



KINGSTON
UNITARIAN
FELLOWSHIP

RE TEACHER MODULES 2018-2019

WELCOME TEACHERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for contributing your time, energy and caring presence in our Religious Exploration (RE) program this year. Each year we depend on volunteers and Queen's University students like you to accompany our children and youth on their own search for truth and meaning.

The relationships we build, the covenants we share, and the way we are together can be as meaningful as the lessons learned. You don't have to "have all the answers". Indeed our goal is to help the children explore information, ask questions, and form their own answers.

These modules will provide you with important information that will enable you to participate in RE with confidence and enhance your experience.

Please let us know if you need help or further information. We're here to support you.

Kelli (RE Committee Chair) and Amy (RE Coordinator)

KUF RE TEACHERS

What are the essential qualities of a good RE teacher?

- **A love of children**
- **A sense of wonder about life**
- **Empathy and the ability to listen**
- **A positive attitude**
- **Self-awareness**
- **Ability to model and nurture curiosity and respect about the beliefs of others**
- **Good communication skills**

“The great end in Religious Education is not to stamp our minds upon the young, but to stir up their own. Not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly with their own...not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment. In a word, the great end is to awaken the soul, to excite and cherish spiritual life.”

— William Ellery Channing

KUF RE PHILOSOPHY

As Unitarians, we want to model theological diversity, so our young people will see and understand that many theological beliefs are welcome here. There are UU Christians, atheists, mystics, agnostics, pagans, humanists (and more) among us.

We are all constantly learning, and many Unitarians continue to evolve their beliefs throughout a lifetime. RE teachers should avoid absolute statements of belief (“God will answer your prayers,” “UUs don't believe in God,” etc.) and the misunderstanding of Unitarianism, “you can believe anything you want.” We embrace theological diversity, within the framework of our Principles and Sources.

KUF RE PHILOSOPHY

We recognize that the families that attend KUF are diverse in many ways. Children that attend KUF come from many different types: of family structures, economic backgrounds, racial and ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, and experiences. We as role models strive to be sensitive and respectful of this beautiful diversity. We aim to not make assumptions about the participants of our program. If you mistakenly make an assumption or misstep, use that as a learning opportunity.

PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES IN CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE

Principles

1. Each person is worthwhile.
2. Be kind in all you do.
3. We help each other learn.
4. And search for what is true.
5. All people have a say.
6. Work for a peaceful world.
7. The web of life's the way.

Sources

The tradition we share comes from many sources:

- The sense of wonder we all share.
- People whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.
- The wisdom of the world's religions.
- Jewish and Christian teachings.
- The use of reason and the discoveries of science.
- The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

SAFETY AND POLICIES: CPICs

- **RE teachers are required to have a Vulnerable Sector CPIC. Special guests or visitors are not required to have a CPIC, but are not allowed to be left alone with children or youth.**
- **Queen's students are required to have an updated Vulnerable Sector CPIC.**
- **Volunteers who do not have a Vulnerable Sector CPIC shall not be left alone with vulnerable people (children or youth under 18).**
- **CPICs must be renewed every five years.**
- **The original CPIC must be provided as this shows the police seal. KUF will cover the cost of the CPIC (\$25).**
- **Each year, following the receipt of a clear Vulnerable Sector CPIC, CPIC holders will sign a waiver certifying that they have not been convicted of a criminal offence since they obtained the CPIC or last signed a waiver, whichever is most recent.**

SAFETY AND POLICIES: SAFE CONGREGATIONS

- **All persons involved with teaching and caring for KUF children and youth *must* read and abide by the Safe Congregation Policies.**
- **Highlights of the Safe Congregations Policies**
 - **The respect for personal space and for appropriate levels of physical contact is vital to the creation and maintenance of safe space for all at KUF. For example, some children are not comfortable with hugs from adults whom they do not know well. Childcare workers must not rough-house with children.**
 - **The ratio of child care workers to children must be a minimum of one adult for every two infants/toddlers, and one adult for every four children over the age of two.**
 - **If we do not meet the required ratio, all children will either stay in the service or extra volunteers will be recruited to assist.**

