

All Souls Community Church

YOUTH ROOTS CLASS

9TH GRADE COMING OF AGE CURRICULUM

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Dr. Brent A. Smith

All Souls Youth ROOTS 9th Grade Program

All Souls Youth ROOTS 9th Grade program is a year-long investigation of the faith identity of Unitarian Universalists especially designed for our young men and women in the 9th grade. The goal of the program is to teach our young people the theological ideas, rituals, communal characteristics, and historical development of Unitarian Universalism and our churches; that is, to teach them their faith.

To accomplish this each month is devoted to a difference aspect of our religion: the history of the idea of freedom as the organizing principle of community; Unitarianism and Universalism in America: freedom's religious foundation; religious beliefs and ideas embodied in Thanksgiving and in Christmas festivities; our worship and liturgy; social justice; church organization and All Souls history; and conducting The 9th Grade Youth Roots Coming of Age Service in May. Nearly every month the class attends a worship service at a nearby Unitarian Universalist congregation and meets with its minister. The class chooses a social justice project. In the fall there is an overnight trip to Chicago, to visit Unity Temple in Oak Park and to learn about Frank Lloyd Wright's Unitarian faith and how it is communicated through his architecture; and to The First Unitarian Church and Meadville Lombard Theological School in Hyde Park. The second trip is in spring or early summer, to Boston and environs, for several days. The class visits historic Unitarian Universalist churches and sites, including the Freedom Trail, the UUA, Arlington Street Church (where hopefully they will ring the bells!), Concord, Plimouth Plantation and the Mayflower, and Salem; maybe, if there is time, Harvard and Lexington. The Boston trip is the culmination of the year and the extent of the visit varies with each class.

The 9th Grade Youth ROOTS class is an equivalent to what in other religious communities is variously called a Bat/Bar Mitvah, a First Communion, or a Coming of Age program. It is highly recommended to both parents and youth because of its scope and depth. Participants, youths and their parents, routinely admit how important and powerful an experience it is. It is the direct passing on of our faith and its history and tradition to the next generation. It is a year not to be missed!

Dr. Brent A. Smith, 2006

YOUTH ROOTS IN CLASS CURRICULA 2008-2009

Session Format

1) *Opening Words:* 5 minutes

The Opening Words, to be delivered by an adult, will come from sources that are used by our congregation: our hymnal or hymnals produced by the Unitarian Universalist Association, the ROOTS booklet for newcomers, sources from our BRANCHES booklets, or other source that would be or should be familiar to All Souls. It is suggested that sometimes the Opening Words be prefaced with a sentence comment on the previous session or a sentence explanation of the author or source, as the reader knows them.

2) *Opening Game:* 10 minutes

Each in class session should include some kind of fun, ice-breaker type of game. Some of these kinds of games are in the sessions outlined below when they pertain specifically to the kinds of things that the youth will experience in that particular session. Leaders are encouraged to find games that are brief, involve everyone, encourage sharing, and relate in some implicit way to the themes to be experienced in the session.

3) *Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity:* 10 minutes

This will be some activity that will raise awareness and reinforce our distinctive religious identity and faith tradition. In many instances it will relate directly to the session theme.

4) *MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION:* 45 minutes

This is the main part of the session, where Unitarian Universalist ideas, beliefs, history, and characteristics are imparted to the youth (and maybe to the adult leaders as well!)

5) *Closing Words:* 5 minutes

Each session ends with an adult leader delivering these.

Session: Our Faith Displayed in the Matrix of the World [September 14, 2008]

*The central idea behind this session is that using selected film clips from The Matrix movie we can illustrate these core values of our faith: **Unitarian***

Universalism is 1) A faith of the free, that upholds 2) A unity in diversity (Unitarianism), which in religious community 3) Aims at the liberation and cultivation of the human spirit, upholding the sanctity of all souls as made in a “likeness to God” and are loved by God. (Universalism)

1) Opening Words:

The name chosen by our founders as the name of our church is All Souls Community Church of West Michigan. Many of our churches throughout the country have this as their name. It comes from the Bible. The Opening Words this morning are from the ancient Hebrew Old Testament book, Ezekiel. In the book, as in the Old Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures, there is uncertainty as to whether God loves all souls, or just those who believe in God in a certain way. The Hebrew prophet Ezekiel, and later the people who make up our faith all the way down to us, put this argument to rest. Ezekiel says that this is what God would say to this disagreement that human beings have over whom God’s love belongs to.

*The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, “Behold, all souls are mine.”
-Ezekiel 18:4*

2) Opening Game: Matrix Mix and Match [see next page below]

Answers [Term#-Meaning#]: 1-3, 2-5, 3-8, 4-4, 5-6, 6-1, 7-7, 8-2

MATRIX MIX AND MATCH

Match the term or name on the left used in *The Matrix*, with the history of the meaning of the word or name on the right.

Term or Name

- 1) *Morpheus*
(name of the leader of the rebels)
- 2) *Nebuchadnezzar*
(name of the rebel ship)
- 3) *Neo*
(hacker name of Keanu Reeves' character)
- 4) *Anderson*
(Neo's real last name)
- 5) *Trinity*
(name of Neo's female sidekick)
- 6) *White rabbit*
(tattoo Neo follows to begin his adventure)
- 7) *Oracle*
(wise mentor of the rebel forces)
- 8) *Matrix*
(the artificial sense of reality created by computers)

Meanings

- 2) Latin, meaning "womb"
- 3) Greek, meaning "to change shape"; also the Greek God of sleep and dreams
- 4) Greek, meaning "man" and "son," together means "man's son"
- 5) Ancient king of Babylon, deciphered to mean "frontiers" or "Nebo, protect the crown"
- 6) Church doctrine meaning "God in 3 Persons," which we don't believe because is not "The One"
- 7) Latin meaning "to speak," a link between divine and human
- 8) Greek meaning "new"

