



All Souls PARENT resource network

FEBRUARY 2011

FEBRUARY PARENTS' GUIDE TO OUR THEME-BASED MINISTRY AND EVENTS
ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH | WWW.ALLSOULSCHURCH.ORG | 918.743.2805 | 2952 SOUTH PEORIA, TULSA, OK 74114

THEME WORKSHOPS

1ST - 6TH GRADES

King John Sigismund: The Children will learn about the only king to be a Unitarian and his Edict of Torda which allowed the free practice of Unitarian and Trinitarian Christianity in Transylvania during the tumultuous Protestant Reformation. They will also study the value of religious equality and give thought to what they would do if they were King.

Movies: Each class will watch and discuss a movie this month that deals with authority – who has it and why – and how we know who's authority to trust.

Conflict Resolution: The classes will brainstorm and role play scenarios looking for the best outcome when in conflict with authority.

Rules vs. Principles: The classes explore living with rules that tell us what to do and principles that tell us how to think about what to do.



BECAUSE I SAID SO PARENTS AS RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

By Gabrielle Ricketts

“Because I said so” was the most frustrating answer I heard as a child. Maybe that is why when it comes to religion, I don’t want to tell my children what to believe. I used to think that sharing my beliefs with them would influence them too much, and I wanted them to have their own spiritual journey unencumbered by the conclusions I had already drawn or the questions I still had. I don’t think I am alone in this dilemma since this subject comes up in every parenting class I have attended at All Souls. Still the question remains, “What authority do I have over my children’s spirituality and religious practices? What religious life do I owe my children?”

I remember when I would have rather given the dreaded “sex talk” over the “religion talk,” mainly because I felt so ill-prepared for the latter. After all, I am still on my spiritual journey and I don’t have concrete answers for my kids (and

kids love black and white answers). Part of my fear was of getting it wrong. I saw the “religion talk” as one conversation instead of many questions about many themes, talks after many stories, answers after the many questions that they would ask.

As Parental Pride goeth before a fall, so did my misconception that I would control my children’s religious experience. Over the years many people have shared their beliefs with my kids. Often Religious ideas are presented in unexpected contexts: movies, valentine cards, funerals, and Christmas celebrations. A friend was driving with her daughter and a playmate, when from the backseat the playmate asked her daughter, “Do you have Jesus in your Heart?” I know the 5 year old friend was repeating what she had heard in her church and from her parents. But that is the point: her parents were having conversations about their beliefs with their daughter.

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THE STORY OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC



LONG, LONG AGO IN ABRAHAM'S TIME, IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THE PEOPLE NEEDED TO MAKE OFFERINGS TO GOD IN ORDER FOR GOD TO BE PLEASED AND IN RETURN, GOD WOULD MAKE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO THEM. SO IN THOSE DAYS A LONG, LONG, LONG TIME AGO, PEOPLE WOULD OFFER FOOD, SPICES, AND PLANTS, AND EVEN KILL ANIMALS OR SOMETIMES EVEN PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE MAKING PAYMENTS TO GOD SO THAT GOD WOULD NOT BE ANGRY WITH THEM. IT WAS A VERY DIFFERENT TIME, AND WE DON'T BELIEVE THAT ANY LONGER. WE BELIEVE SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT NOW.

But I want to tell you the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham had a very complicated relationship with God. God made many promises to Abraham over his life and for the most part Abraham did whatever he believed God asked him to do, no questions asked.

One day, the story goes, Abraham was told to take his son, Isaac, up to Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him as an offering, as payment so that Abraham would receive good fortune and power. So Abraham and Isaac climbed the mountain together, and when it was time to sacrifice Isaac, an Angel came to Abraham and said, "Don't lay a hand on the boy! It is clear to me you fear God."

When people fear God they do all kinds of crazy things to try to make God happy.

But this is a different time. Today and in this church, we believe that God is not to be feared. We do not believe in an angry God who needs payment to be happy. We believe God is Love and if God is Love, God does not need us to offer anything - not people or children, or even animals - as payment.

