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Lifespan Religious Education Handbook

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Updated August 2007

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From Your LRE Committee

Lifespan Religious Education is designed to be just that – a religious education experience for all ages, addressing the individual spiritual, emotional, social and educational needs of all of our congregants.

For our youth, we provide learning experiences from a variety of curricular material provided by the Unitarian Universalist Association, social opportunities in the form of field trips, sleepovers, monthly Dungeons & Dragons (role playing game) and Family Game Night, and other special events. All of our programs are highly interactive, providing opportunities for questions, discussions, and the sharing of ideas and insights and feelings. Our children are an integral part of Spirit of Life UU and are welcomed at all levels of church life, from our classes, to our services to our social times together in Circle Suppers, Pot Lucks, and Game Nights, and in a variety of stewardship opportunities from helping care for our very youngest through our Jr. Nursery Attendant program, to helping with church beautification and “greening” efforts.

For our adult members, spiritual growth and learning experiences occur in the form of services, our Sunday Morning Perspectives adult discussion program, special classes and workshops, our Book Club, Parenting Support groups, volunteer opportunities and our many social get-togethers. As with our youth programs, our adult programs are highly interactive, seeking and celebrating inquiry and insight from all our participants.

This handbook is designed with you – a deeply valued and appreciated member of our Spirit of Life UU family -- in mind, to help familiarize you with our program, guide you through policies and procedures, and to help you connect with those who want to make your religious experience at Spirit of Life a rich and rewarding one. We welcome everyone’s participation at all levels of our programs, and always invite new ideas, suggestions and comments about programs and services.

In our Lifespan Religious Education program, our congregation is our curriculum.

Thank you for making our shared church experience a rich and rewarding one!

Warmest REgards,

Terri Willingham

Spirit of Life UU
Lifespan Religious Education
Mission Statement and Goals

Updated August 2006

Spirit of Life UU believes that Religious Education is an ongoing, life-long process not limited to the confines of a church, but which takes place here and everywhere!

Our Mission

The Mission of Spirit of Life's Lifespan Religious Education program is to provide a religious education experience for all ages, addressing to the best of our abilities, the individual spiritual, emotional, social and educational needs of all of our congregants.

Purpose and Value

LRE's vision statement is part and parcel of the church's larger vision statement. Our purpose and value to the church is that we embrace a large responsibility for sustaining the growth of our church, and helping secure the future of our denomination.

Our Roles and Responsibilities

Our role is that of teachers and spiritual guides. We are responsible for the religious education of youth and adults, of all ages, which includes, but is not limited to:

- 1 Curriculum planning,
- 2 Social activities for youth,
- 3 Continuing spiritual education for adults,
- 4 Coordination of children's in-service time as needed or advised by Worship Associates.

Long Term Goal

Our long term goal is to provide a liberal religious voice for adults and children.

LRE Committee Goals for FY 2008

By the end of FY 2008, we plan to

- Complete our middle/high school curriculum, *Truth and Meaning*;
- Provide at least one adult-focused religious education class;
- Have teens active on at least 3 committees;
- Conduct at least one social outreach project with our youth;
- Publish at least two issue of our new Spirit of Life Alumni Newsletter for young adults who previously attended our church;
- Complete one intergenerational service;
- Have a strong, regularly attended parent support group.

How We Accomplish Our Mission and Goals

If your goal is to be a loving, accepting and supportive companion to your children and to one another as we all journey through life on our quest for spiritual meaning, Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalists can be your religious base camp, because this is our goal, too.

The mission of our Lifespan religious education program for people of all ages is to provide a safe environment in which each youth and adult can be a seeker of personal meaning while developing:

- 1 A strong Unitarian Universalist identity, based on an understanding and appreciation of our UU Principles and Purposes;
- 2 A recognition, appreciation and acceptance of the ever-changing nature of spiritual growth and development in our lives;
- 3 A foundation of values and theological knowledge from a diverse and dynamic tradition;
- 4 The means to meet and respond to life's great questions;
- 5 A strong sense of community with respect for individual differences;
- 6 A capacity for spiritual wonder;
- 7 A feeling of self-worth and dignity.

