myers and Barbara Myers.

For Session Eight: Teaching and Learning in Liberal Religious Education – Part I

Reading: Chapter 10 *Christian Religious Education*, by Thomas Groome.

“The Teacher as Spiritual Guide” by Roberta M. Nelson, in *Essex Conversations*.

The Method is the Message by Angus MacLean, “How We Do What We Do in Religious Education” by Betty Jo Middleton, and “Community

Story and Vision for Religious Education,” compiled by Betty Jo Middleton, all in the *Reader*.

Optional: *Sharing Faith*, by Thomas Groome for a more thorough discussion of shared praxis.

For Session Nine: Teaching and Learning in Liberal Religious Education—Part II

Reading: “Some Notes on Multiple Intelligences,” by Betty Jo Middleton and “Creative Midrash,” by Sherry H. Blumberg, in the *Reader*.

“It’s Elementary, My Friend. It’s Child’s Play,” by John Tolley, in *Essex Conversations*.

Optional: Unitarian Universalist curriculum materials.

Other: Each student is to prepare an outline for a lesson plan (any topic, for any age group), using Shared Praxis approach. If class is large, this may be done in teams.

For Session Ten: Content and Curriculum Resources

Reading: Review Chapters Two, Five, and Eight in *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers

“Useable Truth,” by Richard Gilbert and “Spreading the Good News,” by Susan Harlow, in *Essex Conversations*.

Read or re-read *The Method is the Message*, by Angus MacLean, in the *Reader*.

Curriculum Mapping, online at the UUA website, www.uua.org, (a good source for curriculum evaluation).

Fashion Me a People, by Maria Harris.

Other: Answer for yourself (not to be turned in) questions at the end of Chapter Three of *Fashion Me a People*. Exercise in “Questions for Musing”

Other: Prepare for Curriculum Presentations: In groups of two or three, prepare to teach a lesson from any UU curriculum.

For Session Eleven: Curriculum Presentations

Writing: Make some notes for yourself in response to the ideas presented in Chapter Two of *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers.

Other: Curriculum presentations as above.

For Session Twelve: Multigenerational Worship

Reading: “Draft. Common Worship—Why and How? The UUA Commission on Common Worship;” “Intergenerational Worship in Unitarian Universalist Communities” by Ginger Luke; “Intergenerational Worship Suggestions” by Kathie Davis Thomas, “Four Stories for Multigenerational Worship” by Diane Elliott, with an introduction by Eugene B. Navias, all from the *Reader*.

Optional: Material on the “Worship Web” at www.uua.org

Other: Each student to prepare a brief rationale for multigenerational worship after reading the assigned materials.

In small groups, prepare to present either a story for use in multigenerational worship or a brief multigenerational worship service.

For Session Thirteen: Closing Session

Writing: Final paper.

Other: Any unfinished projects, presentations

Session One: Building the Community – Part I

“Telling the story of your past and present calls into greater awareness the dreams and demons, the rituals and roots, the fantasies and failures that have made you the way you are.”

— Sam Keen in *Telling Your Own Story*

Goals for This Session:

- To create a community of inquiry and discourse among students and faculty
- To build trust and support in the group
- To create a class covenant that will remind us of how we plan to work together

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard
- Chalice, if using

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper, chalk, markers—as needed
- Candle and matches, if using
- Additional copies of Reading List, Final Paper Requirements, and Assignments for Each Session
- 3x5 cards for students to fill out with pertinent information (name, address, phone number, email address, school box number—whatever is applicable and desired)

Resources You Will Need:

- “A Short History of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education” by Eugene B. Navias, in the *Reader*.
- Information about where curriculum materials may be available (local churches, district office) for students who do not have access to them

Advance Preparation:

- Check classroom for size, lighting, chairs, accessibility
- Determine what assistance the school will provide: typing, AV equipment, etc.
- Read or re-read material to be used
- Select an opening reading and a closing story
- Arrive before the students.

Session Plan:

(All time allocations should work for a class of 10-12 students; adapt accordingly)

Opening

5 minutes

Reading of your choice. Chalice lighting if desired.

Presentations and Activities

1. Classroom Covenant

10 minutes

Brainstorm with the group expectations of working and being together: confidentiality, guarantee the right to pass, arrive and end on time, active listening, etc. Put on a sheet to be handed out the next week and make extra copies for future needs

2. Introducing the Class Plan

15 minutes

Say something like: All of us are teachers and learners. In his book *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer writes “The courage to teach is the courage to keep one’s heart open to those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and learner and subject can be woven into a fabric of community that learning and teaching require.” I resonate with these words. This is a seminar class – engagement and participation are critical for all of us. You will be doing some of the teaching through reading, reports and small groups. Your knowledge and experience are critical to class success.

Ask students to sign up for opening words and closing story, once during the semester. The use of a story as a closing is an opportunity for students to build their own collection of stories that can be used in a class or worship setting. In this setting you as the leader can model the length of time and the way a story can be presented. Cast a wide net when choosing your story—it can come from a picture or chapter book or your own life experience.

Find out which students know whether or not they have access to curriculum materials and suggest places they may find them if they do not. Determine that all students have required information about the course and access to all needed resources.

Ask each student to fill out 3x5 card with pertinent information

3. Sharing of Religious Journeys

30 minutes

Go around the circle asking each person to share name, where from, religious journey, including experience with religious education.. (Leader always goes first to model.)

4. Sharing of Call to Ministry

one hour

Go around the circle again, asking each person to share: What events called you to ministry? What are your images of ministry? With whom do associate these images? Have they evolved or changed and what has contributed to the change?.

List some of the similarities and differences on the board (or easel paper).

5. Reflective Writing

5 minutes

Ask students to take a few minutes to write an affirmation or insight from their experience of this class—what was most important to take away.

Assignments for Next Session

Reading: Begin reading *Essex Conversations*, with particular attention to chapters assigned for early sessions.

Closing Story

5 minutes

Give story of your own choosing, modeling what you want from students.

Session Two: Building the Community—Part II

“Be patient towards all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms—live the questions now.”

--Rainer Maria Rilke

Goals for This Session:

- To continue getting to know one another, including names.
- To clarify future work expectations, readings, and papers

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard
- Chalice

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper, markers, chalk—as needed
- Candle and matches

Resources You Will Need:

- *Essex Conversations*
- Extra copies of course Reading List, Final Paper Requirements, and Assignments for Each Session

Advance Preparation:

- Prepare sheets with expectations from Session One

Session Plan:

Opening

5 minutes

Reading, chosen and presented by a student

Presentation and Activities

1. Defining “Religion” and “Education”

35 minutes

Divide the group into equal or nearly equal groups (no more than four). Ask each group to record (preferably on newsprint or easel paper) words the participants associate with the word “religion.”

Each small group shares these in the larger group. Others respond with insights and observations. In the same small groups, write a definition or a list of words that everyone agreed on.

Ask participants to list the words they associate with “education” and follow the same process as with the word “religion.”

Then ask groups to consider: if these are the ideas we share about religion and education, how would we answer the questions “what is religious education” and “how is religious education different from schooling as we know it?”

2. Looking at Our Religious Education History

10 minutes

Still in the large group, ask: What viewpoints are expressed about religious education in the Navias history you read? What are some of the similarities and differences between your views and the views expressed in the history?

3. What Has Educated You?

One hour

In the large group: ask students to take a few minutes to write about a couple of incidents in their lives that educated them; 1) before age 15, and 2) as an adult. Where did they take place? Church, home, school, community, vacation? Who was with you? What was the outcome? Share in the large group—what was evoked for you? What are some of the issues that came to mind? How will you carry these remembrances into your ministry?

4. Reflective Writing

10 minutes

Ask participants to take a few minutes to write down their responses to what being a religious educator means. Ask for any questions.

Assignments for Next Session

Help participants get organized into teams for the assignment under “Other”.

Reading: Four chapters from *Essex Conversations*: “Educating for Faith,” by Barry Andrews; “Making Sure There is a There There,” by Judith Frediani; “Spreading the Good News,” by Susan Harlow; and “Seven Reminders,” by Tom Owen-Towle.

Optional: Remainder of *Essex Conversations*, if not previously read.