But we still make offerings. We give offerings in church as a religious people, not for payment of debts we owe or to bribe God to give us stuff. We give offerings of our gifts, of what we have, like money and time, because we are grateful for what we have and want to share it.

Statue of Abraham by Donatello (between 1408 and 1416). It is in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence.

STORY COMPREHENSION & QUESTIONS

- Why would someone make an offering today?
- What offering can you make?
- Discuss modern day forms of sacrifice for example tithing to the church, fasting, volunteering to help others all may be forms of forgoing self gratification to honor God or giving to the greater good by using your time or treasure.
- To some this is a story of blind faith and the root of religious fundamentalism. Discuss the ways a single story can be looked at in greatly divergent and even opposing ways.
- For children of appropriate age, discuss historical and present day events where people, leaders, or governments kill or imprison in the name of religion. Distinctions should be made between people making bad choices in the name of their religion and the religion itself.



DINNER TABLE DISCUSSION

QUESTIONING AUTHORITY: RULES VS. PRINCIPLES

A RULE is a COMMAND that tells you what to do, while a PRINCIPLE is an IDEA that tells you how to think about what to do. Rules are not supposed to be broken, but principles can be broken . . . by a more important principle. What are your principles (the ideas that guide your behavior)?

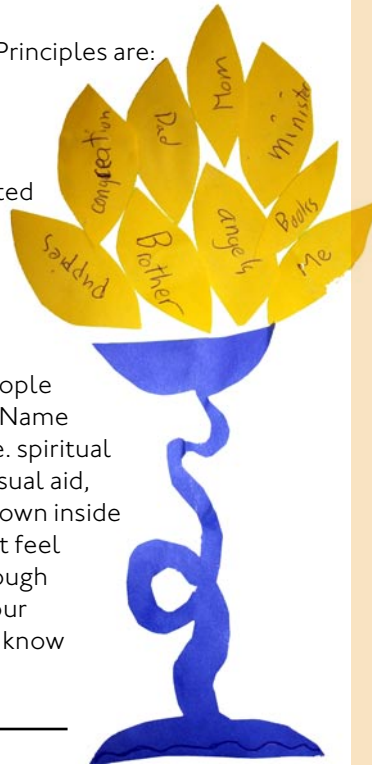
At All Souls the Children's Religious Education Principles are:

- Do no harm in word or deed.
- Respect yourself and all others.
- Everyone gets to play.

A Religious Authority is someone who is respected for knowing what is right and wrong. How do you decide if someone is worthy to be a religious authority?

CIRCLE OF TRUST

Who is your religious authority? Who are the people in your life to whom you can look for guidance? Name different situations for which you need advice i.e. spiritual practices, discrimination, moral choices. For a visual aid, draw a chalice and write these people's names down inside the chalice. Parental note: Your children may not feel comfortable discussing all circumstances and tough discussions with you. Please consider helping your children build a circle of trust – people who you know will give them good advice in your absence.



UU FAMILY VALUES

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE ARE INTENTIONALLY SUBVERSIVE TO YOUR FAMILY'S VALUES?

One of the circumstances which drive All Souls parents to Spiritual Parenting classes is dealing with friends, family and loved ones who do not share our beliefs or values. Some family members are down right hostile to values we may be trying to instill in our children. These values may include religion, politics, vegetarianism, immersion schooling, holistic medicine, and many other choices. There are few people who see eye to eye on everything, but what do you do when the people you love are intentionally subversive to the values of your family?

Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister at All Souls, says, "The best thing you can do is to not dehumanize the other people and to stand firm in front of your children about what you DO believe. For example 'that is their belief... we believe ...' or 'That is what their church teaches ... ours teaches ...' Kids can handle the concept of difference. If you have tried directly speaking to them (or speaking to your children in front of them) and they continue to be subversive, then you should consider limiting contact with them and explaining to them and your children why you are making that choice."

SPIRITUAL FAMILY PRACTICE

for Religious Authority

FOLLOW THE LEADER GAME

Play a modified version of follow the leader. The game is played two times.