How We Accomplish our Mission

We believe the goal of religion is a progressive one, helping us evolve spiritually and emotionally in the search for meaning in our lives.

Our religious education program upholds and promotes our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes, and encourages, considers, and respects all religious questions. Curriculum, which is reevaluated annually, is drawn from materials published by the Unitarian Universalist Association and from the world around us, drawing from traditions of the past, conditions of the present and considerations of the future. Curriculum is often adapted to the individual needs of our congregation, and supplemented with personal experiences and sharing from within our congregation and our community.

We expose our youth and adults to the beliefs and thoughts of all the World's Religions, with a particular emphasis on our Jewish/Christian heritage, in the belief that we have much to gain from the value and wisdom of the world's religious traditions, as we learn to shape inclusive beliefs that embrace the best of all faiths.

Our Principles

As per the Unitarian Universalist Association

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- 1 The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- 2 Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- 3 Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- 4 A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- 5 The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- 6 The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- 7 Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- 1 Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- 2 Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- 3 Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- 4 Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- 5 Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- 6 Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

Our Principles Restated for Youth

- 1 Every person is important and valuable.
- 2 All people should be treated fairly.
- 3 Our church is a place where we accept one another and learn together.
- 4 Each person is free to search for what is true and right.
- 5 All people have the right to speak out and vote on things that matter to them.
- 6 We work for a peaceful, fair and free world.
- 7 We take care of the earth, the home we share with all living things.

These ideas come from many places:

- 1 The sense of wonder we all share
- 2 Women and men long ago and today
- 3 People whose lives remind us to be fair and understanding
- 4 Jewish, Christian and world religions
- 5 Our common sense
- 6 The discoveries of science
- 7 Ancient traditions and rituals

Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalists
Sexual Exploitation, Care Giver Conduct and Youth Protection Policy
Updated August 2006

Statement of Policy

Prohibition of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment

Spirit of Life UU is committed to creating and maintaining a worship education and work community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. Specifically, all persons associated with Spirit of Life should be aware that the church is opposed to sexual exploitation and harassment, and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention and responsibility of the church to take whatever action may be necessary to prevent and correct behavior which is contrary to this policy.

Care Giver Conduct Policy

Ministers, staff, or volunteers engaged in the ministries of the church are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in caring for the emotional, mental and spiritual needs of person who comes to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Sexual harassment or sexual exploitation of a parishioner or other individual is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

Because ministry often deals with people who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or otherwise vulnerable, it is imperative that the caregivers be healthy psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. Caregivers should be adequately prepared and educated to help those individuals under their care. It is the policy of Spirit of Life to encourage and support its ministers, staff and volunteers to nurture safety within care giving relationships by being attentive to self-care, education and the importance of referring those in need. It is also expected that ministers, staff and volunteers complete and submit the enclosed disclosure form.

Youth Protection Policy

Spirit of Life is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people explore, learn and play. In order to ensure this, we expect that all people applying to be volunteers who work with minors will have been members for at least six months, or friends of Spirit of Life for one year. We also expect all staff and volunteers who work with minors to complete and submit background disclosure forms.

All programs in which youth are involved must be staffed by a minimum of two screened and church approved adult volunteers.

Volunteer And Employee Background Checks

Provided by the Volunteer And Employee Criminal History System

<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/BackgroundChecks/>

Checking the Background of Persons Who Work or Volunteer with Children, the Elderly, or the Disabled Under The National Child Protection Act (1993), as amended, and section 943.0542, Florida Statutes (1999)

Spirit of Life participates in the VECHS program. VECHS (pronounced "vecks") is an acronym for the Volunteer & Employee Criminal History System at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The VECHS program was implemented in 1999 and is authorized by the National Child Protection Act (NCPA) (1993), as amended, and Florida Statute 943.0542 (1999).

The mission of the program is to protect children, the elderly, and the disabled.

Through the VECHS program, FDLE and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) provide to qualified organizations (not individuals) in Florida state and national criminal history record information on applicants, employees, and volunteers. With this criminal history information, the organizations can more effectively screen out those current and prospective volunteers and employees who are not suitable for contact with children, the elderly, or the disabled.