Other (In teams):

(1) Each team read and analyze one essay for foundational aspects of a religious education philosophy, using Thomas Groome’s criteria, where present:

A. What is religious education? What are we doing in people's lives when we are doing it? On what religious tradition, on what faith, on what values does our religious education rest?

B. Why? What are the purposes behind what we do in religious education?

C. Where? What is the context of religious education in the community of the church or the fellowship? What is the nature of our church/fellowship as a teaching community?

D. When? To the best of your knowledge what does human development theory have to tell us?

E. Who? Who are the co-partners in the R. E. enterprise?

F. How? If religious education needs be at least good education, how do we go about it? What is the place of method, content, etc.?

(2) Prepare to present responses to the class for Session Three.

Closing Story

Chosen and presented by a student. See Session One for guidelines.

Session Three: Creating a Philosophy of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education

“In a word, the great object of all [Sunday] schools is to awaken intellectual and...moral life in the child. Life is the great thing to be sought in a human being. Hitherto, most religions and governments have been very much contrivances for extinguishing life in the human soul. Thanks be to God we live to see the...dawning of a better day.”

--William Ellery Channing, “The Sunday-School,” 1837.

Goals for This Session:

- To consider what they believe to be the current philosophy of Unitarian Universalist religious education and the proposals for the future by the authors of *Essex Conversations*.
- To propose a philosophy of religious education for the first stage of their ministry

Equipment You Will Need:

- Chalice, if using
- Piano, organ, keyboard, or player and tape, if using B.1.(a) as a presentation
- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Candle and matches, if using
- Copies of the words of the Catechism for each person, if using B.1.(a) as a presentation
- Easel paper, markers, chalk—as needed.

Resources You Will Need:

- Copy of *Singing the Living Tradition (SLT)*
- Four chapters from *Essex Conversations*: “Educating for Faith,” by Barry Andrews; “Making Sure There is a There There,” by Judith Frediani; “Spreading the Good News,” by Susan Harlow; and “Seven Reminders,” by Tom Owen-Towle.

Advance Preparation:

- Read or re-read the pertinent essays from *Essex Conversations*.
- Decide on presentation for the first part of the session and plan accordingly

Session Plan:

Opening, three alternatives

5 minutes

1. Light a chalice and read Channing’s “The Great End in Religious Instruction,” #652 *SLT*, or “The Challenge” by Sophia Lyon Fahs from *A New Ministry to Children*, Boston: American Unitarian Association 1945:

In a free church we should never cease to explore.
We should never be graduated from the church’s school.

Religious education is not something that can be once and for all delivered to us and then be kept.

We cannot be a really free church, unless, as adults, we keep studying.

It is insidiously easy to grow content with comfortable finalities that at one time we regarded as liberal...

We face a new era—new inventions, new communications, new social planning, a new world community.

We see all these advances coming.

But what of our children's religious future?

Are we reading the signs of the times?

Outworn beliefs, outworn ethics and outworn schedules for our church activities have a tremendous emotional hold upon us.

Many Christian churches in America are afraid of a new era in religious education.

They are turning back and trying to revive the old evangelism.

Are the free churches also afraid?

Or shall we slough off inertia, gather together our forces, train ourselves for our great task?

And lead forth!

- 2. Sing “Who Are You?,”** children's song by Eugene B. Navias, as a round.
(Tune: “Three Blind Mice”)

Who are you? Who are you?

Unitarians...Universalists...

We're children and adults and young people, who

Are going to churches and fellowships, too,

Discovering truth, love and freedom, anew,

That is who!

- 3. Go around the group** inviting each person to complete this sentence: “Today I come here bringing...”

Presentations and Activities:

20 minutes

1. Two options:

a. Present evidence of two philosophies from *Unitarian history: the Sung Catechism* by William Bourne Oliver Peabody, 1823, and *The Address to the Sunday School Society* by William Ellery Channing 1837. (See Addendum)

b. Explore the philosophy of religious education embedded in these statements by Angus H. MacLean, Universalist religious educator, more than 100 years after Channing. (See Addendum)

2. Group Presentations:

30 minutes

The teams give five-minute presentations on the *Essex Conversations* authors assigned, introducing the author and the author's responses to the six foundational questions. (If

possible these should be posted.) Take about two minutes after each presentation for clarifying questions by other students.

3. Reflective Writing **5 minutes**
Questions for reflection: What insights, affirmations, and questions do you have?

4. Whole Class: **20 minutes**
What do you hear or reflect upon that you want to call out to all of us?

5. Small Groups (teams from earlier activity) **15 minutes**
Share and note common agreement and differences found in the readings and/or stated in the presentations. What do you want to put in your philosophy of religious education?

6. Whole Class **15 minutes**

Each group reports “one concept you want to incorporate into your own philosophy of religious education.”

Assignments for Next Session

Writing: Write your philosophy of religious education as you understand it now and for the first stage of your ministry (three or four pages).

Reading: *Journey Toward Wholeness Sunday Handbook*. Most recent edition. (online at www.uua.org)

Continuing the Journey, Report and Recommendations to the 2001 General Assembly from the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee (available online at www.uua.org – search “journey”).

Information about accessibility issues (search “Faith in Action”) and Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender issues (available online at www.uua.org – search “justice issues”)

“For the Generations to Come,” by Susan Suchocki Brown, in *Essex Conversations*.

“Choosing a Social Justice Project,” by Jacqui James, in the *Reader*.

Closing **10 minutes**

Suggested alternatives:

1. Student story
2. Extinguish the flaming chalice.
3. Go around the group and invite each person to complete the following: “Now I leave here taking...”

Addendum to Session Three

Two Contrasting Philosophies of Religious Education

B. 1. (a)

Peabody's Singing Catechism

In the early nineteenth century as the Sunday School movement swept through Protestantism, Unitarians presented two sharply contrasting philosophies of religious education. Protestant groups turned to the Bible to find evidence to support their particular strand of faith. They sought to discover right religious belief and the guide to right actions and saw these revealed by God through the commandments and by the teachings of his son, Jesus. Knowledge of the Bible was paramount for through such knowledge one could learn God's will, and learning it, control and direct oneself to doing it.

Unitarians brought their use of reason and independence of thought to the Bible. They found no references to the Trinity but rather evidence of the unity of God, and what they found they wanted to teach their children. But where should they begin? From the mainstreams of Protestantism which they had left, both Unitarians and Universalists took the catechism as the method of imparting their truths. They were familiar with many examples of catechisms of their day, including one with the most memorable title: "Spiritual Milk for American Babes, Drawn Out of the Breasts of Both Testaments for Their Souls' Nourishment" by the Reverend John Cotton.

"A Catechism for the Use of Children" by the Reverend William Bourne Oliver Peabody, written in 1823 for the instruction of children at the First Unitarian Church of Springfield, MA, became widely known in Unitarian circles and was revised and republished in 1849. Uniquely as catechisms go, it was written in verse and was intended to be sung. As the author stated on the title page: "It was thought that an enumeration in verse of the principal duties of religion might be studied with more pleasure and remembered longer by children than the common catechism in prose." There were 47 questions posed by the minister or worship leader, each sung in a verse. Let's try to sing it as children did Sunday after Sunday, 175 years ago. After the introductory verse has been played, there will be a pause while the question is read. We will then sing the answer, and proceed to the next question." (See below for words and suggested tunes.)

The Catechism

William Bourne Oliver Peabody, 1823

Responses to Questions I, II,, XI, and XIV may be sung to the tune of “Old Hundredeth,” #371, *SLT*; Response to Question XII may be sung to the tune “St. Michael,” # 113, *SLT*

The question is spoken by the teacher, and the children respond in song.

Question I. Who made you?

Answer

The God in whom I ever trust
Hath made my body from the dust;
He gave me life, he gave me breath,
And he preserves me still from death.

Question II: What else hath God made? (There are five verses.)

Answer

He made the sun and gave him light;
He made the moon to shine by night;
He placed the brilliant stars on high,
And leads them through the midnight sky.

Question XI. What can you tell me concerning sin? (There are four verses.)

Answer

I sin whenever I pursue
What God commands me not to do;
I sin, too, if I ever shun
What he hath told me must be done.

Question XII. What has Jesus Christ done for you? (There are five verses.)

Answer

For us God’s only son,
From childhood to the grave,
Was poorer than the humblest one
Of those he came to save.

Question XIV. What do you learn of the Future State of Happiness? (There are six verses.)