The first time is a blind walk. Everyone holds on to a long rope, make sure everyone has room to hold the rope and walk at the same time. Everyone but the Leader closes their eyes. No one is allowed to talk. The leader takes everyone around the house to a destination only the leader knows.

The second time is different. Everyone keeps their eyes open. The leader tells everyone where they are going. Along the way the leader points out things that might be dangerous or detours in their route. Anyone can ask questions as long as they take turns.

After the game, choose which game you prefer and why. Ask how this game was like being a leader and a follower at other times your life?

ALLOW LEADERSHIP

Encourage responsible leaders in your family by allowing children to choose a family activity or project, research it, create a budget and shopping list, and lead the activity for the whole family. Parents are encouraged to relinquish their roles of authority to the leader of the activity and everyone tries on the role of being a good follower. Try to avoid complete disaster, but allow natural consequences to occur. Allowing children to see that with "great power comes great responsibility."

RESOURCES

BOOKS



Maybe Yes, Maybe No: A Guide for Young Skeptics by Dan Barker

Maybe Right, Maybe Wrong: A Guide for Young Thinkers
by Dan Barker

Raising Free Thinkers: A Practical Guide to Parenting Beyond
Belief by Dale McGowan et al.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin by Robert Browning

What is the “music” that would make you follow blindly. Is it money, security, popularity? Discuss what you owe yourself, what kind of checks can you have on the people you choose to follow? Look at the deal citizens made with the Pied Piper. How does desperation and fear lead people to blindly accept bad leaders?

Stone Soup, traditional

How does a community come together when times are tough and everyone is hungry? Dishonest visitors create unintentional consequences when they bring towns people together to make soup out of stones.

Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss, book and movie

Horton becomes his own authority when he trusts his own voice and a little voice he hears on a flower. He is willing to stand against authority threatening to put him in jail for protecting the speck.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix by J.K. Rowling, book and movie

What choices do Harry Potter and the students and teachers of Hogwarts make when the Wizard Magistry tries to cover up You-Know-Who’s return? What is the consequence of ignoring evil? What is the difference between embracing evil and not acting against it? Are there parallels in history?

How to Talk so Your Kids will Listen and How to Listen so your Kids will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Parent resources for changing interactions with your children from persuading them to act as you want them to to solving problems for themselves by developing their own conscious and moral authority.

MOVIES

HAPPY FEET

Discuss how the older bird council made rules that didn’t make room for Mumble’s talent. What is the role tradition plays in society or faith vs. changing to accommodate new challenges and realities.



MATILDA BY ROALD DAHL (book and movie)

Raises questions of authority and when do you follow your own path. How did Matilda choose her teacher for guidance?

KARATE KID AND KUNG FU PANDA

Discuss the relationship between the Sensei and the students. Compare and contrast the differences between a good teacher, one who has the best interest of the student and the community, and a manipulative teacher who is out for his or her own gains. What are the rules each “master” creates for his students?



UU TRANSLATOR

The UU translator builds a vocabulary for the members of All Souls allowing a dialogue with each other and people of different faiths.

HELP US BUILD A
RESOURCE LIBRARY
FOR PARENTS.

PLEASE DONATE BOOKS
OR VIDEOS OF THE RE-
SOURCE ABOVE TO
START A LIBRARY. PAR-
ENTS WILL BE ABLE TO
CHECK OUT RESOURC-
ES CORRESPONDING TO
EACH MONTH’S THEME.

"Because I Said So" continued from page 1

Last year there was a conversation among some All Souls parents about a teacher who had said "God loves you" to her students. The conversation centered on the statement being inappropriate in the classroom (with which I agree) and what the parent should say to the teacher or principal. As the conversation progressed, all I could think is that I need to prepare my child for the world, because there is no way I can prepare the world for my child.