- 1) Leads Alice into and through Wonderland

3) *Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity [see next page below]*

Answers:

1) *Unitarian Universalist*

2) *Boston*

3) *King's Chapel (Unitarian Universalist, in Boston)*

4) *Plymouth (Massachusetts)*

5) *All Souls (from the Ezekiel verse in the opening words, and its Universalist meaning)*

6) *unity (which is, by the way, Frank Lloyd Wright's family's motto, being Unitarians, and is also a common name for individual churches; but we are not the Unity Church of Christianity)*

7) *hell (hence, "universal" salvation, for God's love was "universal")*

8) *covenant (it is the agreement all members make to one another, and is the center of the church, instead of a creed of common belief)*

9) *hymns*

10) *2001 (in our tradition when a church is founded we say it is "gathered," because the church is the people and the fellowship created between them; it is not a "foundation.")*

A Jumbled Religion

Take each of these word jumbles and unscramble them, and you will have the answer to the question about Unitarian Universalism that is before it.

1) What does UU stand for?

RATIANNU RSAELVIISTUN

2) The city that has the headquarters of the Unitarian Universalist Association, our national organization?

NOTSOB

3) What is the name of the oldest church in the United States still holding services?

GNISK PELACH

4) Where did our religious ancestors, the Pilgrims, land?

MOUTHLYP

5) What is the most common name of Unitarian Universalist churches?

LAL LUOSS

6) The word "Unitarian" means the belief in the ____ of God, not the Trinity.

YUINT

7) When Universalists were first started they believed that God loved human beings so much that he would never send anyone to ____.

LLHE

8) This is one thing we recite every Sunday morning in worship.

NNVOCAET

9) We call the songs we sing in worship ____.

MNYHS

10) The year All Souls Community Church was gathered.

OWT OUDNASHT NOE

4) MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION:

The main activity for this session involves using scenes from the movie, “The Matrix” to help our youth understand key ideas of Unitarian Universalism in particular and liberal religion in general. These ideas are in written form in the tri-fold cards that we will give to the youth on November 16th.

Unitarian Universalist religious idea #1: Faith of the Free – The free mind is necessary for truth to flourish, and the wide and free heart is necessary for love to fulfill life. God (the power that creates life and meaning) is revealed in freedom.

At one point in the movie Morpheus explains to Neo, “*I’m trying to free your mind, Neo. But I can only show you the door. You’re the one that has to walk through it.*” In another place he says, “*You have to let it all go, Neo – fear, doubt, and disbelief. Free your mind.*” This is our path of faith articulated by William Ellery Channing in the early 1800’s, and used as the opening words in our first session together: *I call that mind free which masters the sense, and which recognizes its own reality and greatness; which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers and opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, and receives new truth as an angel from heaven.*

Film Scene: Watch the scene where Neo meets Morpheus for the first time, where Morpheus gives Neo the choice between two pills: One will free his mind and take him into the real world, the other will keep him ignorant and in the virtual and artificial world. [about 25 minutes into the film]

Discussion Questions: Which pill would you take, and why? Why is freedom such a hard life to live, while staying ignorant is dreamy and easy? In what way is ignorance like an illusion? Morpheus tells Neo he is a slave born unknowingly into a prison of the mind. What “prisons of the mind” were you born into? How do you “escape” or “free yourself” from them? Why does Neo have to be “reborn” to be free? What does that mean for us in real life?

Unitarian Universalist religious idea #2: Unity in Diversity – There is a “dual nature” to the world. Although there are individual differences that are apparent among human beings, there is an unseen “real unity” that lies within the world as it is seen. We use various words to express

this unseen, underlying unity: “all are God’s children” or “we can love alike without having to believe alike” or “life’s diversity is its power.” Much of human history, religious and otherwise, has focused on man’s differences, and that has been the source of hatred and suffering. Our belief and faith as Unitarian Universalists is that underneath these differences is the reality that God is One as all of the human family is One: Unity. The life of faith in our tradition is not just believing in this unity, but living our lives towards it: deeds not creeds.

At one point Morpheus says to Neo, *“You have the look of a man who accepts what he sees because he is expecting to wake up. Ironically, that’s not far from the truth.”* Part of our faith tradition includes the idea that we accept the diversity and difference that we see, while also anticipating and expecting to “wake up” to the underlying unity that makes all one. At another point Morpheus says, *“There is a difference between knowing the path and walking the path.”* Belief is not the issue in religion. It’s how we treat one another, how one lives one’s life, walks the path of seeing God is One and all people are one family.

Film Scene: Morpheus explains to Neo about the battle between humans and machines, and the creation of the matrix. [about 39 minutes into the film]

Discussion Questions: Which is real? What are the differences between human beings, and how do they divide the human family? Why is it so hard to be free of the hate and animosity differences create? Do you think this is a “dual nature” to existence? Why does Morpheus have to see and experience the “human crop field” to know about this “dual nature” of reality and the matrix being bound up together? Why can’t he just accept what he’s been told? What experiences have you had of this “dual nature,” and what experiences have you have of the underlying, unseen unity?

Unitarian Universalist religious idea #3: To Liberate and Cultivate the Human Spirit. The aim or purpose of All Souls Community Church is to liberate and cultivate the human spirit; to help each and every person, in our church and in the world, to become a fully functioning, free person; an individual who can listen and discern the dictates of conscience, the voice of God within, and live according to its dictates, and not live a certain way because a church or preacher or governmental leader or any other person tells him to.

Cypher, who will betray the other humans, complains, “*Free? You call this free? All I do is what he (Morpheus) tells me to do.*” Later on he says, “*Ignorance is bliss.*” Another character, Mouse, says, “*To deny our impulses is to deny the very thing that makes us human.*” What, then, can liberation and cultivation of the human spirit mean?