Answer

Oh, when the hours of life are past,
And death’s dark shade arrives at last,
It is not sleep—it is not rest—
‘Tis glory opening to the blest.

Channing's Address to the Sunday School Society

It was not long before the catechism as an educational method was harshly questioned. At a meeting of the Unitarian Sunday School Society, in the Federal Street Church in Boston, in October 1837, William Ellery Channing delivered an hour long address which not only blistered the ears of some of his hearers who found themselves accused, but set out the most comprehensive statement of the aims and methods of liberal religious education to appear up to that time. The catechism, Channing said, is "a skeleton, a dead letter, a petrification." Commenting on its effectiveness for young minds, he continued, "I do not think that so much harm is done by giving error to a child as by giving truth in lifeless form. Catechisms seldom enter the Sunday School but to darken and mislead it."

Channing's was the most comprehensive statement of a philosophy of Unitarian religious education in the whole 19th Century. In his address he applied his convictions about Unitarian Christianity to what he observed was the nature of children and their growth. He grounded his address by asserting that the Sunday School is founded on a four-dimensional faith: faith in the school, faith in God, faith in the child who is taught, and faith in Christianity. The most radical of Channing's principles was his faith in the child. He proposed that children had the capacity for improvement, worth, ability to distinguish right from wrong, and capability "for knowing and loving the good and the true, as having conscience to take the side of duty, as open to ingenuous motives for well doing and as created for knowledge, wisdom, piety, and disinterested love."

The portion of the address that has been remembered and used has been titled by its opening words; "The great end in religious instruction" was absolutely unique in its day. It is quoted as a responsive reading in *Singing the Living Tradition*. It is important to remember the context in which Channing presented it.

The great end in religious instruction, whether in the Sunday-school or family, is not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own; not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth; not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs; not to burden the memory, but to quicken and strengthen the power of thought; not to bind them by ineradicable prejudices to our particular sect or peculiar notions, but to prepare them for impartial conscientious judging of whatever subjects may, in the course of Providence, be offered to their decision; not to impose religion on them in the form of arbitrary rules, which rest on no foundation but our own word and will, but to awaken the consciousness, the moral discernment, so that they may discern and approve for themselves what is everlastingly true and good; not to tell them about God, but to help them to see and feel his love in all that he does within and around them; not to tell them of the dignity of Christ; but to open their inward eye to the beauty and greatness of his character; and to kindle aspirations after a kindred virtue. In a word, the great object of all schools is to awaken intellectual and moral life in the child. Life is the great thing to be sought in a human being. Hitherto, most religions and governments have been very much contrivances for extinguishing life in the human soul. Thanks to God, we see the dawning of a better day.

Channing's address was printed and widely read, but there is no evidence that anyone tried to apply it to the development of curriculum or to teaching methods, until well into the 20th Century.

What answers does Channing's address provide to Groome's foundational questions?

B. 1 (b).

Angus H. MacLean

On October 29, 1951, Angus H. MacLean, revered Universalist educator, gave an address entitled: *The Method is the Message* to the Universalist Sabbath School Union, meeting at the Arlington Street Church in Boston. A pamphlet by that title and based on the address, may be found in the *Reader*. Consider these excerpts:

The subject matter may be what you please at any time..., but since our methods communicate the values implicit in them, such matters as love, the ability to reason, the experience and appreciation of freedom, mutual tolerance and understanding, justice, etc., must be taught by being used all the time in all the classes and courses. If anything was ever worthy of being called the “core curriculum” this is.

Religious education is, for us, a creative conversation carried on between our children, ourselves and the life that surrounds us...It is an on-going adventure that has as its purpose the molding of a certain type of person...

This person, one who can think fully and act responsibly, is shaped not by theological dogmas but by ethical qualities...We want to create children who possess strong inner resources of courage and hope; who will be sensitive to, and appreciative of goodness and beauty, who will seek the truth through rational independent thought; who will form an intelligent and devoted attachment to the church; who will be acquainted with our universal religious heritage; and who will become persons of broad sympathies and deep compassion for all people.

As you consider these excerpts from the address, what do they suggest be incorporated into a Unitarian Universalist philosophy of religious education? To which of Groome’s foundational questions do they apply?

Session Four: Social Justice Visions for Religious Education

“Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are people who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the awful roar of its waters.”

- Frederick Douglas

Goals for This Session:

- To engage participants in exploring aspects of racial justice, including personal privilege, prejudice, and power; implications for a philosophy of religious education; and actions for themselves, the congregation, and the home
- To clarify their visions for racial justice
- To apply these to their ministry, religious education and personal lives

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard
- Chimes
- Chalice, if using one

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper and markers or chalk
- Candles and matches, if using chalice

Resources You Will Need:

- *Journey Toward Wholeness Sunday Morning Handbook*. Most recent edition. (online at www.uua.org)
- *Continuing the Journey, Report and Recommendations to the 2001 General Assembly from the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee* (available online at www.uua.org – search “journey”).
- Information about accessibility issues (search “Faith in Action”) and Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender issues (available online at www.uua.org – search “justice issues”)
- “For the Generations to Come,” by Susan Suchocki Brown, in *Essex Conversations*.
- “Choosing a Social Justice Project,” by Jacqui James, in the *Reader*.
- Anti-bias, multicultural and anti-racism materials for display

Advance Preparation:

- Write your own story of when you first became aware of prejudice and racism or prepare to present the one in the session plan.
- Prepare a resource list of anti-bias materials for display and distribution.

Session Plan:

Opening, with reading or meditation; chalice lighting optional**5 minutes**

Suggested: “Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are people who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the awful roar of its waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand...it never did and it never will. Find out what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice which will be imposed upon them. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.”—Frederick Douglass, *Singing the Living Tradition*, Boston: Beacon Press 1993.

Presentations and Activities**5 minutes**

1. Introduction: In 1992 the UUA General Assembly called the Association to take the next steps to “support a vision of a Unitarian Universalist faith which reflects the reality of a racially diverse and multicultural village.” You have read of that in the Report and Recommendations to the 1996 General Assembly titled *Journey Toward Wholeness and Continuing the Journey*. The 1996 report includes: a time line of two hundred years of our history dealing with racial and diversity issues; research on where Unitarian Universalists stand on racial and cultural diversity; an overview of the recommended Initiative; a continua of becoming an Anti-racist Multicultural UUA; a theology of anti-racism; a congregational reflection and action process guide; and much more. There is enough material under this broad umbrella to engage us for weeks, but this plan calls for us to explore three aspects of the process: Personal privilege, prejudice and power; Implications for a philosophy of religious education; and Actions for the congregation and home.

2. My Story (by Eugene B. Navias)**10 minutes**

It can be helpful for each of us to explore our own early years for times when we became aware of prejudice and the power and privilege that attach to it when it becomes institutionalized in society and law. To prime your own reflections, I will share memories that have come to me:

I was seven when Mother took my brother Bob and me to Washington. We craned our necks to see the top of the Washington Monument, were on our best behavior when greeted by the President’s children as we rolled eggs on the White House lawn, but above all we clamored to go to the Zoo. And so we did on Thursday. When we got to the gate we saw a sign which said “Thursday—Colored Only.” In fact the only people we saw going in were Negroes as we called them. The guard at the gate looked at us, crossed his arms as to bar the way and addressed Mother disapprovingly: “Lady, this is the niggers’ day, Thursday.” Mother said, “This is the only day my boys have to see the zoo. Can we come in?” “You can, if you want to go in with all them niggers,” he spat at us. “Yes, we do. If they don’t mind, we don’t either.” He let us in muttering something about “damned nigger lovers.” As soon as we were inside, we pelted our mother with questions. “Mommy, why did he call them niggers?” “Because he’s prejudiced and calls them by an ugly name.” “Mommy, why can’t they come in every day, like white people?” “Because

the zoo doesn't believe in being fair. There are a lot of unfair things that people do to Negroes." By that time we were at the lion house where we gawked at a huge daddy lion yawning and showing his teeth. The Negro children seemed to be just as impressed as we were. Prejudice, privilege, power—an unholy trinity. Prejudice against. Privilege unearned. Power over. Racial prejudice and the power to enforce it equal racism and are institutionalized in an evil alliance!

