

Life Span Religious Education 5 Year Planning Team Report

Preface: Exploring religious truth, meaning and experience is central to Unitarian Universalist faith, and faith development is central to our liberal religious education. In communities and as individuals we seek lives of meaning anchored by values and a commitment to promote principles of justice, love, trust, safety, tolerance and encouragement. We want to deepen in spirit and nurture our souls; we strive to contribute to and shape the wider world for the greater good. We recognize that we are part of an interdependent web of life.

Foothills Unitarian Church would like to incorporate well integrated Unitarian Universalist religious education curricula which are designed to support the needs of individuals at all stages of growth and faith maturity. Curricula are available for developing and deepening our faith; understanding our Unitarian Universalist heritage and identity; exploring Jewish and Christian heritage, from which we draw our roots; studying world religions and their traditions; learning about multiculturalism and the ways in which we can develop anti-oppressive anti-racist identities in our selves and others; and social justice, which undergirds our philosophy of how our faith is lived out in the world.

RE Life Stages: For purposes of better understanding the varying needs of our congregation, the team used the following life span categories. Of particular help was the use of the terms Explorers, Pioneers and Settlers presented at the UUA Large Church Meeting. It attempts to align young adults more by life stage or maturity level rather than a specific age. We felt this was significantly better than trying to address “Young Adults”, ages 18-35, as a single group. Similarly, we broke out Adults into categories based upon feedback from the neighborhood meetings. While the programming may appeal to multiple groups, there appear to be some unique needs in some life stages which we need to better understand.

1. Birth→Pre-kindergarten (0~4 years)
2. Pre-Kindergarten→5th grade (~5-10 years)
3. Middle School (~11-13years)
4. Youth (~14-18 years)
5. Explorers (~19-23 years – post high-school/college age, may be in school or working)
6. Pioneers (~23-28 years – more mature, post under-grad or early career)
7. Settlers (~28-35 years – establishing career, may be married without children)
8. Adults with younger children (pre-high school)
9. Adults with children in high school/youth programming
10. Empty Nesters (mid/late career couples who most likely have adult children and perhaps young grandchildren)
11. Single Adults (mid/late career individuals who may be divorced or widowed, may also be “empty nesters”)
12. Seniors (Retired individuals or couples who may have health issues)

OPPORTUNITIES	5 YEAR GOALS	SHORT-TERM GOALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare for all church-related activities and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire a PT childcare coordinator, eliminating the need for each activity/event coordinator from having to do this task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit a team of volunteers who will coordinate all childcare needs for church-sponsored events and activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life-Span OWL (Our Whole Lives) Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide OWL curricula for grades K-1, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, grades 10-12, young adults, and adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer Owl for grades K-8 Explore offering OWL for high school and adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for life transitions. This is an area that is can best be addressed by ministerial resources, not religious education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure we have sufficient ministerial resources to provide small group ministry and to provide support for members of all ages facing life transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask existing ministerial resources to provide more support for life transitions and small group ministry as time permits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure coordination and transition support between the various life stages RE programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Span RE Council in place to provide oversight for entire RE program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid staff and volunteer coordinators to meet on a regular basis to provide more continuity among programs and life stages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several members have difficulty attending Adult Enrichment programs in the evenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide sufficient staffing to address the varying needs of adults with young children through seniors including day-time and night-time programs, activities, and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an survey to better understand specific needs by life stage Recruit volunteers to provide transportation for those unable to drive to evening programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our biggest shortcoming is addressing the needs of Youth through Young Adult (See more detail below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire a Young Adult Minister to guide and coordinate the religious activities of this age span and conduct weekly worship services Paid staff for each life stage Weekly young adult worship service Recognized CSU Group Active group and program for Pioneers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide limited ministerial presence/support for youth & young adults with existing resources Conduct a needs assessment for all young adult ages (18-35)

Specific Recommendations for Youth - Settlers:

Life Span Category	Long-Term Goals	Short-Term Goals
Youth (High School Age ~14-18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More worship and music • Expanded staff hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YRUU bridging follow-up • Ministerial Support
Explorers (Post high-school/ college age, may be in school or working ~19-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congregation committed to offering UU programming to this age group • Official CSU group recognition/presence on campus • Paid Campus Outreach Minister or Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start core group • YRUU bridging follow-up • Paid and/or volunteer coordinator • Worship component • Ministerial presence or trained lay leaders • Place to meet
Pioneers (More mature, post under-grad or early career ~24-28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active group and program • Ministerial support • Worship meeting place • Paid staff member/minister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment to understand how to reach this age group • Volunteer coordinator to ensure there is a contact
Settlers (Establishing a career, may be married without children ~28-35)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active group • Programming specific to their needs • Ministerial Support • Worship meeting space • Paid staff member/minister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate current energy • Continue meeting through summer • Assessment as to how to better meet their needs • Volunteer and/or paid coordinator

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