Film Scene: From where Cypher expresses his misgivings to Neo, makes a pact with Agent Smith, to where Neo and the crew are eating breakfast and Mouse says, “*To deny our impulses is to deny the very thing that makes us human.*” [about 61 minutes into the film]

Discussion Questions: What does true freedom, the true liberation of the spirit, mean to you? How is it different from just “doing whatever you want”? What do you think freedom means to Cypher? Have you ever felt ignorance is bliss? Isn’t it sometimes easier to just remain ignorant than to have to be responsible for knowing things? What do think makes us human? What are the impulses that Mouse is talking about that when we deny, we deny our humanity?

5) Closing Words (you may want to grab some extra orders of service for them and recite this together):

Each month you will attend worship at another Unitarian Universalist church in the Midwest, which you will find has characteristics similar and dissimilar to us. Each of our churches has its own character, its own forms of worship, and its own covenant. That is the way of our faith, and it is called congregational polity. We’ll send you off on your spiritual adventure this year with the Covenant from here at All Souls:

ALL SOULS COVENANT

We pledge to walk together in the ways of truth and affection,
 As best we know them now,
 Or may learn them in days to come;
 That we and our children may be fulfilled,
 And that we may speak to the world,
 In words and actions of peace and goodwill.

Session: Akhenaton, Moses, and Priscilla Mullins [September 21, 2008]

The central idea behind this is to tie the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaton, recorded history's first theological unitarian, to Moses and the ancient Hebrew faith (Exodus story and one God), to the Pilgrims of Priscilla Mullins, made immortal in the American poem, "The Courtship of Miles Standish."

1) Opening Words:

The opening words for this session are those written down by the men and women and children who first gathered in Manhattan Park in East Grand Rapids on September 9, 2001 and continued gathering that fall until they had created Community Church in the Park, which was renamed All Souls Community Church. They wrote these words to describe the church they were founding and hoped would someday be fulfilled by people like you.

All Souls Community Church is a church dedicated to religion, but not to a creed. It is a liberal religious community of free individuals of all ages walking together in relationship to one another, to our larger community and to the transcending mystery of the universe. Our community is based on open communication, democratic process and a belief in the capacity for goodness in all people. Our spiritual health and our growth as a church community are intimately connected with the spiritual growth and development of our children. We pledge to develop our church community with this always in mind. This church aims at celebrating and cultivating community, a sense of inquiry, moral character and insight, religious freedom, and helpfulness to humanity -- that is, it aims at liberating and cultivating the human spirit.

2) Opening Game: To be supplied by adult leader

3) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity: see sheet following page, to be copied and distributed to the youth

Unitarian Universalism

One God Who Loves All Souls

Unitarianism literally means “one God” because it comes from the word, “unity.” Throughout history unitarians were those who believed in a “unity” of all things, that exists behind all the various names and qualities human beings give and have given to God and gods. Universalism literally means “all,” as in universal. Throughout history universalists were those who believed that whatever this “unity” is behind all our words and concepts and ideas of God and gods, that “unity” appears to us as the spirit of love freely given to all souls, to everyone.

To see how radical these two ideas are in history, take a moment to list some things to be shared with the group and written on newsprint:

- 1) List all the names you can think of, which human beings have used to represent God and gods. Example, the Greek god Zeus.
- 2) List all the qualities you can think of, which human beings have assigned to God and gods. Examples include, destruction, creation, knowledge, etc.
- 3) List all the things you know of that human beings have used to claim that they are better than other people. These are often the things we fear in other people. And are the things that also have kept people from believing in the power of a love for all souls.

Now, share that list with the adult leader, and write down on newsprint all the various answers on the lists of everyone.

And now, the hardest and most important one of all, and the part that IS FOR YOU ONLY AND NOT TO BE SHARED.

I have looked over all the various answers from all the lists of everyone here. I see what I need to work on to develop my character and let it grow. I need to work on personally getting rid of

so that I can live out a love for all souls, which will help create a deeper unity in the human family, in our shared world, and in me.

4) *MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION*: The main activity of this session will consist of the youth producing a “rap” from the facts of the lives of Akhenaton, Moses, and Priscilla Mullins and the Pilgrims. The facts of the three historical figures are listed below. It is suggested that the youth be divided into three groups, each with the task of creating a “rap verse” for one of the three historical figures; or, for the group as a whole to produce all three verses. The chorus, to be rapped at the beginning before the first verse, between all verses, and ending the song, is listed below. To help start the youth, whether they are in three groups or just one, have them list the historical figure, and list all the words and combinations of words that rhyme with the name. For example, Akhenaton – which is pronounced Awk (as in “awkward”) – nay (as in “nay”) – tun (as in “ton”), with the emphasis on the second syllable – could elicit such words as waitin’, debatin’, elevatin’, or a combination of rhyming words, like “ain’t he a great one” or “walk-this-way-son,” etc. Moses could elicit toe-ses, roses, supposes, encloses, etc. Incorporate the “facts” of the three figures as you want, to produce a rap that ties all three together with us. The chorus of the rap goes like this:

*I’m a free gal/guy,
I don’t take no crap,
When I deliver my
One-God rap.*

This is suppose to be fun, so have fun with it!