It was only a year later that I got another lesson when my mother lost her citizenship. Mother was born in Manhattan while Dad was born abroad of American citizens who sought their fortune in South Africa. When Dad decided to come to college in America, he was entitled to come as a citizen, as he was the son of citizens. Dad and Mother married, and then in 1936, the General Electric Company sent Dad to scientific conferences in Europe. When he applied for a passport, he found that his parents had stopped filing as citizens abroad, and he'd lost his citizenship. Since he had been born in Grodno, Poland, he could become naturalized. The astonishing thing was that my mother lost her citizenship, too. They had married when it was still the law that women took the citizenship of their husbands. "But, Mother," we wailed, "you were born in America; you've never left the country." "That's true," she said, "but it doesn't do me any good. I have no birth certificate, my birth isn't recorded in the records of New York, and all my family has died." "But, Mother, why did they make you take Dad's citizenship?" "Because for centuries, women had no rights; they couldn't vote; they couldn't own property; they belonged to their husbands." "Mommy, that's not fair!"

Prejudice, privilege, power—institutionalized in the laws of the land. Sexism ran rampant.

I was 25 when I discovered I was gay. I was already a fellowshipped UU minister, and serving as assistant in First Church, Cleveland. When I discovered my nature, I was both relieved and terrified, really terrified. I had no right to be a UU minister, no rights under the law, and I was a potential victim of the ugly things people do to despised minorities. I had watched other people be the butt of prejudice, privilege, and power. Now it was my turn. Prejudice, privilege, power—institutionalized in the laws of the church and the state. Institutionalized heterosexism.

3. Reflection and Sharing

30 minutes

Groups of Three: Instructions for participants: Take five minutes of companioned silence to reflect on your own personal experiences of prejudice, privilege, and power. Write down what comes to you. Identify those instances which were or can be institutionalized. When the chime sounds, you will have five minutes to share what you choose to in your small group

Whole Class. Instructions for participants: I invite you share what you discovered about prejudice, privilege, and power and its institutionalized applications from your own experience or that of your group.

Move the process along by saying something like, “and now someone from another group...”

4. Categories of the Privileged

15 minutes

Engage the group in building a list of categories of the privileged; that is, of traits, qualities, identities that provide favor. Suggest that the list is broad and deep and continue until you get a sizable number. Prime the pump to get started if the group has trouble with the question. Make two columns on easel paper or chalkboard with the words “Up and Over” as a heading on the left and the words “Down and Under” on the right. Ask for a category of privilege and next to it a word for those who do not enjoy privilege. Be sure to have an inclusive list, for example:

Up and Over

white people
temporarily abled persons
beautiful people
men
adults
educated persons
heterosexual

Down and Under

people of color
persons with disabilities
plain people
women
children
ignorant persons
bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender
persons

Ask participants to name categories to which they belong—and how it makes them feel to be there.

5. Moving to Your Congregation, or Setting

15 minutes

The UUA Principles affirm the worth and dignity of every person. Can you think of some categories of people or traits that people have, that you do not believe are valued or affirmed in the UUA or in congregations you have known. List people “Not Valued/Accepted.” A starter might be: “The Uneducated”. Actions speak louder than words; if your church is not accessible, then people with disabilities are not valued.

Ask if there are categories on the list that they would like to change. What would it take to effect the changes envisioned? List these thoughts next to the group they apply to. If time permits, ask the group to consider “How can Unitarian Universalism be a church for all people?” and “Are there some things we could do to make it more so?”

6. Goals and Implications

30 minutes

The UUA Multicultural and Anti-Racism Agendas have three major facets:

- To help Unitarian Universalism and Unitarian Universalist congregations become as inclusive of the diversity of the world as possible
- To help us as individuals, congregations, and denominational institutions to rid ourselves of personal and institutional racism
- To work in the world to lessen the oppression of bias and racism

Groups of Four: Instructions for participants: Look for implications of today's discussions for the philosophy and practice of Unitarian Universalist religious education. How should these visionary initiatives and our principles impact our philosophy of lifespan Unitarian Universalist religious education? Take ten minutes to discuss and record. Were there articles in *Essex Conversations* or other advance reading that spoke to your consideration of these questions? Each group should be ready to report at the sound of the chime.

Whole Class: Each group reports one implication they found. Record responses. (Ask groups not to repeat any previously reported.)

Groups of Four: How should these visions be implemented in the programs we offer, the service opportunities we arrange, the actions we take in lifespan religious education in our congregations? Take five minutes to brainstorm.

Whole Class: Each group reports.

Read this from Mark Morrison-Reed's address to the General Assembly in 1993: "Our history in regard to racial issues is brave enough to make you proud, tragic enough to make you cry, and inept enough to make you laugh once the anger passes. We also have a future. Today's task is to learn from what was and move on. To move on would mean creating a vision for the future. May concern for our faith and love for one another guide our efforts."

The UUA has created a vision called "Continuing the Journey Toward Wholeness." As ministers we are charged with implementing it through religious education and all the facets of ministry.

7. Reflective Writing

Questions for reflection: What was reconfirmed for you? What did you discover? What do you need to do now to grapple with this topic in yourself or in your ministry?

Assignments for Next Session

Reading: "Gabriel Moran's Theory of Religious Education Development," by Makaanah Elizabeth Morriss, in the *Reader*.

Students who have little knowledge of or experience with children may wish to read *Ages & Stages: A Parent's Guide to Normal Childhood Development* by Charles Shaefer and Teresa Foy DiFeronimo before this session.

Other: In groups of two or three, prepare presentations on the philosophy of one Unitarian Universalist religious educator. Schedule of presentations to be worked out with instructor.

Questions and issues to be addressed in student presentations:

What is the person's theological perspective?
What is her or his philosophy of religious education?
What program changes does she or he advocate?
What insights about religious education did you gain from this person?

Prepare questions for class discussion.
Presenters need to bring their own supplies.

Suggested list (not inclusive) of UU religious educators—if your class is interfaith, students should have the option of choosing persons from their own religious tradition:

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Baker
Rev. Dr. Hugo Hollerorth
Dr. Angus MacLean
Dr. Dorothy Spoerl
Rev. Sophia Lyon Fahs

Also, see the *Futures Committee Report*, *Stonehouse Conversations*, and *Essex Conversations* for names of additional Unitarian Universalist educators.

Closing

5 minutes

Suggested:

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then no person will be subject to another's will
And then all will be both rich and free and varied.
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of the many.
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth.
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

- Judy Chicago, *SLT*

Session Five: Developmental Theories for Religious Education

“Religious education development is the inner/outer journey that leads to the center where peace and justice reside.”

--Gabriel Moran

Goals for This Session:

- To learn about, or to revisit knowledge of, theories about human development with regard to religious education.
- To share their learnings (in groups of two or three) through presentations about Unitarian Universalist religious educators using the questions and issues outlined in the assignments section.

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, whiteboard, or chalkboard

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper, markers or chalk—as needed

Resources You Will Need:

- “Gabriel Moran’s Theory of Religious Education Development,” by Makaanah Elizabeth Morriss, in the *Reader*.
- **Optional:** *Ages & Stages: A Parent’s Guide to Normal Childhood Development* by Charles Shaefer and Teresa Foy DiFeronimo.
- Materials needed and criteria for class presentations.

Advance Preparation:

- Familiarize yourself with the religious educators being presented.
- Make sure that the assignments for this session are given in Sessions One or Two and that the order of student presentations is clearly set by Session Three.
- The number of presentations will depend on the number of students and whether they are divided into groups of two or three. Two students per educator will be a more feasible group size if the students do not live in close proximity to one another. Following their choice of a presenter (or co-presenters) you will need to plan a schedule and give it to the class immediately. You could choose to have the presentations in chronological order by religious educator. Depending on the number of students, you may have time for more conversation. Plan ahead to have presentations continue in later sessions.

Session Plan—Part 1:

Opening

5 minutes

A reading chosen and presented by a student.

Presentations and Activities

1. Child Development**30 minutes**

Divide students into three groups, one for early childhood, one for primary age children, and one for older elementary. Ask each group to brainstorm, calling on their personal knowledge and on the reading, about the developmental characteristics of each group. Suggest drawing an outline figure of a child and noting the characteristics on and around the outline. Allow 20 minutes for small groups, then post and discuss. What are the implications for religious education?