By participating in this program, Spirit of Life can assure congregation members and visitors that anyone who works with children in any capacity at our church has been formally screened for:

- State and national criminal history,
- Notification of any warrants or domestic violence injunctions that the person may have.

If you need additional information on this service, or email us at:
PublicRecords_VECHS@fdle.state.fl.us

or please call FDLE at (850) 410-VECHS (410-8324), or write to us at the following address:

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Criminal Justice Information Services/User Services Bureau
Attention: VECHS Unit
P.O. Box 1489
Tallahassee, Florida 32302

Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalists
Lifespan Religious Education (LRE) Conflict Resolution Policy
Approved by the Board of Trustees on 5/17/2005
Adapted from Faithworks by Theresa Willingham, Co-Chair of the LRE Committee
Revisited August 2006

In any relationship, conflicts are inevitable. In healthy and right relationships, they can be resolved in community, while staying within our covenant, and built upon in ways that strengthen and edify the group as a whole.

The following is the recommended procedure for dealing with concerns and conflicts within our religious community.

1) Practice Conflict Prevention!

First determine that the apparent disagreement is not simply based on misunderstanding or miscommunication. Speak directly – and kindly and respectfully -- to the person with whom you seem to be having a misunderstanding or disagreement.

Ask for clarification of your understanding of what you heard. Repeat back your understanding of what was said to make sure your understanding matches the speaker's intent. Make sure you're defining words the same way – you may actually be in agreement but using different words to say the same things!

At this step, and at all succeeding steps that become necessary, *own your issue*.

If possible, agree on a mutually acceptable time and place to talk in private and as soon as possible after the incident.

If a direct conversation is too difficult, consider putting your thoughts into writing and send the letter to the person with whom you're having a misunderstanding. Do not send it to the entire congregation, or to people not involved in the disagreement. Be available to hear the response. If discussion does not bring clarity or resolution to the problem, proceed to step 2.

Important:

- If you feel that personal safety is an issue in the conflict, use an appropriate third party or committee to provide a safe environment for the discussion.
- If the conflict is staff or duty related regarding how someone is performing a job (ministerial, religious educator, building maintenance, etc.), address the concern to the proper supervisor so that individuals are not being “supervised” from all sides.

LRE Conflict Resolution Policy – Continued

2) Seek Mediation

If you are uncomfortable or unable to resolve differences via personal communications and the matter is not duty related, please visit the minister or lay leader for counseling regarding the issue.

- If all parties agree that the minister or lay leader is neutral and appropriate, the minister or lay leader mediates.
- If the minister or lay leader is not appropriate, the minister or lay leader will direct you to the correct mediation body.
- If the conflict involves the minister or lay leader, the mediation body is the Committee on Ministry or, in the absence of such a committee, the mediation body will be the Board.

3) Board Consideration

The Board will consider matters that can't be resolved via mediation and take action as they deem appropriate. The Board can solicit assistance from the UUA.

- The Board can take action to exclude a person from attending for a period of time based on a refusal to honor our church covenant, and with reference to our Safe Congregation Policy and our Disruptive Behavior policy.
- The Board, given just cause, by a two-thirds majority can exclude a person from the church and the church premises and remove their name from church membership.
- The Board may specify conditions for returning as a welcomed member of our community and set criteria for evaluation of compliance.
- Assent of the Board by a two-thirds majority will be required for return to the community.
- The Board can call a congregational meeting to address the conflict with the collective compassion and shared wisdom of the entire body.

When no resolution is possible, concern for the well-being, openness, safety and stability of the congregation as a whole shall be given priority over the feelings or actions of any individual.

We trust that most conflicts can and will be resolved at a caring individual level because we believe our congregation members truly wish to be in right relation with one another, hold our covenant in highest regard, and use our UU Principles and Purposes to inform their actions and treat everyone with compassion, dignity and respect.

**Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalists
Lifespan Religious Education Committee
Disruptive Behavior Policy
Adopted May 2007**

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by Spirit of Life Unitarian Universalists and is expressed in the Unitarian Universalist Association's Purposes and Principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere in which such openness can exist.

When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person or persons.