Akhenaton facts:

- Egyptian Pharoah (1380-1362 BCE)
- wife was Nefertiti
- son-in-law was King Tut
- got rid of the hundreds of Egyptian deities and proclaimed there was only one God, a unity to all existence
- the oneness of God was represented by the circle of the sun
- during his reign there was artistic and intellectual freedom and innovation not known previously in Egypt

One internet site (the address is below) described him this way:

An Egyptian pharaoh (1380-1362 BC), the predecessor of Tutankamen, and husband of [Nefertiti](#). Akhenaton radically revised the Egyptian religious world by instituting a unique form of monotheism. His innovation temporarily ushered in a period of artistic freedom an innovation in Egypt known as [Amarna Art](#)

Amenhotep IV ruled at the height of Egypt's empire. He is remembered for combining the hundreds of deities worshipped in ancient Egypt into one overarching deity -- Aton Ra, a sun deity. Amenhotep then changed his own name to "Akhenaton" -- or servant of Aton. His radical change in religion was a direct challenge to the priestly caste. Priests were chosen by status at birth, and were guaranteed incredible power as the spokesmen (and women) of the gods. When Akhenaton declared Aton-Ra as the supreme god, he also declared that he himself was the sole spokesman of Aton-Ra. The priests suddenly found themselves out of favor, out of power, and effectively out of a job. They were not happy. Akhenaton, on the other hand, had effectively consolidated his power. The centralization of power, combined with a weakening of the age-old superstition, produced a boom in art and creativity known as [Amarna Art](#).

-from web address

<http://members.tripod.com/clayt/Humanities/Akhenaton.html>

Moses facts:

- considered a prophet in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
- lived between mid 1400- early 1300 BCE
- led the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, and is the key human figure in the Passover story and celebration
- brought the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai to the Jews
- when he was born in Egypt, he was placed into a basket and floated down the Nile River, to avoid the Pharaoh's order to murder all the Jewish baby boys
- found by Pharaoh's daughter in this basket, he was raised as an Egyptian, and not a Jew, in Pharaoh's court
- announced that there would be plagues on Egypt until Ramses, the Pharaoh at the time, "let My people go" (as Moses reported God had said)
- Moses had a speech impediment, as he stuttered, so his brother Aaron spoke for him to Pharaoh

-his famous sister was Miriam

Priscilla Mullins and Pilgrim facts:

- made famous as a character in a romantic poem by Unitarian Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, where she falls in love with John Alden
- the real person was born in 1602, although her date of death is unknown
- came over to from England to here on the Mayflower as one of the pilgrims, with her parents and younger brother in 1620
- the Pilgrims thought their voyage across the Atlantic, from England to what became our United States, was like the ancient Jews' Exodus from slavery to freedom; to the Pilgrims, not being able to worship freely, as they pleased, to as they called it, "walk in the ways of God as they are made known to us," was spiritual slavery
- in 1623 married John Alden, a cooper, which was a
- in 1631 moved away from Plymouth to found the community of Duxbury
- her alleged words, written by Wadsworth in the poem, survive in American folklore: "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

An online biography reads:

Priscilla Mullins was born probably in Dorking, Surrey, England, to William and Alice Mullins. She, her parents, and her brother Joseph all came on the Mayflower to Plymouth in 1620. Her entire family, herself excepted, died the first winter. She was shortly thereafter, in 1622 or 1623, married to John Alden, the Mayflower's cooper, who had decided to remain at Plymouth rather than return to England with the ship. John and Priscilla lived in Plymouth until the late 1630s, when they helped found the neighboring town of Duxbury.

John and Priscilla would go on to have ten or eleven children, and have an enormous number of descendants, including poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams, and Vice President Dan Quayle.

The web address for the biography, and other information, is:

<http://www.mayflowerhistory.com/Passengers/PriscillaMullins.php>

5) *Closing Words:*

God is One. –traditional Eastern European Unitarian saying

God loves all souls. –traditional American Universalist saying

Session: Freedom, Freedom, Everywhere [October 5, 2008]

The central idea behind this session is that one core belief of our faith is that freedom is a religious idea (in the form of free belief), and exists in community (society) through democracy (in the form of free speech). The free pulpit (lent by the congregation to an individual to speak freely from) and the free pew (no theological test for membership in the community) are its church forms. The free press and freedom of speech are its political forms.

1) Opening Words:

Last month you visited your first sister Unitarian Universalist Church this year and began to learn that we and our church are connected to other people and other churches, and so the Opening Words are from the “Father of American Unitarianism,” William Ellery Channing. If you remember when you were younger playing the computer game, “Where in the U.S. Is Carmen Sandiego?” you may remember that if you go to Newport, RI, you will see on the screen a statue of Channing in the town square because he was born there. And if you click on it you will hear that he lived in the late 1700’s to the mid-1800’s. He helped to start public education in our country, and parishioners in his church in Boston started kindergarten education and professional help for the mentally ill, and wrote many of the classic books in American literature. Channing’s influence on the development of our country is great and unique! You will see the church he served and a statue of him when we go to Boston.

I call that mind free which masters the senses, and which recognizes its own reality and greatness; which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers and opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, and receives new truth as an angel from heaven.

-William Ellery Channing

2) Opening Game: [see next page below]

Money Talks!

You have been given \$1000 to spend on the following values. You can invest all of your money in one category or divide it between the items. Place your money on those things that you value most.

1. to be a rock star for one year \$ _____
2. to stop world hunger \$ _____
3. to be the most popular person
in the world \$ _____
4. to be a great world leader \$ _____
5. to know the future \$ _____
6. to have freedom of speech \$ _____
7. to travel anywhere in the world \$ _____
8. to spend time with a special person \$ _____
9. to find the real meaning of life \$ _____
10. to go to the church of my choice
or no church at all \$ _____
11. to know the future \$ _____
12. to stop all disease \$ _____

3) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity: Top Ten List of Kool-itarians and Rad-iversalists [See next page below]

Top Ten List of Kool-itarrians and Rad-iversalists
Match the Name on the Left with the Description on the Right