2. Youth Development**20 minutes**

Ask each participant to think of an experience when they were 13 or 14 years old and to jot down on paper some of the feelings surrounding it. Post this question: What was going on developmentally? Then do the same for the ages 15 or 16 and 18 or 19. Discuss. Suggest that there were dramatic changes during the teen years if this does not emerge in the conversation. What are the implications for religious education?

3. Adult Development**10 minutes**

Discuss: What issues and concerns of adult development should be taken into account in planning for adult religious education?

Session Plan—Part 2:

“Oh God, I thank you for the lanterns of my life.”

—Marian Wright Edelman

1. Religious Educator Reports and Discussion
minutes**one hour 30**

Three groups present their reports, each addressing the following questions and issues about the religious educator they are reporting on:

What is the person’s theological perspective?

What is her or his philosophy of religious education?

What program changes does she or he advocate?

What insights about religious education did you gain from this person?

and coming prepared with questions for class discussion.

4. Reflective Writing**5 minutes**

Ask participants to take a few minutes to write a response that completes one or more of the following sentences:

I learned ...

I discovered ...

I am curious about ...

Assignments for Next Session

Reading: *Educating Congregations*, by Charles Foster.

“Outside the Box,” by Susan Davison Archer and “Margin and Center,” by Tracey Robinson-Harris, in *Essex Conversations*.

Other: Bring copies of church newsletters you may have.

Closing

Story chosen and presented by a student.

5 minutes

Session Six: The Congregation as an Educating Community – Part I

**“The purpose of liberal religious education is to create
a learning community committed to the discovery of useable truth.”
--Richard Gilbert**

Goals for This Session:

- To introduce the concept of entire congregations as educating communities
- To provide specific input from the thinking of leaders in this area
- To provide an opportunity for reflection and discussion on students’ knowledge in this area, especially Charles Foster’s points
- To deepen understanding of ways in which students might help congregations move further in embracing and putting into place those ideas
- To continue with presentations on religious educators as needed

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper, chalk, markers—as needed

Resources You Will Need:

- *Educating Congregations*, by Charles Foster.
- “Outside the Box,” by Susan Davison Archer and “Margin and Center,” by Tracey Robinson-Harris, in *Essex Conversations*.
- **Optional:** *The Learning Congregation: A New Vision of Leadership* by Thomas R. Hawkins.
- *Intergenerational Religious Education*, by James W. White
- *Mapping Christian Education*, by Jack L. Seymour

Advance Preparation:

- Read or re-read material assigned to students, as well as *The Learning Congregation*, *Intergenerational Religious Education*, and *Mapping Christian Education*, if you choose
- Prepare overview from which to lecture
- Gather church newsletters
- If this is a group where shared leadership would work, and you are comfortable with it, invite one or two students to work with you to plan Sessions Six and Seven. This works best with enough time, and when you are all geographically close.

Session Plan:

Opening

5 minutes

Prepared by a student, or: “We learn to be faithful by reflecting on the brokenness and possibilities in the experiences of our lives, and the social contexts in which they emerge

in communities of care and mission that are seeking to be a part of hope-filled grace-filled, and inclusive future.”—Jack L. Seymour

Presentations and Activities

1. Check In/Review

10 minutes

Any issues or questions from last week that need to be brought up for further discussion.

2. The Congregation as Educating Community—An Overview 5 minutes or more

Begin with a question or two, such as: How does what you have read fit with what you already perceive, or would like to have happen?

Review major points in Charles Foster’s work:

Loss of corporate memory

Cultural captivity of church education—racism, classism, etc.

“Congregational life is shaped around the ways it remembers certain events.”

Movements in education of community around events—

Preparation, engagement, mutually critical reflection.

Building community

Best picture of the possibilities in a book written by one person.

Be prepared for student resistance to his emphasis on the heritage and on the Christian tradition. If this comes up, ask how our own heritage might be maintained into the present, or its identity or purpose altered for changing times. How could we bring in our history in more than just classroom settings?

Bring in ideas from *Essex* materials as appropriate and as time permits..

3. Exercises from Charles Foster

Divide class, depending on size, into groups of three or four. Do not have the students self select. In a class of 18 to 20, you may count off and get a good mix, but in a smaller class you need to be sure that students with more congregational experience are mixed together with those who have little or none of that experience on which to draw. Balance ages, too, if possible. If there is adequate space, even in other rooms, it helps if groups can spread out.

List first questions from sheets of adaptations from Charles Foster (appended) on blackboard or easel paper. Hand out these questions at the end of the session.

Individual Writing

10 minutes

This will enable students to get down the things that first occur to them.

Small Group Discussion

20 minutes

Discussion of the questions in small groups.

Whole Group Discussion

10 minutes

This is a good time to bring up Maria Harris' description of Elliot Eisner's explicit, implicit, and null curricula, if it has not come up in a previous class. If it has been discussed, remind students of this, and ask what they observe in congregations they know related to the topic of the congregation as an educating community that fits any of the categories.

Ask students to look at newsletters for examples of educating that might not be labeled as such, and that promote or impede the ideas of the educating congregation.

Take a few minutes to elicit brief comments about the topic and the class. Where could more time be spent? What will you explore further? Note concerns to be brought up next time.

Suggestions for Further Exploration: Observe a congregation they are familiar with where learning occurs, what activities or lack thereof promote or deter the concept of the educating congregation.

4. Reflective Writing

5. Presentations on Religious Educators as Needed

Assignments for Next Session:

Reading: Complete *Educating Congregations*, by Charles Foster.

Engaging in Transcendence, by William Myers and Barbara Myers.

Writing: Write two to three pages comparing and critiquing *Educating Congregations* or *Engaging in Transcendence* with the *Essex* readings.

Closing

Story chosen and presented by student or this reading from Jack L. Seymour:
“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.”

Addendum to Session Six

Questions to ask about your congregation as an educating community:

Taken from *Educating Congregations* by Charles R. Foster, with some editing and adapting by Judy Mannheim.

- I. What are the times and places in your congregation where people are engaged in what you would call “religious education?” Include classes, study groups, special programs, new member orientation, certain worship services, etc. Be specific.

How effective are these? And how do you decide what is effective?
- II. What events are central to your congregation’s life over the year? Calendar year; religious events, seasonal events’ occasional events; unexpected events this year or other years.
- III. Where in the life of the congregation—classes, worship, administration, social justice, service, fellowship setting - are children, youth, and/or adults encouraged to:
 - A. Look for religious meaning, make a connection to history, stories, hymn, art?
 - B. Listen for intentions?
 - C. Find clues as to ways they can respond to the call of their faith in the situation?
- IV. Go back to the list of events
 - A. Which events bind the generations?
 - B. Which create patterns of partnership among people typically separated from one another by age, gender, ethnicity, social class, occupation, or other factors?
 - C. Which nurture hospitality for strangers in and beyond the life of your congregation?
 - D. Which hinder the building of community among church members?
- V. Foster sees four education tasks in community building (which I have adapted to Unitarian Universalism):
 - A. Transmitting the vocabulary
 - B. Sharing the stories of faith
 - C. Nurturing interdependent relationships
 - D. Practicing a “faith-full” life

Take one event from the time line. Identify how and where the four educational tasks are found.

Session Seven: The Congregation as an Educating Community—Part II

**“Education empowers us to move from conversation to faithful living.”
--Seymour and Miller**

Goals for This Session (as in Session Six):

- To introduce the concept of entire congregations as educating communities
- To provide specific input from the thinking of leaders in this area
- To provide an opportunity for reflection and discussion on students’ knowledge in this area, especially Charles Foster’s points
- To deepen understanding of ways in which students might help congregations move further in embracing and putting into place these ideas
- To continue with presentations on religious educators as needed

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper, chalk, markers—as needed

Resources You Will Need:

- Complete *Educating Congregations*, by Charles Foster.
- *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers.

Advance Preparation:

- Read, or re-read material assigned
- Prepare outline from which to lecture

Session Plan:

Opening

5 minutes

Reading or brief meditation, chosen and presented by a student, or:
“One goal of the community approach to education is understanding the experiences of our lives and addressing them through working together as a group so as to continue creating a more whole and just community. We learn about faith and life as we work together in community.”—Robert T. O’Gorman

Presentation and Activities

1. Check In/Review

5 minutes

Collect papers. Deal with issues or questions from previous week. If some relate to material to be presented and discussed today, those can wait.

