

Annual Report: Children's Faith Exploration Program

May 2024 – April 2025

I am happy to report that the Children's and Families Faith Exploration (CFE) Program has continued to thrive! Over the past year, our average weekly attendance has increased, with approximately 17-25 children ranging from ages 4 to 14 participating in Sunday programming. Families with one to four children regularly attend, and we continue to welcome new visitors and friends nearly every week.

Our team of adult volunteers has expanded, and we are grateful for their ongoing commitment. As the program grows and we offer multiple classes each Sunday, the need for additional volunteers remains vital. We are also supported by one paid childcare professional who assists on the first and third Sundays of each month.

One of the highlights of the year was the successful launch of the *Our Whole Lives* (OWL), a comprehensive sexuality education program, for 7th–9th graders. During the summer and fall, five adults completed extensive training to become certified OWL facilitators. They went on to guide six youth through 25 in-depth, two-hour sessions, creating a lasting educational experience. The level of commitment from families, youth, and facilitators was amazing.

The total cost to run the OWL program was \$3,600, which was provided by a combination of grant funding and the Children's Faith Exploration (CFE) budget. All participants and facilitators are grateful for the support of the UUSD community. We are incredibly proud of everyone who participated in the OWL program.

Monthly Curriculum Highlights

All lessons were sourced from the *Soul Matters* curriculum or thoughtfully created by me and our gifted members and friends who serve as CFE teachers/leaders. A sampling of this year's curriculum includes:

- **May** – Pluralism
- **June** – UU Traditions
- **July** – *Games Galore* and *Let's Explore Labyrinths* (2 Sundays)
- **August** – *Unraveling the Mystery of UU* and *Game Day Extravaganza* (2 Sundays)
- **September** – Yoga & Building a Lending Library (now installed near the playground)
- **October** – *Listen to Your Heart*, *Butterflies*, and *All Souls Day*
- **November** – Gifts of Generosity, Gratitude, and Mystery
- **December** – The Gift of Hope, *A Spaceditty's Christmas*, and Hanukkah Traditions
- **January** – The Stories and You
- **February** – Embracing the Practice of Inclusion
- **March** – The Practice of Trust
- **April** – Bursting with Joy!

Our CFE program is sustained by the spirit of our volunteers. The presence of our wider congregation in the classroom is always met with enthusiasm from the children, deepening intergenerational connections.

We have recently moved away from offering “CFE Lite” on some weekends. Given the consistent attendance, we now provide structured classes or activities nearly every Sunday. Children are always welcome to attend worship services with their families or participate in CFE classes. A reminder to check the calendar with updates to the schedule!

Family Covenant Group (FCG)

Our Family Covenant Group has also experienced exciting growth. This group gathers six times annually on Saturday evenings from 5–7 PM. The evening begins with a potluck-style dinner, followed by children joining in fun CFE activities and adults engaging in a facilitated small group discussion with Rev. Heather. Adult discussion topics are drawn from the *Soul Matters* Small Group Ministry curriculum.

FCG attendance has grown to 35 participants, supported by at least four adult volunteers per gathering. As always, we welcome additional support for setup and cleanup to make these events successful.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the coming year, our goals include creating a gathering space for our youth, revamping the nursery, and expanding programming. This summer we will launch our inaugural Still Water Summer Camp for 1st-8th graders! This fall, we are excited to offer the *Crossing Paths* curriculum to youth in grades 6–9, alongside age-appropriate programming for younger children.

We are a vibrant, multi-generational community committed to growing together in love and learning. As the Children’s Faith Exploration Director, I am honored to be part of this evolving ministry and look forward to continuing to nurture the spiritual growth of our children, youth, and families at UUSD.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Heather Hamilton
Children and Families Faith Exploration Director