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1) <i>Thomas Jefferson</i> | a. <i>While her husband, John Adams, was President, she is credited with creating our first flag.</i> |
| 2) <i>Mariah Carey</i> | b. <i>Superman in the movies, he is an actor now known for his work from his wheelchair</i> |
| 3) <i>Christopher Reeves</i> | c. <i>Wrote the play, "The Christmas Carol," among other great works</i> |
| 4) <i>Kurt Vonnegut</i> | d. <i>Her likeness is engraved on the dollar coin, she worked for women's rights</i> |
| 5) <i>Paul Newman</i> | e. <i>She went to Church School at her local Unitarian Church before becoming a pop diva</i> |
| 6) <i>Abigail Adams</i> | f. <i>He wrote "Welcome to the Monkey House," "Slaughterhouse Five," and "Cat's Cradle"</i> |
| 7) <i>Beatrix Potter</i> | g. <i>Wrote the Declaration of Independence and the First Amendment, and, oh yea, was Prez</i> |
| 8) <i>Susan B. Anthony</i> | h. <i>Wrote children's book about Peter Rabbit</i> |
| 9) <i>Charles Dickens</i> | i. <i>Discovered evolution</i> |
| 10) <i>Charles Darwin</i> | j. <i>Academy Award winning actor, starred in Hud, Cool Hand Luke, Color of Money</i> |

4) *MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION: Read the newspaper story out loud, discuss together what the free speech issues are, and then vote on which side to support, giving reasons as to why to side with one or the other. Then to conclude each story, ask the Youth if there are any issues like this specific one happening in their school. In italics at the end of each is an interpretation from one of our congregation's lawyers, and then a connection of the central issue of the case in terms of civic freedom, to our churches' practice of spiritual freedom. For this session, it might be helpful to enlist the direct participation of one of the congregation's attorneys.*

-OHIO Jan Smithers, a junior at Ottawa Valley High in Sandusky, Ohio is suing his school over a dispute centering on free speech issues. Smithers, a local standout in vocal music who has performed with the Sandusky Symphony and is a soloist with the Ottawa Valley High Concert Choir, was asked to choose a piece to sing at an all school assembly on February 12, 2002, that would be attended by local dignitaries including Mayor Ben Brinkman. Smithers did not tell his vocal instructor Ellen Coaches what song he wanted to sing prior to the day of the assembly. Problems arose when he handed his sheet music to the school accompanist who refused to play the song written by Marshal Mathers better known to his fans as Eminem. Ms. Coaches and the Principal, Ed Johnson supported the decision by the accompanist and Smithers was told he could sing another selection or not sing at all. Smithers argued with school officials stating that the song did not contain the typical level of obscenities that many Eminem songs are known for and that he should be allowed to sing what he chose. He was however told he could not sing whatever he wanted at a public forum and a substitute filled in at the assembly. Smithers has enlisted the aid of the local chapter of the ACLU to challenge the decision of the school to not let him sing on first amendment grounds. Does Smithers have a case, and why or why not? *[Yes, he does. He stayed within the parameters he was given, to choose any piece he wanted. Although the piece chosen might have been inappropriate, or in poor taste, he did fulfill the parameters he was given. This is the different between a right and a responsibility. Likewise, in our church, the pulpit is lent by the congregation to the minister, who can say anything s/he wants to from it. However, not all things that could be said from it should be, though they can be, because the minister is in relationship, in covenant, to a congregation; therefore, some things that could be said would be inappropriate or in poor taste.]*

-INDIANA -- Ben Whitman was suspended by his Indianapolis area high school for wearing a t-shirt to school that had an obscene message emblazoned on the front. Whitman was stopped in his first hour class by his teacher and asked to turn the shirt inside out to hide the offending message. When Whitman refused, he was suspended for the day and told he would need to go home immediately. Whitman maintained that his first amendment right to free speech had been violated and refused to return to school until they allowed him to wear the shirt. The high school had a long standing policy about appropriate school attire and stood firm by its policy. A local attorney agreed to represent Whitman stating that he too believed the student's rights had been violated and that the school needed to get with the times. Was Whitman's free speech rights violated? Why or why not? *[No, schools can, within certain parameters, set policies regarding what is worn. Any church can set parameters too, of what is worn. Though few do explicitly, many do implicitly. Thus, in churches, there are explicit and implicit agreements of all kinds. In our faith tradition we like those agreements to be as explicit as possible, and rarely if ever do we make determinations about what can be "said" on someone's attire, as that is part of our emphasis on individual authority.]*

-TEXAS – The Midland Independent School District has become embroiled in a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by a student who was suspended and barred from attending his own graduation – all because he refused to apologize for a picture he had in his closet at home. The picture was a photograph of the married principal's car parked outside the residence of an unmarried female teacher. Midland High School senior Casey Riggan did not take the picture – one of his friends did. But when the Midland principal learned of the photograph's existence, he suspended Riggan and ordered him to apologize for starting rumors of sexual indiscretion. Riggan refused. Instead, he filed a lawsuit against the school district for violating his free speech and due process rights. Was Riggan's free speech rights violated? Why or why not? *{Yes, because the home is a private space and not subject to the same free speech parameters as a public space like a school. To us, religiously, it is a matter of individual authority, which is properly dealt with at home between the student and his parents. Our faith tradition draws distinctions between what is properly a public issue, which would involve the school, and what is properly a private issue, like religion, which should be between youth and parent and clergy person, where there is one.}*

- OKLAHOMA – In Sand Springs, Oklahoma, the microphone used by a student speaker at graduation services was turned off and his speech cut short by school officials when the student deviated from the text he had submitted. It is school policy that the text of all speeches given at graduation services be submitted to the principal in advance, and that speakers adhere to the texts that they have submitted. When Casey Claussen changed the speech to one that was highly critical of the school and his educational experience there, principal Barnaby Best had the power shut down and escorted Claussen off the stage. Was Claussen’s free speech rights violated? Why or why not? *[No, because free speech rights of students are related to school policy, and schools have the right to regulate time, place, and manner for exercise of free speech. This was not an open forum. Our faith tradition is rooted in two concepts, the Free Pulpit and the Free Pew. Standing in the pulpit, an individual is free to say anything, as in sitting in a pew an individual is free to believe anything. It is not the purpose of the church to regulate either. The purpose of the church is to form a community where obligation between pulpit and pew is understood and exercised, and spiritual freedom is created.]*