2. Review of Myers and Myers

15 minutes

William Myers and Barbara Myers are concerned especially with children and how they absorb adult culture. Again refer to the explicit, implicit, and null curricula. What messages do we as an educating congregation give our children?

Bring in ideas from James W. White (and Thomas R. Hawkins and Jack L. Seymour if you have read them). Elicit and discuss ideas for moving to a total learning community.

3. Exercise and Discussion (Ideas from Charles Foster) 45 minutes

Divide class into groups of three or four. Questions to discuss in small groups for no more than 15 minutes:

How do we prepare people

- a. To be part of the religious community?
- b. For our worship?
- c. For involvement in social justice work?
- d. For leadership?

More time may not be needed as most students will discover not much preparation does occur, especially in smaller congregations.

Large Group Discussion

Add further questions and concerns: Where could we do a better job?

Discuss differences in church cultures (what is expected) and in church size as it affects the number or types of things that can be done.

Comment briefly on class process and where students may seek further learning.

4. Reflective Writing

5 minutes

5. Presentations on Religious Educators as Needed

Assignments for Next Session

Reading: Chapter Ten *Christian Religious Education*, by Thomas Groome.

“The Teacher as Spiritual Guide” by Roberta M. Nelson, in *Essex Conversations*.

The Method is the Message by Angus MacLean, “How We Do What We Do in Religious Education” by Betty Jo Middleton, and “Community Story and Vision for Religious Education,” compiled by Betty Jo Middleton, all in the *Reader*.

Optional: *Sharing Faith*, by Thomas Groome for a more thorough discussion of shared praxis.

Closing

Brief reading, song or story.

Suggested:

“If the church is to have a vision that infuses our lives with hope for the future and that mobilizes our energies for faithful responding to the possibilities for humanity in that vision, we need a context where people might encounter the creative and redemptive activity of God at work, where the exploration of new images for God’s activity is affirmed, and where the exercise of the imagination is deliberately and intentionally nurtured.”—Charles R. Foster

Session Eight: Teaching and Learning in Liberal Religious Education – Part I

**“The method is the message.”
—Angus MacLean**

Goals for This Session:

- To learn about shared praxis and to design a lesson plan using this process
- To become familiar with several perspectives on teaching

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or white board
- Chime or bell for notifying participants of time

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper; chalk, markers—as needed
- Clay—enough for each person to have a piece the size of a tennis ball or larger

Resources You Will Need:

- **Reading:** Chapter 10 *Christian Religious Education*, by Thomas Groome.
- “The Teacher as Spiritual Guide” by Roberta M. Nelson, in *Essex Conversations*.
- *The Method is the Message* by Angus MacLean, “How We Do What We Do in Religious Education” by Betty Jo Middleton, and “Community Story and Vision for Religious Education,” compiled by Betty Jo Middleton, all in the *Reader*.
- **Optional:** *Sharing Faith*, by Thomas Groome for a more thorough discussion of shared praxis.

Advance Preparation:

- Read or re-read the required reading.
- Prepare presentation, including a circle drawing to illustrate Shared Praxis: divide the circle into six equal parts (like a pie). Label each section, beginning at the 3 o’clock position with Focus, and moving clockwise through the steps in the Shared Praxis model. (You may wish to draw this as you present, instead.)

Session Plan:

Opening, with reading or meditation; chalice lighting optional. 5 minutes

Selected and presented by a student, or: “Human beings have always made things. Potters still make pots, weavers still weave cloth, and we needn’t worry about being original. Even when we borrow from other traditions, our work will be ours. Don’t worry about making an absolutely new thing—something that has never existed. (We usually stumble on those things by accident in the pursuit of simpler goals.) We give form to the familiar.”—Corita Kent in *Learning by Heart. Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit*. New York: Bantam 1992.

Presentation and Activities

1. Check In 10 minutes

Two options:

For a small group

Invite each student to share briefly a thought about this week's reading, as well as any personal information that seems appropriate.

For a Large Group

In groups of four to six, invite each student to share briefly a thought about this week's reading, as well as any personal information that seems appropriate. Invite anyone who wishes to share with the whole group to do so.

2. Shared Praxis Model from Thomas Groome 25 minutes

Draw and label circle model (on easel paper, chalkboard, or white board) as you present if not prepared in advance.

Discussion in pairs or triads

5 minutes

Discussion in whole group

15 minutes

Say something like: "What are your questions?" to begin each discussion.

3. Lesson: Models of Religious Education, using Shared Praxis 75 minutes

Focus

5 minutes

Point out the final section of "How We Do What We Do" in the *Reader*

Naming your knowing

5 minutes

Invite students to say one thing they know about any of the structural models of religious education referred to in the paper—in one group if fewer than 12, in groups of six or so if larger.

Examples:

In my home church, each of the classes had a pew in the sanctuary for their meeting space, except for the primary class, which met in the choir loft and had a long table with two benches. Except for the primaries, everyone sat on a pew facing a teacher.

When I was in about first grade, all of our classes were open classrooms and we had lots of learning centers.

Reflecting on your knowing

5 minutes

Say something like: "As you reflect on the model you described, what about it appeals to you? Appalls or repels you? Leaves you unexcited? And why?" Invite responses of ten words or less.

Community Story and Vision**15 minutes**

Weave the “Community Story” in the *Reader* into a presentation of your own, or ask several students to read it aloud. (As always, be sure they are comfortable reading aloud to the group without prior preparation.) Begin by saying something like: “What is the Unitarian Universalist Story, and Vision, for religious education? Here are some strands of that Story.”

Story and story/Vision and vision**15 minutes**

Say something like: “How does this Story relate to your experience and knowledge about religious education? Take about one minute to jot down some thoughts, then form pairs and each person take three minutes to tell the other of your thoughts”. (Sound chime at each change in the activity.)

Say something like: “What Vision of religious education is suggested by this material? How does that relate to your vision?” (Follow same process as above.)

Faith response for the future**10 minutes**

As you think of the future, what model or models of religious education do you want to promote and affirm in our congregations? Ask for brief responses from those who wish to share.

3. Form-giving: Working with Clay**15 minutes**

Give each person a ball of clay to work with. Suggest that they close their eyes and play with the clay, discovering what they can do with it—stretching it, flattening it, and so on. Suggest that there is a form within the clay and ask them to find it. Once they feel they have found the form, suggest that they open their eyes and continue working with it.

4. Suggestions for further exploration

This activity comes from the work of Maria Harris. For further information, see *Teaching and Religious Imagination* (p. 34) or *Fashion Me a People* (p. 40).

5. Reflective Writing**5 minutes**

Questions for reflection: What did you discover in this process? Has your vision for religious education changed in any way? If so, how? What faith response do you have for the future?

Share aloud as appropriate and as time permits.

Assignments for Next Session

Reading: “Some Notes on Multiple Intelligences,” by Betty Jo Middleton and “Creative Midrash,” by Sherry H. Blumberg, in the *Reader*.

“It’s Elementary, My Friend. It’s Child’s Play,” by John Tolley, in *Essex Conversations*.

Optional: Unitarian Universalist curriculum materials.

Other: Each student is to prepare an outline for a lesson plan (any topic, for any age group), using Shared Praxis approach. If class is large, this may be done in teams.

Closing

Story and/or song selected and presented by a student.

Session Nine: Teaching and Learning in Liberal Religious Education— Part II

**“A creative midrash uses reflection and symbolism
to express a person’s feelings, thoughts, and responses to a text or a question.”
—Sherry H. Blumberg**

Goals for This Session:

- To lead a portion of the session, demonstrating their learnings about Shared Praxis.
- To look at religious education methods through the lens of Multiple Intelligences.
- To discuss and experience creative expression in religious education.

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or white board; equipment as needed for art activity

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Easel paper, different colors markers or chalk, so that each group can have a different color; art materials for the activity you have chosen. See suggestions below.

Resources You Will Need:

- “Some Notes on Multiple Intelligences,” by Betty Jo Middleton and “Creative Midrash,” by Sherry H. Blumberg, in the *Reader*.
- “It’s Elementary, My Friend. It’s Child’s Play,” by John Tolley, in *Essex Conversations*.
- **Optional:** *Play With Your Food* by Joost Elfers and Saxton Freyman, New York. Stewart, Tabori, and Chang 1997.
- **Leaders’ Guides** for religious education materials.