There have been times my children have been told things I don't believe, and I'm sure there will be many more. As they grow up, I look forward to my kids being exposed to many ideas about God and religious practice, and try many ways to develop their spirituality and find the Holy. They will do this not only because they live in a diverse world, but because this type of exploration is the basis of the All Souls Children's Religious Education program; it is a rite of passage at All Souls. Every time I attend the annual Coming of Age Service when the 9th graders read their statements of belief or Youth Sunday when the seniors give their sermons, I am reminded that a comprehensive religious education is the best way to encourage my children to think for themselves. And I will give them my thoughts on religion and spirituality without worry, because, really, when has "Because I said so!" ever worked to get a kid to believe anything?

RESCHEDULED:



MUMS EIGHTH ANNUAL
Sweetheart Ball

Monday
FEBRUARY 21 at 5:30 pm

*Family Fun in a
prom style atmosphere!*

\$25 TICKETS INCLUDE DINNER FOR ONE CHILD & ONE ADULT
& A COMMEMORATIVE PHOTO.
EACH ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER IS \$5 WITH A FAMILY MAXIMUM OF \$40.
INFANTS ARE FREE.
RESERVATIONS CAN BE MADE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 918-605-5354.

LITTLE ANSWERS TO BIG QUESTIONS

At our church, can we believe anything we want?

I have heard it many times when All Souls members are asked what do you believe at your church? The mistaken response is "anything you want." I believe the misconception comes from All Souls having a covenant instead of a creed. Even though Unitarian Universalism is firmly planted in Judeo-Christian heritage, we do not require members to make a common statement of faith as do many religions. Because we covenant "to seek the truth in love and to help one another," many diverse sets of beliefs are able to respectfully worship together. If you attend All Souls regularly, you will meet Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Agnostics, Humanist, and Atheist just to name a few. We regularly state that everyone is welcome in God's love, and we value diversity as a necessary component of growing theologically. This diversity is inspiring and can be confusing. At All Souls, members are invited to worship, meditate, sing, and question in community. Our Church community provides a moral safety net for our beliefs and faith practices.

Answer

No. At All Souls, each person has their own understanding of God or the divine guided by what speaks most profoundly to their mind, heart, and conscious. Our church members gather in covenant, promising to be in community to live out our values and to seek the truth in love.

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CHANNING'S CHILDREN

Our pre-school class celebrates the Chinese New Year and Valentines Day and becomes more aware of their ability to express themselves through questions and more adept at communication through asking and answering questions.

KINDERGARTEN

The kindergarten class celebrates Valentines Day and works on their class chalice.

7TH GRADE

The seventh grade visits the Tam Bao Buddhist Temple and practices Buddhist meditation.

8TH GRADE

The eighth grade studies at early Christianity and it's codification into the Orthodox and Catholic religions.

Redemption Freedom Mercy Redemption Freedom Mercy Redemption Freedom Mercy Redemption Freedom Mercy

Dinner & Themes Discussion

March - *Redemption* April - *Freedom* May - *Mercy*

Join Rev. Marlin for dinner, and gain an overview of All Souls' Spring themes and how they relate to our Children's Religious Education program.

Wednesday, Feb. 23, 5:30 pm in the Alliance Room
Wednesday Connections Dinner: \$8

Redemption Freedom Mercy Redemption Freedom Mercy Redemption Freedom Mercy



SPIRITUAL EXPRESSIONS

Our Spiritual Expressions classes occur each Sunday that there is Children's Programming from Noon to 12:45 pm. If you would like to volunteer to assist in one of these classes, please contact Shannon Boston, Children's Religious Education Administrator, at sboston@AllSoulsChurch.org or 743-2805, ext. 321.

Kindergarten – Yoga with R.E.C.E.S.S. Instructor Dian Trompler

1st grade – Drama with Toni Willis

2nd grade – Art with Nancy Parke

3rd grades – Service with Doug Fishback and Janet Williamson

4th grade – Ceramics with Kristin Miller

5th grade – Yoga with R.E.C.E.S.S. Instructor with Natasha Bogdanova

6th grade – Art with Brigid Kelley

7th grade – Our Whole Lives Sexual Education

8th grade – Mosaic Chalice with Bill Westcott



CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The aim of Religious Education at All Souls is to foster the lifelong exploration of religious thought and values through a program that promotes spiritual development by means of free inquiry, mutual respect and responsible behavior. All Souls Children's Religious Education (CRE) is a cooperative church school program that supports families by nurturing hearts, minds and souls. A carefully planned curriculum encompasses exposure to our Jewish and Christian heritage, World Religions, Unitarianism and Universalism, and the world and our place in it. There is no fee associated with our Children's Program, but we do expect our parents to pledge to the church's operating fund and to participate in the program in some way during the year.