- CALIFORNIA – An article on sex education in the Granite Bay High School student newspaper caused one group of parents and at least one school board member to question the First Amendment rights of student journalists. The high school newspaper published an article detailing how little some high school students know about their own bodies. Student editors decided to publish the story after a new state education law took effect, requiring abstinence and safe-sex practices to be taught as part of the schools’ sex-education curriculum. In the article, Granite High teacher Kathie Sinor said one male student asked her where his cervix was and another asked her if she could get pregnant from oral sex. Parents and one school board member were furious – not because their students knew so little, but because words like “sex” and “cervix” were published in a school paper. Despite the fact that California has a law that grants students freedom of expression in school-sponsored publications, school board members are looking to give administrators more control. Do student newspapers have the same free speech rights as daily newspapers? Why or why not? *[No, they do not have the same rights as privately owned newspapers, because schools are public and students not of legal age. Freedom is related to consent, and consent is, in our culture, related to age. In this church the 9th grade year recognizes that you are stepping into consent from the church’s perspective.]*

5) *Closing Words:*

Each month you will be doing parts of the worship with Brent, so the Closing Words are by James Luther Adams, who was the greatest Unitarian thinker in the 20th century, and was one of the people who educated Brent. Adams taught at Harvard (the oldest university in America and 1 of 3 schools that train our ministers) and the University of Chicago (one of the world's greatest universities and the second of 3 schools that train our ministers; the third is in San Francisco), helped to educate our servicemen that occupied Germany after WWII, he was the leading religious ethicist of the 20th century.

I call that church free which binds together families and generations, bringing individuals into a caring, trusting fellowship; that protects and nourishes their integrity and spiritual freedom, open to insight and conscience from every source; a pilgrim church, a servant church, on an adventure of the spirit "that bloweth where it listeth and maketh all things new."

-James Luther Adams

Session: Is There Religious Freedom in YOUR SCHOOL? [October 26, 2008]

The central idea behind this session is that another core belief of our faith is that an individual's direct relationship with God or conscience is sacred and primary. Thus, in a society church and state (religion and government) must be independent to protect that. The religious community's (the Unitarian Universalist church) role and aim is to create relationships that deepen freedom and liberty. The democratic society's role and aim (in protecting political freedom) is to keep government from regulating, defining, or exercising undue influence or control over religion.

1) Opening Words:

Part of the purpose of our time together in this class is to welcome and educate you into our noble religious tradition. So the Opening Words this morning will be from someone whose life and thought helped shape our church and faith through the generations, as well as our country: Thomas Jefferson. Not only was he a great President, but he was also a great philosopher and scientist, and was educated religiously by Unitarian minister Rev. Joseph Priestley, who served our congregation in Philadelphia. Jefferson loved freedom, especially when it came to religion, supported the search by every person for the truth of individual conscience, and encouraged each person to connect with God in his own unique way.

I swear upon the altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of tyranny over the mind of man.

-Thomas Jefferson

2) Opening Game: Supplied by Adult Leader

3) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity [see next page below]

Famous UU's Word Search

N O S R E M E W B C P J U L K
 L I S M E R C Y U A R R L K M
 Z P G G Z B E M R G R E D V R
 X P Z H N L M Z C T H T O H Q
 V R E Z T I E W H C S X O N B
 J H Q U N I K L T T H A G N H
 E C K G G Z N I U X H H S S Y
 C N S L N E M G H J O T O E P
 W E E O L U E W A O L H L A O
 U R T L E N O C Z L M E V T T
 U F I E N U K Y U A E R O H T
 Q U Z O H S U R D R S L X G E
 Q Y V K O B W A G G N S K I R
 N W J N Q X M Q E J P M P R D
 N P A E G S H H D S R K X W U

Find the names of these famous Unitarian Universalists hidden in the letters. Only the words in **bold** appear but they work backwards and forwards, up and down, and diagonally.

Jane Adams	William Fogg Osgood
Clara Barton	Beatrix B Potter
e. e. cummings	Quillen Shinn
Dorothea Dix	Benjamin Rush
Ralph Waldo Emerson	Albert Schweitzer
Daniel Chester French	Cecilia Thaxter
Horace Greeley	Henry David Thoreau
Oliver Wendell Holmes , Sr.	Garrick Utley
Helen Jackson	Kurt Vonnegut
Thomas Starr King	Frank Lloyd Wright
Arthur Lisner	Whitney Young , Jr.
Maria Mitchell	Albert Zeigler
Florence Nightingale	

4) MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION Once Upon a Time in Your School

Have the youth enact these three scenarios, one at a time, and then lead them in discussing the situations using the questions that follow. Make sure you copy the scenarios so the youth can read their parts:

Scenario One: A teacher stops one of his students after class

TEACHER: Jack Black, how did you like the class today?

JACK: It was all right. In fact, it was pretty interesting. I like your class a lot.

TEACHER: Well, I hope you find your time in my class to be worthwhile. Say, are you planning to attend the prayer at the flagpole tomorrow morning?

JACK: Well, I hadn't planned on attending. Why?

TEACHER: Well, I am going to be part of that and I thought you might want to be there. There's going to be a bunch of students and teachers there and it's going to be real important.

QUESTIONS: How would you feel if you were Jack Black? Have you ever had something like this, or something similar, happen to you? Is it legal for the teacher to pray with the students at the flagpole on school grounds? Why? When, where, and under what circumstances is it possible for teachers to pray? Why is it that way?