There have been times when the disruptive behavior of an individual within the church building has led members to voice their concerns about one or more of the following:

- *Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child;
- *The disruption of church activities;
- *Diminishment of the appeal of the church to its potential and existing membership.

The following shall be the policy of Spirit of Life LRE in dealing with these issues:

1. If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister(s), if available, and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed. If further assistance is required the Police Department may be called. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister(s) and President being present, the Minister and President must be notified. A follow-up letter detailing what steps must be taken before returning to the activities involved will be sent by the Minister(s) and President to the offending party or parties.
2. Situations not requiring an immediate response will follow the guidelines of our Conflict Resolution policy. Those engaged in Conflict Resolution will respond in terms of their own judgment observing the following: (a) Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals; (b) stereotypes will be avoided.

Mediators will collect all necessary information. To aid in evaluating the problem, the following points will be considered:

- * DANGEROUSNESS- Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?
- * DISRUPTIVENESS- How much interference with church functions is going on?

* OFFENSIVENESS- How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?

3. To determine the necessary response, the following points will be considered:

* CAUSES- Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?

* HISTORY- What was the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?

* PROBABILITY OF CHANGE- How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?

4. Mediators will decide upon the necessary response on a case by case basis. However, the following three levels of response are recommended:

* LEVEL ONE- Mediators shall inform the Minister(s) and President of the problem and either the Minister(s), President or a member shall meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern.

* LEVEL TWO- The offending individual is excluded from the church and/or specific church activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear.

* LEVEL THREE- The offending individual is permanently excluded from the church premises and all church activities. Before this is carried out, Mediators will consult with the Board of Trustees and the Minister(s). If it is decided that the expulsion will take place, a letter will be sent by the Minister(s) or President explaining the expulsion and the individual's rights and possible recourse.

Any action taken under the above item may be appealed to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees and/or Minister(s).

Spirit of Life UU LRE strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree the disruption compromises the health of this congregation, our actions as a people of faith must reflect this emphasis on security.

Spirit of Life UUs
Philosophy of Spiritual Development
August 2006

Spirit of Life has long subscribed to the concept of spiritual development stages described by theologian Gabriel Moran in his book, *Religious Education Development: Images for the Future* (Minneapolis, Winston Press, 1983.). In his book, he explored the work of Piaget, Dewey, Kohlberg, Erickson, Montessori and other child development experts, examining both the values and the flaws of their studies. He concluded that there are three stages of spiritual development:

1. **The Simply Religious** - from birth to age 5/7.
2. **Acquiring a Religion** - from age 5/6 to adolescence and beyond.
3. **The Religiously Christian (Jewish, Muslim and so forth)** - adulthood onwards, which we call the “**Religious Adult**”

The Simply Religious :

- Need love,
- Must feel safe,
- Need to learn to trust us,
- Need a chance to explore
- Need to be allowed to wonder

This is the time when children are most subject to indoctrination, and for that reason, we do not teach children at this stage any more than those five religious values, to enable them to approach with an open mind and ready heart the next stage of their spiritual development.

Children at this stage have profoundly religious or spiritual experiences, and have no vocabulary to describe those experiences to us. They are *simply*, or naturally religious experiences.

Acquiring a Religion is what Moran considers the “rational” stage; a period in which everything is viewed as black and white, right and wrong, good or bad. People at this stage are very interested in justice and fairness, and they have a vivid sense of both the *sacred* – that which transcends the mundane and routine -- and of the *profane* -- a sense of contempt and irreverence.

The Religious Adult is the spiritual adult, says Moran. “The religiously adult person is the individual who holds in fruitful coexistence the rational and the irrational.”

Religious adulthood is a slow process, a maturation that occurs after personal exposure to other ideologies and theologies that lead the religious adult to find that God, truth and profound thinking are not limited to one philosophy, thought, practice or culture. Religious Adulthood is a return to being naturally, simply religious, now with a rational eye, to find a sense of unity.

Spirit of Life strives to support and encourage all congregation members throughout the varying stages of their religious and spiritual journeys in a warm and welcoming religious environment and through our religious education programs.