Advance Preparation:

- Read or re-read materials as described above
- Plan for creative expression activity and obtain needed equipment and materials.

Session Plan:

Opening

5 minutes

Reading or meditation (optional lighting of candle or chalice.) Suggested: “...a special concern of ours is the release of creativity, and the use of intuitive ideas and perceptions, in the areas of religious education. Yet so often in the liberal church we shy away from the intuitive act of faith, the use of imaginal modalities, and the creation of symbolic equivalents for experience.”—Dorothy Tilden Spoerl in *The Creative Process and Religious Education*. Boston. Unitarian Universalist Association 1964.

Presentations and Activities

1. Check In

5 minutes

2. Sharing of Students' Lesson Plans Using Praxis

15 minutes

If group is large, do this in groups of four, then have a general discussion. If six or fewer, stay in one group for the entire activity.

3. Multiple Intelligences

30 minutes

Go over material in the *Reader*. Discuss briefly. Break into groups of four (into pairs if group is small) and look in the leaders' guides for examples of activities that speak to the various intelligences. Designate space on chalkboard, white board, or posted easel paper with headings for each of the intelligences. Give each group a different color marker (or chalk) to note activities they found in each category. As a group, look at the categories. Which of the multiple intelligences are appealed to the most? The least? Not at all?

4. Using the Arts in Religious Education

45 minutes

Ask for examples of creative activities from various religious education programs. (Be prepared to suggest some, such as these: making a pumpkin house of light in *The Haunting House*; weaving activity in *We Believe*; sponge painting a mural in *The Adventures of God's Folk*; easel painting in New Beacon Series books, dramatic and musical activities.)

Engage in a creative activity, such as finger (or toe) painting or making creatures out of food. (Joost Elfers and Saxton Freyman use tomatoes, lemons, peppers, potatoes, black-eyed peas and other food materials to make expressive faces that give personality to fruits and vegetables.)

Another possibility: an hour-long workshop suggesting ways to accommodate various intelligences. The workshop "is intended to help people try different ways of learning...Leaders should plan for a minimum of one hour...The theme for the workshop depends on the interest of the leaders and the materials available." State the theme to participants and say something like, "After a brief presentation, you will be encouraged to take the theme and interpret and explore it through creative activities, such as painting, sculpting, dancing, or through reading, writing, or creating a dramatic presentation. You may work alone, or with others." Some suggested focus materials: a filmstrip showing different images of gods and goddesses, creation myths, a reading of the principles and sources of Unitarian Universalism. The workshop concludes with sharing of work done by participants. [From *First Steps. Planning for Adult Religious Education. A Process Guide* by Betty Jo Middleton, Greater Washington Religious Education Council 1994.]

5. Reflective Writing

5 minutes

How did you feel about the activity when it was proposed? While doing it? How do you feel about it now?

Be prepared to respond to comments/criticisms by students for whom this kind of educational practice is new.

Assignments for Next Session

5 minutes

Reading: Review Chapters Two, Five, and Eight in *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers

“Useable Truth,” by Richard Gilbert and “Spreading the Good News,” by Susan Harlow, in *Essex Conversations*.

Read or re-read *The Method is the Message*, by Angus MacLean, in the *Reader*.

Curriculum Mapping, online at the UUA website, www.uua.org, (a good source for curriculum evaluation).

Fashion Me a People, by Maria Harris.

Other: Answer for yourself (not to be turned in) “Questions for Musing...” in Exercise 1 at the end of Chapter Three of *Fashion Me a People*.

Prepare for Curriculum Presentations: In groups of two or three, prepare to teach a lesson from any UU curriculum.

Closing

5 minutes

Story or song, selected and presented by student.

Session Ten: Content and Curriculum Resources

**“The curriculum must take into account three forms:
the explicit curriculum, the implicit curriculum and the null curriculum.”
— Elliot Eisner, quoted by Maria Harris in *Fashion Me a People***

Goals for This Session:

- To explore the role of curriculum for all ages in a religious setting
- To articulate the explicit, implicit and null curriculum in the teaching environment

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard
- Chalice

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Candle, matches
- Easel paper, markers, chalk—as needed

Resources You Will Need:

- **Reading:** Review Chapters Two, Five, and Eight in *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers
- “Useable Truth,” by Richard Gilbert and “Spreading the Good News,” by Susan Harlow, in *Essex Conversations*.
- *The Method is the Message*, by Angus MacLean, in the *Reader*.
- Printed copy of material from *Curriculum Mapping*, online at the UUA website, www.uua.org.
- *Fashion Me a People*, by Maria Harris.

Advance Preparation:

- Prepare any presentation you plan to make
- Review materials and respond to them

Session Plan:

Opening

Reading, chosen and presented by a student.

Presentations and Activities

1. Exercise from *Fashion Me a People*

Divide students into small groups. Ask them to share some of their thinking in response to the questions asked at the end of Chapter 3 of *Fashion Me a People*.

Ask them to share some insights, questions, concerns from the small group with large group.

2. Identifying Forms of Curriculum

Divide students into three small groups. Have one group identify the explicit curriculum in this course, one the implicit curriculum in this course, one the null curriculum in this course.

3. Curriculum Presentations

one hour

Two groups of two or three students teach lessons from a curriculum guide. (Thirty minute presentations, followed by short reflection.)

4. Reflective Writing

Ask students to take a few minutes and respond to these questions: What did you discover? What did you learn, or relearn? What was a highlight for you?

Assignments for Next Session

Writing: Make some notes to yourself in response to the ideas presented in Chapter Two of *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers.

Other: Students who have not made curriculum presentations continue with preparation.

Closing

Story chosen and presented by student.

Addendum to Session Ten

Some Thoughts on Curriculum

Rev. Dr. Roberta M. Nelson

The *Merriam-Webster New Third International Dictionary* defines curriculum as:

1. The whole body of courses offered by an educational institution or one of its branches
2. Any particular body of courses set for various majors
3. All planned school activities including besides courses of study organized play, athletics, dramatic clubs, and home-room program
4. a. General education and breeding
b. A work schedule

The *New Third International* definition resonates with the goals of a liberal religious education program that enables individuals to explore information and a wide range of issues that impact their daily lives. The curriculum should be congruent with our liberal faith and the purposes and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Curriculum emerges from life experience and should be broad, wide and deep. The environment for such exploration must be safe, supportive and caring if we are to ask individuals to move beyond the known to the unknown, to share their hopes and dreams, their fears and anxieties, their joys and sorrows.

A key component in this curriculum is to be aware of what an individual is experiencing beyond the church community. We need to ask ourselves:

- What is happening at home, work, or school?
- What is a child experiencing with the family and other adults who care for him/her?
- What is going on in the wider community?
- What is going on in the world?
- What is the adult experiencing within his or her family, work, or caring community?

We also must be aware of and plan for the environment a person will experience on arrival at church:

- Is the church welcoming of people of all ages and abilities?
- Are the children included in events in the church community?
- Are the classrooms clean and inviting with appropriate furniture?
- Are the leaders there and prepared for the class?
- Is there an environment of open, honest communication?
- Is there a sharing of new ideas and different points of view?
- Does the environment encourage independent learning?
- Is there an awareness of the varieties of learning style?
- Is there sensitivity to a variety of family styles and cultural diversity?

- What questions are raised, what questions are ignored?
- What issues are addressed, what issues remain undisclosed?
- Do the teachers/leaders have the resources and support they need?
- Are the leaders open to the questions and concerns that might be raised?

Maria Harris in *Fashion Me a People* writes “It is the teacher who is at the heart of our program. It is the teacher who listens and hears, who affirms and challenges. It is the teacher who questions and encourages questioning. It is the teacher who is the spiritual guide.”

Written curriculum helps us plan for these learning styles but cannot encompass the wide range of needs that the church needs to address. As the definition implies curriculum is the sum total of materials and activities that we plan.

The curriculum we espouse invites us to discover for ourselves new meanings and understandings, new questions and doubts, new ideas and values. For us curriculum is a process by discovery and an openness to the question, “Who am I and who do I want to become?” This process of discovery is at the heart of our religious faith.