FYI: It is not legal for teachers to lead or participate in prayer on school grounds or during school times. Teachers are public servants, and not servants of particular students who hold the same faith, or particular religious viewpoints. They serve all students, and to do that requires them not to participate in or lead prayer. That's their role as public servants, which is what they are doing while on school grounds. They can, however, pray to themselves, or participate in or lead group prayer off of school grounds during non-school hours, when they are not functioning as public servants

Scenario Two: Lil' Kim and Will Ferrell are talking after class.

WILL [bobbing his head to the right]: Lil' Kim, will you go with me to the prom?

LiL' KIM: Well, I was going to go with Clay Aiken. But, if you want to go with me, I guess that would be the best day of your life. So, yes, I'll go with you. But, only under one condition.

WILL: That I give you the perfect cheer? Or, quit doing my George Bush imitations?

LiL' KIM: No. That you take this religious pamphlet and read it all the way through. And, then, come to my church with me this Sunday evening, and join my church, and go with me three times a week for the rest of your life. And listen to me while I witness to you right now.

WILL: Oh. Don't you think that's a lot to ask of someone just to go to the prom?

QUESTIONS: Have you ever had another student witness to you? Have you ever had another student give you a religious pamphlet, or any other informational brochure? Can one student hand out a religious pamphlet to another student at school? Why? Is it permissible for one student to witness to another at school? Why? Can adults who do not work at the school, come on school grounds and pass out pamphlets? Can they come onto school grounds and witness to students? Can teachers? Why?

FYI: Students can distribute religious pamphlets to other students during school hours, on school property. That's why some adults use students to do this. Students can also talk about religion, witness to each other, and even organize themselves to pray together (it's just they cannot be organized or led by a teacher), or study religious texts together. But, adults who do not work at the school cannot enter upon school grounds and distribute any literature, or talk to the students about religion, or pray with them. And, neither can adults who work at the school.

Scenario Three:
Austin Powers is giving a report in the literature class of Dr. Evil

DR. EVIL: Mr. Powers, I'm the boss; need the info. Could you give the class your report now.

AUSTIN: Yea, baby, yea! My randy report is on the symbolism in the story of David and Goliath.

DR. EVIL: Right. Zip it, Mr. Powers, while I turn on my [does quotation marks with his fingers] laser, and use it to destroy your report. You can't give a report on the Bible for a literature homework assignment. Zippy Longstockings, Mr. Powers.

AUSTIN: Groovy, baby, but I beg to differ. Yes, I can!

DR. EVIL: Throw me a frickin' bone, here. Class, you all know that he can't give a report like that, don't you?

QUESTIONS: Have you ever had somebody use the Bible or another religious text to complete a class assignment? Can Austin Powers, or anybody, use the Bible as a source for completing an assignment, if it can be used to do so? Why? What would you do if a teacher told a fellow student he couldn't? What are the responsibilities of students concerning issues of the separation of church and state, especially when they concern a teacher?

FYI: Yes, the student can use the Bible, or other religious scriptures, to complete an assignment providing that using that resource fulfills the assignment, and doesn't become a substitute for doing the assignment correctly. It's one of the freedoms we enjoy: the ability to express our religious perspective as an individual. The separation of church and state doesn't infringe upon that right, but protects each of us by prohibiting the state, and its agents like public schools and their workers, from using their power to force religious ideas upon us. The teacher could not make the assignment that the students had to use the Bible as a resource, unless the course was the study OF religion with the Bible as one of the course's required readings.

5) *Closing Words:*

Next month you will visit your second Unitarian Universalist Church, and so our Closing Words will send you off on your next adventure in discovering the faith tradition that claims you and your family: Unitarian Universalism. The words are from Rev. Olympia Brown, the first woman to be ordained by a denomination in our country. She served congregations in Wisconsin, and along with fellow Unitarian Universalist Susan B. Anthony, helped to secure the rights of women in this country.

Stand by this faith. Work for it and sacrifice for it. Do not demand immediate results but rejoice that we are worthy to be entrusted with this great message [of freedom]. There is nothing in all the world so important as to be loyal to this faith which has placed before us the loftiest ideals.

-Rev. Olympia Brown

Session: Desperate Crossings and The Plimoth Plantation [November 2, 2008]

The central idea behind this session is that the Pilgrim's journey of religious freedom is an analogous journey to All Souls Community Church's spiritual journey, the spiritual journey of all Unitarian Universalist churches, and is a macrocosm of the spiritual journey of all individuals in our faith tradition.

1) Opening Words:

As this Sunday and this month we will be talking about the central story in our faith tradition, we will use our Sunday worship Invocation as Opening Words:

This morning is a gift freely given to us, and the dawn's new light is a summons to be greeted with gratitude and thanksgiving. We give thanks that we can:

*See the forms of creation,
Hear the call of creation,
Smell the fragrances of creation,
Taste the sweetness of creation,
And touch the warmth of creation.*

We give thanks for the life we've been given; for the love that graces our days; and for the chance to assist in creation's unfolding.

2) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity: Review of Church Visits

4) MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION: View the video from The Plimoth Plantation and/or Desperate Crossings, especially about the Thanksgiving Meal held there. Question for discussion include:

What is different about the Pilgrims Thanksgiving meal and yours? Why does sharing a meal become an appropriate way to give thanks? Why is sharing a meal with someone you don't know a special experience? How are people different towards each other when they are eating, as opposed to when they are arguing or fighting? What meals do you remember as

especially memorable? What would be your ideal Thanksgiving Meal, in terms of the foods served and the guests invited? Do you remember any trips that your family took that you would now look back on and say it was a spiritual excursion? What made it that way?

5) Closing Words:

In a few Sundays you will be helping lead the congregation in its annual Thanksgiving Service, it is appropriate to use the Benediction from worship at All Souls:

And now seeing that there is naught to fear and bearing witness to what can never die, let us go forth into the world in peace.