Overview of 2007-2008 LRE Classes & Goals for Current Year

How the Program is structured

Religious Education classes begin at 10AM and end at 10:30 for our Primary Group, with a snack and play break before services, and at 10:45AM for our Youth Group. Children are welcomed and vital to our service, which starts at 11AM. All youth are encouraged to participate as ushers, in our Joys and Concerns sharing period, and our Children's Time, after which our younger members are brought back into "Third Hour," a short activity period that can include "check-in" (catching up on weekly happenings), arts and crafts projects, movies, snacks, or a continuation of a class project. All youth rejoin families and the rest of congregation for our coffee hour after services.

Program Goals

The goal of all of our programs is to give congregation members of all ages a sense of religious perspective and Unitarian Universalist identity. It is our hope that this perspective will help guide members in their own understandings of their beliefs and convictions. This year, we have a congregation-wide theme of Peace, that we will tie in with social activities, discussion times, holidays, special classes and our regular curricular program for youth, which is structured as follows:

- **Nursery – 0 – 5 year olds** are cared for and taught in our nursery, and may remain in the nursery until service ends. A short, fifteen minute mini-class will be provided to older nursery aged children at the start of each nursery session.
- **Primary class – 6/7 to 10/11 year olds** -- This class will meet in our Reading Room and enjoy a Peace and Social Justice theme working from the curricula, *We are Many*, *We are One* and *In our Hands*. Cynthia Carey is the Core teacher for this group, with assistance from other congregational volunteers.
- **Senior class – for 12+** -- This group will meet in the Teen Room and will be starting off with *Dare to Know*, an examination of Humanism and Unitarian Universalism., and moving into *Truth and Meaning*, a Western religious heritage class. Terri Willingham is the core teacher for this group, with assistance from other congregational volunteers.

All of these age categories are general guidelines, and not rigid requirements. If a child is more comfortable, or works well in a certain group, the parent or guardian is welcome and invited to discuss preferences or individual needs with teachers. ***Our goal is always to provide the most enriching and meaningful experience possible for our youth and we'll always work with families to find the best ways to do that for your child.***

Adult Discussion is provided for parents & other adult congregation members are invited to meet at 10AM in the Parlor for this wonderful opportunity to connect with one another and share thoughts and insights. Facilitators and discussion topics vary for this engaging adult time together (*more about Adult Discussion on next page*).

Sunday Morning Perspectives Adult Discussion group

Our Sunday Morning Perspectives program provides a conversation-based social gathering for adults each Sunday morning at 10AM. A team of facilitators takes turns leading discussions on a variety of subjects ranging from examinations of current events to free-flow chats that arise spontaneously or on subjects of choice selected by group participants.

The purpose of this Adult Discussion program is to provide a space for sharing ponderings, questions and ideas in a safe and accepting environment in a way that helps us grow from one another's experiences and insights. We're fortunate to have a place where like minded liberal religious people can gather, and Adult Discussion provides breathing, thinking, and sharing space where we can maximize our time together in personal and meaningful ways.

Adult Discussion is conducted in a covenantal way in keeping with our principles. Civility rules our dialog and exchanges, and everyone is encouraged to listen with the same enthusiasm with which he or she wishes to be heard.

Anyone interested in facilitating a discussion, or who wishes to suggest discussion topics is invited to contact Terri Willingham at tmwillingham@verizon.net or 813-792-7411.

Guidelines for Civil Discourse
Guiding Adult and Youth Discussions in all Programs
Adopted 2006

We need not think alike to love alike.

Francis David, 16th Century

Adapted from guidelines developed by *No Place for Hate*
<http://ci.lexington.ma.us/NoPlace4Hate/GuidelinesCoverLtr.htm>

“Democracy is a means of living together despite our differences. Democratic deliberation is an alternative to physical violence. It is predicated on the assumption that it’s possible to disagree agreeably, that it’s better to laugh than cry, that one can vigorously contest the positions of one’s adversary without questioning his or her personal integrity or motivation, and that parties to a debate are entitled to the presumption that their views are legitimate if not correct.”

-Thomas Mann

Recognize a person’s right to advocate ideas that are different from your own.