In our rush to teach children and adults our heritage and history we often forget that they were forged by women and men who dared to ask, to discover, to question and search. When Angus MacLean writes about the method being the message, we need to heed his advice if we want to address the needs of the individual and the needs of our hurting world.

Spiritual teaching and curriculum are partners for healing brokenness, supporting growth and inspiring action.

We must remember that when we invite someone to lead/teach in our churches that they are the most important piece of the curriculum and they need all our help and guidance to move beyond the “book.”

Session Eleven: Curriculum Presentations

**“The ongoing dynamic of transcendence suggests
a new understanding of curriculum.”**

— Barbara and William Myers in *Engaging in Transcendence*

Goals for This Session:

- To continue curriculum presentations
- To examine the criteria for curriculum choices
- To explore the meaning of the Myers’ statement, “The ongoing dynamic of transcendence suggests a new understanding of curriculum.”

Equipment You Will Need:

- Easel, chalkboard, or whiteboard

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Chalice or candle, matches, easel or white board

Resources You Will Need:

- *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers.
- Other materials for examining criteria for curriculum choices

Advance Preparation

- Review the assignments and your response to them.
- Read or re-read Chapter Two of *Engaging in Transcendence*, by William Myers and Barbara Myers.

Session Plan:

Opening

Reading by a student.

5 minutes

Presentation and Activities:

1. Continue Curriculum Presentations

one hour

In their second chapter, William Myers and Barbara Myers write, “The word transcend comes from the Latin *transcendere*, which literally means “to climb over.” The word transcendence points at the process of moving over, going beyond, across, or through real or imagined limits, obstacles, or boundaries. Lonergan urges us to befriend these inner desires of the heart for *transcendence* and to recognize the inner tugs they exert on us, even as they call us out of ourselves and into the world.”

2. Small Groups

15 minutes

In small groups, students explore their interpretation/meaning of the word transcendence and their own experiences of transcendence and the context of the experiences.

3. Whole Group

10 minutes

Each small group shares with other groups.

4. Small group curriculum presentations

one hour

Two or three 30-minute presentations followed by a short reflection.

5. Criteria for Choosing Materials

15 minutes

Divide class into six groups. Assign each group an age interval—young children, grades 1-3, grades 4-5, middle school, high school, adult—and have students list the criteria they would use for choosing age-appropriate curriculum.

In the large group, list some of the common criteria and some of the differences. Ask participants to share in the large group your thoughts and responses to the William Myers and Barbara Myers statement: “The ongoing dynamic of transcendence suggests a new understanding of curriculum.”

6. Reflective Writing

5 minutes

Take a few moments to write an insight or affirmation from this session

Assignment for Next Session:

Reading: “Draft. Common Worship—Why and How? The UUA Commission on Common Worship;” “Intergenerational Worship in Unitarian Universalist Communities” by Ginger Luke; “Intergenerational Worship Suggestions” by Kathie Davis Thomas; “Four Stories for Multigenerational Worship” by Diane Elliott, with an introduction by Eugene B. Navias, all from the *Reader*.

Optional: Material on the “Worship Web” at www.uua.org

Other: Each student to prepare a brief rationale for multigenerational worship after reading the assigned materials.

In small groups, prepare to present either a story for use in multigenerational worship or a brief multigenerational worship service.

You may wish to distribute a handout with the information in the Addendum, rather than just reading it.

Closing

Story chosen and presented by a student.

Addendum to Session Eleven

In order to be prepared for our next session, Multi-generational worship, we need to start to consider the nature and practice of worship in Unitarian Universalist congregations.

As we look around our congregations we find that their worship is united by many factors:

- Use of the hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Lighting a chalice at the beginning of the service
- Reading of an affirmation that starts with the words “Love is the spirit of this church”

Visitors sometimes report that despite all kinds of differences in the services, finding these familiar elements made them feel at home. Some of these differences are:

- Diversity of architectural and worship settings
- Wide range of musical resources, styles, and tastes
- Broad spectrum of “liturgy” from very informal to highly formal
- A spectrum of preaching styles

Multigenerational services have variety also. They may be held weekly, with the children sitting with their parents before going to their religious education programs; children coming into the service from classrooms, sitting on the floor and first rows of seats in the front, or held monthly, seasonally, or on holy days in the religious or church calendar; occur at family nights, or all church retreats or camps, be held periodically or seasonally occupying the entire service

Session Twelve: Multigenerational Worship

**“Children and elders, midlers and teens, Singles and doubles and in-betweens,
Strong eighty-fivers and street-wise sixteens. We are part of the family.
Greeters and shoppers, long time and new. Nobody here has a claim on a pew.
And whether we’re many or only a few. We are part of the family.
Come in, come in and sit down. You are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found. And we are a part of the family.”
—From a song by Jim Manley**

*We are grateful to James K. Manly for permission to use this excerpt from his words
to the song, “We Are Part of the Family” ©1983.*

Goals for This Session:

- To involve students through reading in a retrospective history of Unitarian Universalist worship, its theory and practice
- To engage students in considering rationales for and practices of multigenerational worship in Unitarian Universalist congregations
- To have students state their individual rationales for holding multigenerational worship services
- To provide groups of students with the experience of creating and taking part in a multigenerational service and evaluating services others present

Equipment You Will Need:

- Chalice
- Chime

Materials and Supplies You Will Need:

- Candle and matches
- 3x5 cards—four to six for each student

Resources You Will Need:

- “Draft. Common Worship—Why and How? The UUA Commission on Common Worship;” “Intergenerational Worship in Unitarian Universalist Communities” by Ginger Luke; “Intergenerational Worship Suggestions” by Kathie Davis Thomas; “Four Stories for Multigenerational Worship” by Diane Elliott, with an introduction by Eugene B. Navias, all from the *Reader*.
- **Optional:** material on Worship Web at www.uua.org.
- Display of Unitarian Universalist worship materials and resources
- At least one copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*

Advance Preparation:

- Read or re-read the assigned material

- Prepare a display of Unitarian Universalist worship materials and resources, appropriate children’s books, materials on intergenerational worship and the Worship Web at www.uua.org.

Session Plan:

Opening, with reading or meditation; chalice lighting optional

Suggested: “Worship is to center, to search, to be open to being apprehended by truth; to rejoice in new perceptions, to find comfort in community, to share self ... learning ... joy ... to share the world ... to leave centered.”—Anonymous, from a UUA workshop.

Presentations and Activities:

1. Point out display materials; ask for questions and comments on assigned reading.

2. Sharing of rationales for multigenerational worship.

Ask each student to share a brief rationale (no more than two or three sentences long) for multigenerational worship.

3. Sharing of worship stories and services.

Participants are asked to make notes on 3x5 cards as each group presents. After each group presents, take time for brief comments of appreciation (first) and concerns.

4. Plan Together

Make plans for your closing session, or continue with planning you may have begun earlier.

5. Reflective Writing

What is the most important thing I learned today? What do I need to do to prepare myself further to lead multigenerational worship?

Assignments for next session

Continue with presentations of worship services and stories

Turn in final paper, project, or portfolio

Other as needed to complete course

Closing:

Suggested: “We receive fragments of holiness, glimpses of eternity, brief moments of insight. Let us gather them up for the precious gifts that they are, and, renewed by their grace, move boldly into the unknown.”—Sarah Moores Campbell, *SLT*.

Session Thirteen: Closing Session

“The beginning of learning is the element of experiencing.”
—Robert L’H. Miller, in *The Methods of Religious Education* (UUA 1962)

Goals for This Session:

- To complete unfinished projects and presentations
- To give students an opportunity to ask questions
- To suggest resources and opportunities for further exploration of liberal religious education
- To celebrate the completion of the course

Equipment, Materials and Supplies, Resources Needed:

- This will depend on what you have planned together

Advance Preparation:

- As required by your plan for this session

Session Plan:

Opening

Reading chosen and presented by a student, or of your choosing.

Presentations and Activities

1. Collect final papers and any other outstanding work.

Be sure students know when and how they may get back any assignments turned in and learn their grades.

2. Worship Service Presentations

Groups continue as scheduled.

3. Other, as Planned

Suggestions for Further Exploration

Share ideas, resources, and opportunities you think might be fruitful for students to pursue in their future studies of liberal religious education. Students will have ideas to share as well.

Closing:

Celebrate!