SAFETY AND POLICIES: SAFE CONGREGATIONS

- **Highlights of Safe Congregations Policies Continued**
 - **Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for their child(ren). If a child is disruptive, the parent/guardian will be notified and the child will be returned to the parent/guardian.**
 - **Children under the age of 11 may not be left unsupervised. Once the Sunday Service is finished, parents are to collect their children (and sign them out on the sign out sheet).**
 - **No form of harassment will be tolerated.**
 - **No incident of child abuse will be tolerated.**
 - **Reports of child abuse will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with the best interests of the child, and in compliance with the laws of Canada and the Province of Ontario.**

SAFETY AND POLICIES: REGISTRATION

- **All families are asked to complete the annual RE registration form for their children, and to read and support the applicable policies.**
- **Parents/guardians are to ensure that the registration information is kept up-to-date, especially with respect to the emergency contact information, special needs, and allergy details.**
- **Only children who are registered in the KUF RE program are permitted to participate in off-site events, field trips, and sleepovers; however, exceptions may be made (e.g. for OWL session) with the approval of the RE Committee.**

SAFETY AND POLICIES: FIRE DRILLS

- Fire drills should occur several times throughout the year.
- In the event of a fire drill or actual fire, the lead teacher will instruct all children to line up quickly and quietly.
- The assistant teacher or Queen's student will use the sign in sheet to determine that all children are present.
- All people will exit through the RE kitchen and go through the door at the kitchen. They will then turn right to go out the east exit door.
- This door leads to stairs which everyone will go down together. Children with mobility issues will need to be carried down the stairs.
- Proceed safely through the parking lot to the area beside the parking lot with stones.
- Everyone should remain together with the group as attendance is checked and until we have been cleared to re-enter the building.

SAFETY AND POLICIES: SHOES AND COATS

- **Children should remove muddy, wet, or snowy boots and put them on the tray for shoes.**
- **They should hang their coats, sweaters, and outdoor gear on the hangers on the rack that is at their level.**

SAFETY AND POLICIES: INCIDENT REPORTS

- **If a physical, emotional, or sexual incident or significant property damage occurs at KUF, please see Amy to fill out an incident report form.**
- **This includes any time first aid is needed (bandaids, ice, or something more serious) and anything more serious.**
- **Allows parents/caregivers to be informed of injuries or incidents and for KUF to address any safety issues.**

SAFETY AND POLICIES: FIRST AID

- For minor injuries requiring minimal first aid there is a first aid box on top of the brown stand alone cupboard beside the kitchen and one inside the office on the shelf as you enter.
- Try to comfort the child and address the injury to the best of your ability.
- Wear gloves when dealing with any blood or bodily fluids.
- If you are not comfortable, get the child's parent/guardian from upstairs to assist.
- If you are able to comfort and care for the child, be sure to inform the parent/guardian about the incident when they come to pick up their child.
- If the injury requires more than first aid or demands a trip to the hospital, you must fill out an incident report form.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- **Practice self-care so you can be fully present.**
- **Rituals such as gathering into a circle, lighting the chalice, and sharing joys and sorrows are part of how we “do” faith, and help young people to know that it is time to settle down and be present, themselves. If you aren’t yet comfortable with these rituals, take some time to practice so that they come naturally.**
- **Get to know your fellow teachers and volunteers. We are a caring community. Communicate with each other and the RE team about how you feel things are going. Share your ideas. Let’s work together on challenges.**
- **Keep each other informed as needed about the health and well-being of the children and youth we serve. Speak to Amy, Kelli, or Rev. Beckett if you think someone needs more pastoral care than you are able to offer.**

KEY MESSAGE FOR PLANNING

“PLAN TIGHT; LEAD LOOSE.”