- 1 Show respect for others.
- 2 Discuss ideas, not people.
- 3 Only one person should be speaking at any given time.
- 4 Use helpful, not hurtful language.

Speak as you would like to be spoken to.

- 1 Restate ideas when asked.
- 2 Use a civil tone of voice.

Agree to listen.

- 1 Respectfully hear and listen to differing points of view.
- 2 Be encouraging of others to speak out.
- 3 When unsure, clarify what you heard .
- 4 Realize that what you say and what people understand you to have said may be different.
- 5 Recognize that people can agree to disagree.

Speak for yourself, not others.

- 1 Speak from your own experience.
- 2 Use “I” statements. (“I think that the ideas presented...”)

Follow agreed upon guidelines regarding who speaks when and for how long, if or when appropriate.

Spirit of Life's LRE Program Volunteer Duty Descriptions

June 2007

Our Lifespan Religious Education program is currently volunteer-managed and conducted. There are a lot of opportunities for participating in or assisting with LRE. The following duty descriptions provide a general overview of program positions.

Lifespan Religious Education Director/Chair

The Lifespan Religious Education Director/Chair will be responsible for managing the Lifespan Religious Education program at SLUU, with ultimate authority for executing the LRE program. The LRE Director/Chair, in close coordination with the LRE Committee, is responsible for envisioning and developing the mission, philosophy, and spiritual direction of the LRE program through curriculum, programs, policies, and structure.

The DLRE will be part of the VECHS background check program. Additionally, The DLRE will, as his or her primary duties:

- coordinate and oversee both youth and adult programs within the policies and procedures set forth in the LRE Handbook;
- hold monthly LRE meetings inviting and considering input from LRE committee members and congregation;
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the LRE Committee,
- support outreach to graduated youth and young adults;
- maintain records of programs and communications on file;
- exercise fiscal responsibility by understanding budgetary limitations and acting responsibly within those limits. And making budgetary recommendations and providing for appropriate fiscal reporting;
- provide spiritual leadership that supports volunteers and staff both emotionally and educationally, providing for training and support as needed,
- promote LRE programs internally and externally, maintaining a visible, identifiable, and accessible LRE presence for the congregation, visitors, and community
- coordinate with other SLUU committees as needed,
- report to the Board of Trustees and Minister and work collaboratively with both.

Youth program volunteers

**All youth volunteers and teachers must*:*

- Be background checked via our VECHS program enrollment;
- Attend LRE committee meetings at least 4 times a year;
- Be punctual and reliable, arriving at 9:30AM on assigned Sundays and not departing until after service;
- Be regularly responsive to committee and to youth.

Volunteer Core Teacher(s) responsibilities:

- Minimum 3 Sundays a month teaching availability;

- Prepare lesson as needed, in advance;
- Communicate via email/phone or in person lesson notes and related information; to students and parents on a weekly basis;
- Maintain contact list for class;
- Attend monthly LRE Committee meetings;
- Be flexible and able to improvise, as well as willing and able to incorporate students ideas/leads, as needed;
- Understand that curriculum is a *guide* to knowledge and not the knowledge itself;
- Communicate own needs to LRE committee so plans can be made for substitute teachers or other needs in a timely fashion.

Volunteer Teaching Assistant(s) responsibilities:

- Minimum of one Sunday per month availability;
- Attend 4 LRE meetings per year;
- Communicate regularly with core teachers, especially about scheduling needs or changes;
- Be active in class and connect with youth both in and out of class.

Nursery Volunteers:

- There must be a minimum of four (4) core volunteers/staff for the nursery.
- Two approved nursery volunteers must be in the nursery each week.
- Nursery volunteers must attend LRE meetings at least quarterly.
- Nursery volunteers must ensure that nursery is cleaned up , with help of youth and families, at the end of each Sunday session.
- Nursery volunteers must follow all nursery guidelines and policies regarding cleanliness and other concerns.

Adult Program volunteers

Adult program coordinator responsibilities:

- Attend LRE meetings at least four times a year;
- Coordinate speakers and topics for weekly adult discussion program;
- Communicate needs, ideas and information regularly to LRE committee;
- Work in cooperation with LRE committee to coordinate, manage or create adult programs, as needs and interests of congregation identified;
- Send announcements of programs to LRE committee in a timely fashion for newsletter and website inclusion;
- Communicate own needs in a timely fashion to enable adequate assistance and support from LRE.

