

Responsibility of Children:

Our teachers welcome the responsibility of our children during Religious Education (RE) lessons. We lovingly return that responsibility to their parents and guardians before, during, and after the service, when RE lessons are not in session.

For Their Safety:

Children should not play outside without adult supervision.

Children and adults should never go beyond the benches or fence toward the water, for safety and wetland regulations.

Children should ALWAYS walk in the building, since running is a danger to themselves and other members.

Children should ask for adult help if they need something in the kitchen.

Children should use good manners before, during, and after the service, and be respectful of others.

Please remember, the greatest tool for creating a harmonious religious community is open and honest direct communication.

If a child (or an adult) behaves in dangerous or disruptive manner, communicate directly:

“Please **walk** when you are inside.”

“Please **use your inside voice.**”

Be kind and gentle, but honest.

If the behavior continues, please notify the Director of Lifespan Faith Development or the Minister with specifics of the situation.

About Us:

UUSD is a Welcoming Congregation, a completely volunteer program for UU congregations seeking to be inclusive toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning, GLBTQ, people.

UUSD is an accredited Green Sanctuary.

We are members of the UU Partner Church Council and are partners with the Unitarian Church in Tordatur, Transylvania, Romania where our Unitarian roots began in the sixteenth century.

Our Mission:

Nurture Spiritual Growth

Embrace Diversity

Work for Justice

Strive for a Loving World

Our Vision:

Creating a spiritual community embracing universal acceptance, justice, and compassion.

Please feel free to contact the Director of Lifespan Faith Development if you have any questions or comments:

Amber E. Peterson — 302-853-0846

DLFD@uussd.org

The text of this brochure was written by Andrea Lerner, First Unitarian Church, Orlando, FL, and revised for UUCT by Katie Culbert, further revised for UUSD in 2016.

A Guide for Adults Who

Worship With Children



Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware

30486 Lewes-Georgetown Highway
Lewes, DE 19958
Phone: 302-313-5838
<http://uussd.org>

The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds 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 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....

William Ellery Channing (1839)

WORSHIP IS:

A set-apart time to consider things of worth and value.

A time for the gathering of our church family.

A time to come home to ourselves.

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME HERE!

Children are full, important members of our faith community. Infants are equally welcome and whether they are nursing or bottle-fed, feeding during worship is fully acceptable in the service.

Just like adults, children learn by doing and experiencing firsthand. We believe it is important for children to participate in whole church worship.

Children may not understand everything that happens in a service, but we believe they absorb bits and pieces as well as a sense of being valued and welcome.

We also know that it is tough for children to sit still and quiet for long!

Thus, we offer suggestions to parents and the gathered congregation on the following pages, to ensure an enriching, encouraging and welcoming environment for all.

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS:

Get settled with your child(ren) during the Gathering Music, before the service. Consider sitting near the front--**children who can see what is happening feel more involved.** Remind children that once the Worship Associate opens the service, they should be quiet and respectful.

Review the order of service to help children understand what will be happening. Share the hymnal and order of service at your child's eye level. Follow words with your finger for younger readers or whisper each line before it is sung or read.

Feel free to whisper instructions to help children learn "worship etiquette." Have expectations and encourage children to behave appropriately during worship. For example, expect them to be quite and respectful during prayer and medication, and gently remind them of your expectations when they forget. During worship, feel free to take children out briefly as needed and then return to the service.

Talk about worship at home. Look for opportunities to relate either the sermon or the story to something that happens during the week. If your family experiences a significant event, support your children if they wish to share during the Joys and Sorrows portion of worship.

**YOU AND YOUR FAMILY
ARE IMPORTANT HERE!**

A MESSAGE TO THE CONGREGATION:

Greet children as well as adults. Be as intentional about knowing children's names as you are about knowing adults' names.

When children share, respond to them as participants in worship--not as performers.

Be understanding if parents need to take younger ones out and then return during worship.

Be patient with the learning process...it won't always be smooth, and all children do not learn at the same pace.

Remember the commitments we make when we dedicate a child during our Child Dedication. We dedicate ourselves to the **tenderness of understanding, the fairness of good care, and the wisdom of devotion.**

Open yourself not only to what you might be able to teach our children, but also to what you might be able to learn from them!