- **Be well prepared for a structured lesson, but be willing and able to let elements go if other things arise.**
- **While the curriculum is important, it's only part of the experience. Being in relationship with one another, accompanying each other on the journey, and bearing witness to young lives, matter more.**
- **Your role in planning involves reviewing the lesson scheduled for that day, making sure you understand all the elements, and reaching out to Amy if you have any questions or concerns. Amy and other volunteers will prepare all the materials.**

DISCIPLINE

- **The children will help decide on appropriate behaviour guidelines at the beginning of the year. Their ideas will be posted on a chart on the wall so they can be referred to.**
- **If a child needs time away from an activity, the Queen's students can help with an alternative activity or distraction.**
- **Have a check in at Council Circle.**
- **Use I messages. "I like the way you are listening." "I have trouble talking when you are running."**
- **Use positive messaging. "At KUF, the clay stays on the table." "We are going to finish the story before we use the paints."**
- **Consistency is key. Even if the guidelines are different than what you think is best or what you do at home, please ensure they are always followed.**

ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

Located on the first floor of our building, the RE space is an open concept design with spaces for everyone.

Nursery (infant to age 3): To the left of the main RE space is a small alcove designated as our nursery. This space offers a rocking chair, playpen, soft foam floor and toys appropriate for young infants. There is a change station in the first floor bathroom just off the RE space.

Parents/caregivers may choose to enter this space, close the gate and remain with their baby while watching the other RE programming. They may also choose to participate in the larger area with the older children. Parents/caregivers are welcome to leave their infants in the nursery with our Queen's Work-Study Students providing childcare.

CHILDREN'S RE (AGES 4-12)

Most of the children attending RE at KUF fall into this age category. This group uses the carpeted area as well as the tables and chairs and kitchen space.

We'll be using the Spirit of Adventure curriculum, designed to allow the children to learn about Unitarian Universalist principles, sources, and history in an active and fun way. The curriculum covers the following themes: sports, food, science, medicine, building, explorers, winter holidays, and the web of life.

This curriculum was initially written for children in grades 2-3. Slight variations to the activities may need to be made based on the children that are present.

SUNDAY ROUTINES - TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS

- Please review the lesson prior to teaching and discuss any questions or concerns with Amy or the RE committee.
- Plan to arrive early to do any needed set up (by 10:15 at the latest).
- Please wear your nametag and encourage the children to wear theirs.
- All the supplies you need for the activities will be supplied for you, unless other arrangements have been made.
- If you are delayed or unable to make it on a day you are scheduled to teach or assist, please contact Amy as soon as possible. You can text or call 613 264 6346 anytime, email re@kuf.ca, or communicate on the KUF RE Facebook page.
- Teachers and assistants should confirm that each child is present throughout the session.
- Snack (apple slices, crackers, cheese slices) and water are provided each week at the end of the session. Queen's students are responsible for preparing and cleaning up snack and ensuring there is enough snack for the following week.

SUNDAY ROUTINES - FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

- **Parents or caregivers must sign their children when they arrive at KUF and must sign them out when they pick them up after the service. A Queen's student will welcome children and families as they arrive and ask parents to sign their children in.**
- **The children attend service with the rest of the congregation upstairs. Welcome tables are located at the back of the sanctuary for families to sit together. Colouring pages and quiet toys are available.**
- **During service the children are led to the carpet at the front of the sanctuary for the time for all ages.**
- **After the time for all ages the children are "sung downstairs" led by the RE teacher and Queen's students. Parents are welcome to remain upstairs or join the children downstairs.**

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW - SHARING CIRCLE

- **The Sharing Circle is central to our RE experience. Sharing, reflecting and listening are important skills we'd like to cultivate with our children.**
- **In this curriculum, the sharing and reflecting comes at a later place in the morning than is typical. Research and observation has increasingly highlighted that the friendships that active children make do not immediately include intimate sharing. Disruption, teasing and fidgeting can be manifestations of the discomfort some children feel when sharing is artificially imposed before they are ready.**
- **This year, we will be engaging in active play at the beginning of the morning, then engaging in meaningful work through the group project.**
- **Later, Sharing Circle can be about reflecting on these shared experiences and what it means for each class member.**