Child Care
Updated January 2007

Our Nursery aims to provide a cheerful and safe place for our youngest children throughout the year. The sound system broadcasts into the Nursery for parents who wish to remain with their children. Parents are invited to communicate frequently with nursery attendants, to ask questions and to check in on their children whenever they'd like.

Nursery care is provided from 10AM to noon for our youngest children. If pre-school children and their parents wish to make use of the nursery care during intergenerational services they are welcome to do so.

For babies, please bring a diaper bag each week with spare diapers and a change of clothes. Please be sure to advise nursery attendants of any special needs or concerns via our family registration forms and personal communications

No attempt is made to conduct a structured program for children of this age. We have, however, set the following goals for children of this age group:

- Good physical care is provided
- Toddlers are played with, read to, and kept as happy as possible
- Parents or guardians are encouraged to stay with children until they are familiar with the sitter and the surroundings
- Childcare is available in Nursery on Sundays from 10AM to noon.
- One volunteer assistant is needed each week during the church service.

The Nursery is currently staffed by a rotating slate of volunteers. Please be sure to convey your wishes concerning any preferences regarding your children, from dietary needs to disciplinary preferences, to our child care staff and volunteers.

Nursery Program Guidelines
Spirit Of Life Unitarian Universalists
August 2006

In order to insure the health and safety of the youngest members of the SLUU Community, we request that parents, guardians and volunteers review and agree to the following guidelines.

Illness

Please do not bring a sick child to the nursery program. This includes children who have a fever, severe cough, runny nose that is not clear, infection, or any contagious condition.

Children must be symptom free for 24-48 hours before they participate in nursery activities.

If you are scheduled to volunteer and are sick, please make arrangements for another caregiver to cover for you.

Please note that individuals with weakened immune systems should not volunteer in a nursery setting.

Nursery Procedures

We ask that parents or guardians bring diapers, formula and juice, or any specific items your child needs. Unless other arrangements are made in advance, your child will not leave the nursery until the approved parent or guardian who signed your child in has returned.

We strive to have two adults with each group of children at all times. Given that policy, parents or guardians may occasionally be asked to help with nursery duties.

Volunteers will observe proper hand washing procedures when changing diapers. Diaper changes should take place in the bathroom area only. The volunteer on duty should make sure the waste bag is sealed and carried to an outdoor garbage can after Sunday services.

The nursery bathroom should be cleaned with disinfectant every week. Toys and objects in the nursery area will be sorted and sanitized on a regular basis.

How We Live and Work Together At Spirit of Life UU

First: Safety is First

Leave classroom or building only with permission and appropriate supervision.
Rough play and running are not appreciated inside church.

Second: Live our principles..

1. We believe that each and every person is important.

- 1 We do our best to look after one another.

2. We believe that all people should be treated fairly.

- 2 Speak and act with respect for classmates, teachers, and all members of the congregation, and for oneself.

3. We believe that our church is a place of acceptance and growth.

- 3 Share or pass when it's your turn.
- 4 Listen and wait during others' turns.
- 5 Participate with enthusiasm (or give it a try!).
- 6 Include everyone in activities and planning.
- 7 Make an effort to come – your teacher has.
- 8 Friends are welcome. Let them know the rules.
- 9 Our worship space is special. Please treat it so.

4. We believe that each person must be free to search for understanding and for what is good and right.

- 1 There are times to cooperate and times to work independently.
- 2 Put-downs and name-calling are not called for or accepted.

5. We believe that each person should have a vote for what concerns him or her.

- 1 Share your ideas.
- 2 Express criticism constructively and politely.

6. We believe it is our task to make the world a place that is peaceful, fair and free.

- 1 Do your best to get along with others and to be helpful.
- 2 Ask for help from an adult when you need it.
- 3 Respond appropriately to adults or older kids who give reminders about behavior.

7. We believe in caring for our environment.

- 1 Help clean up.
- 2 Be careful with our space, furniture and materials.
- 3 Use only what you need.