EACH SUNDAY OUR CHILDREN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN FOUR COMPONENTS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

- **10-11:15 am Core Curriculum** | Channing's Children (pre-school) and Kindergarten classes learn about our church and the overarching concept that God is love. In grades one-six, Guides work with the children throughout the year on character- and community-building, and guest facilitators lead workshops which explain, personify, and creatively and artistically articulate the monthly, church-wide theme in a way that is accessible to children and allows them to explore and stretch their spiritual and intellectual bounds. The workshops are based in Bible literacy and engage multiple intelligences. Please check the bulletin boards in the hallway each week for room assignments and to pick up name tag buttons. Our seventh grade concentrates on Eastern World Religions and eighth grade concentrates on the Abrahamic faiths.
- **11:15-11:35am Worship** | Our Children, pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, have their own worship service every Sunday that they do not worship with the adults in the Sanctuary. This is a special time when our ministers and carefully selected lay leaders provide an age-appropriate worship experience that mirrors the worship service that the adults experience in the Sanctuary. Along with Children's Chapel, seventh and eighth graders add to their worship repertoire by visiting other houses of worship and creating their own worship.
- **11:35am-12:00 Community Building** | All of the classes have the opportunity to play and socialize in mixed-age groups and enjoy a healthy snack.
- **12:00-12:45pm Spiritual Expressions** | Using visual arts, drama, yoga and music, the children explore the monthly themes with professional artists, further deepening their understanding of our themes and values. (Pre-kindergarten classes repeat the first hour's activities.)

Our church school session extends from Homecoming Sunday in September through May with a variety of educational opportunities for children. During the summer months, CRE offers a preschool class and a mixed-age programming (kindergarten – 5th grade and 6th – 9th grades) during the church services.

PARENT RESOURCE NETWORK

All Souls offers families of all kinds a loving place in which we can shape our beliefs, celebrate our discoveries, and live out our values. Our paths may be diverse, yet we share the journey.

All Souls Parent Resource Network is committed to providing programs and resources to inspire this journey, as individuals and as families.

Parents are the primary religious educators for every child. Drawing on the Children's Religious Education Curriculum and our Theme based ministry, the Parent Resource Network publishes a parent's guide to share each month's theme, stories and values.

Parents assure the health and well being of every child. Throughout the year, the Parent Resource Network working with Adult Religious Education, childcare experts, church groups, and community leaders will present events intended to address a wide variety of parenting topics and celebrate UU values.

The parents' guide will also communicate classes, events and activities especially designed for families, parents and children.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 6

- Normal Sunday Schedule with Story for All Ages

FEBRUARY 13

- Normal Sunday Schedule
- 12:45 pm 7th and 8th grade Youth Group

FEBRUARY 16

- 7:00 pm Evening MUMs, childcare provided

FEBRUARY 18

- 6:30 pm Parents' Night Out*

FEBRUARY 20

- Normal Sunday Schedule
- 12:45 pm 6th grade Youth Group

FEBRUARY 21

- 5:30-7:30 MUMs Sweet Heart Ball



FEBRUARY 23

- 5:30-6:30 pm Dinner and Theme Discussion with Senior Minister, Marlin Lavanhar, childcare provided. Dinner \$8.

FEBRUARY 24

- 11:30-1:00 pm MUMs potluck. Childcare is available.

FEBRUARY 27

- Youth Sunday
- 12:45 pm 7th and 8th grade Youth Group

* To reserve Childcare, contact Jean Kline at ChildCareCoordinator@AllSoulsChurch.org

FOR QUESTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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