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW - COUNTDOWN FOR QUIET

- Instead of hushing active children, ask them to finish what they are doing and join in a group countdown by simply starting a count.
- The first few times you may need to stop the countdown “20, 19, 18 ,17... Now’s the time to join in the Council Circle...16, 15 ,14...”
- As each child realizes what is happening, they too can add their voice and be part of the countdown. With lots of clean up, you may need to start at 50, 49, 48....
- Try a loud count sometimes, then change it to a whispered or a hiss to keep the tension palpable each time.
- Once the class members understand the countdown for quiet, a child may take on the responsibility of counting.
- You can try other techniques such as using the rain stick (in the music cupboard) if you prefer.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW - QUIETER OPTIONS

- RE groups are a mixture of active and less-active children. Not all children will enjoy the rough and tumble of the active games. Not all children will be able to partake in them.
- For the children who will feel better not being in the middle of the active games, there are quieter options suggested.
- The goal is to help each child able to contribute to the group in their own way.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW - THE PROJECT

- **Active children thrive on meaningful work.**
- **Being in charge of something important is a good way to direct the physicality and goal directed nature of an active child.**
- **Sometimes it's as simple as helping to fix and serve snack.**
- **In the curriculum, there is a suggested project for the group, after the active game.**
- **These projects are intended to help children develop leadership skills, take more responsibility in the fellowship setting and feel a valued part of the fellowship.**
- **We may choose to continue with one project week after week if the children are so inclined.**

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW - TAKE HOME PAGE

- **Take home pages give a summary of what was planned to be covered that day, so that parents can get more information about the session.**
- **These pages should be placed by the sign out sheet at the end of each session for parents/guardians to pick up as they gather their child(ren).**
- **Amy will prepare these each week.**

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW - THEMES

- **The curriculum is divided into several themes.**
- **Ideally the same people will teach a given theme (3-5 lessons) to provide continuity.**
- **The themes and their connection to Unitarian Universalism are:**
 - **Sports - Good sportsmanship and teamwork offer important parallels to the UU way of being in the world.**
 - **Medicine - Taking care of others and keeping each other safe. Learning the stories of Elizabeth Blackwell, Clara Barton and Albert Schweitzer.**
 - **Food - Using science to prepare food and nurturing others. Learning the stories of Fannie Farmer and Henry Bergh.**

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW - THEMES

- **Themes continued:**
 - **Winter Holidays - Being kind and generous. Learning the stories of Charles Dickens and James Pierpont.**
 - **Science - Using reason. Being curious. Learning the stories of Tim Berners-Lee, Maria Mitchell and Alexander Graham Bell.**
 - **Building - Being creative. Learning the stories of Frank Lloyd Wright, Daniel Chester French and Peter Cooper.**
 - **Exploring - Trying new things. Learning the stories of Vilhjamur Stefansson and N.C.Wyeth.**
 - **Web of Life - Living simply. Loving animals. Learning the stories of PT Barnum, Beatrix Potter and Henry David Thoreau.**

JUNIOR-SENIOR YOUTH GROUP

We recently graduated a large group of SY and so are happy to be combining the groups this year. We are also combining the advisors, and Emily and Cindy are thrilled to be working together again! The model will be a blend as well, incorporating the freestyle SY way of sharing snacks from home, doing Joys and Concerns, playing games, and doing spiritual, political, and/or philosophical activities frequently led by the youth, with the JY style of curriculum based learning. The curriculum this year is called "Be the Change." We may travel to some youth conferences this year too, TBA! Feel free to contact either Cindy Harvey harvey.zippo@gmail.com or Emily Cummins-Woods emilycumminswoods@gmail.com if you'd like to chat.