Dates, Times and Contact Information

Updated August 2007

Times to Remember:

Sundays at 10AM:

- Sunday Morning Perspectives adult discussion in the Parlor
- Childcare in nursery
- Youth classes for children 7 and up in the youth room and LRE Reading Room

Service at 11AM in the Pavilion

All are welcome for refreshments and conversation after the service in the Nirvana Café, in the kitchen.

Dates to remember for the 2007/2008 school year:

- Registration Sunday – August 19, starting at 10AM -***All children in our programs, from the nursery to classes, must be registered.***
- First Day of class: August 26
- Holidays – *No LRE*, although childcare is provided: Christmas/New Year
- Last Day of fall classes: May 18, 2007 (*LRE Lite continues through the summer for all ages*)

Special Events

- Annual Haunted Cottage: October 27, 2007
- Annual Easter Festivities: March 23, 2008
- Annual Youth Service: May 18, 2008

Ongoing activities and gatherings:

- LRE Committee Meetings – 1st Sundays, 12:30PM
- Parenting Support Group – 1st Sundays, 1PM
- Dungeons & Dragons & Family Game Nights – 3rd Saturdays, 5:30PM at church
- Buddhist Group – 1st Wednesdays at 7PM
- Community Building Sundays (no LRE classes, group projects and time together instead) 4th & 5th Sundays
- Pot Luck Sunday– 3rd Sundays after service

Upcoming Programs (dates to be announced):

Parents as Spiritual Guides

All dates, times and activities may change for various reasons, so please see the calendar pages included with your package for specific dates for this year's program activities, and check your newsletter and the website regularly for current information.

Communicating – the Heart of our Program

There are many ways to stay involved and informed about LRE.

- **Talk to us at church** – to Terri Willingham, our LRE chair and program director, to any of our teachers or to the minister about LRE. :
- **Come to monthly LRE committee meetings**, the 1st Sunday of each month, at church in the LRE Reading Room.
- **Read LifeLines**, our monthly newsletter, where you'll find regular and comprehensive LRE updates and information.
- **Call:** 813-792-7411 ,anytime, to speak with Terri.
- **Email** tmwillingham@verizon.net anytime, to write to Terri.
- **Join REmarkable Families**, our LRE email list for announcements and automatic calendar reminders:
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/REmarkable_Families
- **Visit our website:** www.spiritoflifeuu.org
- **Volunteer!!** Assistance is always welcome in our classrooms, the nursery and with crafts, music and activities. If you have a special skill to share, or just want to be a more integral part of our Lifespan Religious Education program, please let us know!

Spirit of Life UU

Religious Education Family Volunteer Form

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Spirit of Life UU has many opportunities to help in our program Please indicate your preferences below:

I am willing to be a:

_____ lead teacher

_____ assistant teacher

_____ occasional helper

_____ Hanukkah _____ Christmas _____ Solstice _____ Kwanzaa

_____ Other holidays or Special Events

_____ substitute teacher

_____ lend my musical talents two to three times a year

_____ be a driver for field trips

My preferred age group(s) to work with is:

_____ babies & toddlers _____ 4-6 yr olds _____ 7-10 yr olds

_____ middle/high schoolers

_____ adult programs

I am happy to help with:

_____ art projects _____ games _____ music

_____ writing projects _____ holiday parties _____ cooking

_____ special services (Christmas, Samhain, etc.)

Other

Adult or Youth RE programs and activities you would like to see (that are not currently offered):

Other Comments: _____

Spirit of Life UU
Religious Education
Family Registration Form

Father/Guardian's Name _____

Relationship to child(ren) _____

Occupation _____

Interests/skills _____

Mother/Guardian's Name _____

Relationship to child(ren) _____

Occupation _____

Interests/skills _____

Address: _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Child Information:

	First Name	Nickname	Last Name	Age	Birthdate	Grade
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

We strive to give our young people a safe, happy and rewarding church school experience. Please list any pertinent information to help us know your family better.

Allergies: (include child's name)

Abilities and Disabilities (include child's name)

Family or other Information you feel may helpful