*Be of good courage.
Search all things
And hold fast to that which is good,
Render unto no one evil for evil.
Strengthen the faint-hearted,
Support the weak,
Help the afflicted.
Love all men, women, and children, all souls.
Serving the Most High,
Rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.*

AMEN.

Session: The Meaning of the Thanksgiving Festival and Thanksgiving Festival Dinner Services [November 16, 2008]

The central idea behind this session is to communicate to the youth how some of the core values we hold are expressed through the Sunday morning Thanksgiving Festival and Sunday evening Thanksgiving Dinner Services.

1) Opening Words:

The Opening words for our Session this morning are the First Reading that will be used for the Thanksgiving Festival Dinner, which we will hold next Sunday evening, November 23. We hope you and your family come because it is a retelling of a very important story of freedom for us:

Let us praise God on this festive day of Thanksgiving, rejoicing in the bounty of the good earth and in the loving kindness which unites us in one family. Let us call to remembrance our fathers and mothers of old who came to our land on pilgrimage, endured great hardships, and gathered together after their first harvest to offer praise and thanksgiving for their deliverance in the wilderness. Let us honor the freedom and justice they so dearly bought. Even as our bodies are renewed at this thanksgiving table, so may our spirits find renewal by the act of giving thanks.

2) A Team Building Exercise of Your Own Choosing

3) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity [Make copies of "Turkey Quiz" so that each youth has one to fill out. Have them fill them out, and discuss the questions and answers with them. PLEASE use the internet to pick up additional information about any of the answers, or go onto The Plimoth Plantation web site (http://www.plimoth.org/education/olc/index_js2.html) and use their educational curriculum for your own research purposes If you have a computer that has a built in way to get on the internet, you could use this site on Sunday morning as part of the Main Activity below.]

Answers: 1b, 2c, 3a, 4b, 5bcef, 6b

Turkey Quiz

How Much Do You Already Know About Your Spiritual Ancestors?

- 1) The Pilgrims were originally from
 - a) *Michigan*
 - b) *England*
 - c) *The Bahamas*

- 2) How did they get to Plimoth, now Plymouth, Massachusetts?
 - a) *By Greyhound Bus*
 - b) *By Happy Feet Rickshaw*
 - c) *By Mayflower Boat*

- 3) When they arrived, what did they sing as they were coming off their boat?
 - a) *All People That On Earth Do Dwell*
 - b) *Boogie On Reggae Woman*
 - c) *Don't Worry, Be Happy*

- 4) What was the name of the Native American tribe who shared with the Pilgrims the first Thanksgiving meal?
 - a) *Cleveland Indians*
 - b) *Wampanoag*
 - c) *Mayans*

- 5) What was the name of the leader of the Native American tribe?
 - a) *Bush, also known as W*
 - b) *Daddy, also known as Puff*
 - c) *Massasoit, also known as Ousamequin*

- 6) *Choose all the foods below that were part of the first Thanksgiving*

a) <i>Big Mac</i>	d) <i>curly fries</i>
b) <i>deer</i>	e) <i>turkey</i>
c) <i>corn</i>	f) <i>fish</i>

- 7) *What month and year did the event take place that we celebrate as Thanksgiving and how long did it last?*

a) <i>July, 1776, a month</i>	c) <i>January, 2000, one night</i>
b) <i>October, 1621, 3 days</i>	d) <i>May, 1918, a week</i>

4) *MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION: Review with the youth their viewing of the video, The Plimoth Plantation and/or Desperate Crossings (which they should have seen November 2, ask Lisa as she taught that session):*

- 1) What do you remember from the video about the first Thanksgiving meal? Have you every eaten at someone's house that you didn't know all that well? Do you remember eating over at a friend's house for the first time? How did you feel?
- 2) The Native Americans and Pilgrim English were NOT friends. Why would eating together help to make cool off any hostilities between them?

The Reading below, "The Ancient Drama," will be read at the Thanksgiving Festival Meal. Listen to what it tells about:

Reader #2 The Ancient Drama

In 1620 our forebears came to the coast of New England to begin a new life. Their names were English: William and Mary Brewster, Miles and Rose Standish, William and Dorothy Bradford, but their cause was world-wide. They were living through an ancient drama that good people have many times endured and glorified. The drama begins in the great cities of the world. It tells of oppressions so terrible and of life so threatened that there must be a going-out, an exodus.

It remembers long ordeals in the wilderness where the people had hastily fled, their bread unleavened and their provisions ill-suited to enable them to live alone apart from the city's help and the city's comfort. It tells of the founding of new towns and cities, dwelling of people dedicated to the proposition that all are able, if they are willing, to live together in justice, liberty, and a fullness of life. These many pilgrim voices echo in us, their descendants either in body or spirit, recalling on this festive day their ancient story.

Those who were to become our Pilgrim forebears suffered in England under religious persecution even as the children of Israel suffered under Pharaoh's yoke.

- 1) What does it mean to be persecuted?
- 2) Why do human beings persecute one another?

- 3) The Pilgrims came over on a ship to escape persecution and find freedom? What other examples are there from our history of people coming over here on boats and ships, and why did they come here? [slaves, indentured servants, cruise lines, immigrants]

Eating:

- 1) What is different about the Pilgrims Thanksgiving meal and yours?
- 2) Why does sharing a meal become an appropriate way to give thanks? Why is sharing a meal with someone you don't know a special experience?
- 3) How are people different towards each other when they are eating, as opposed to when they are arguing or fighting?
- 4) What meals do you remember as especially memorable?
- 5) What would be your ideal Thanksgiving Meal, in terms of the foods served and the guests invited?
- 6) The Pilgrims saw their journey to this continent to be a spiritual excursion. Do you remember any trips that your family took that you would now look back on and say it was a spiritual excursion? What made it that way?

5) *Closing Words:*

In the worship service next Sunday morning, November 23, you will be helping lead the congregation in its annual Thanksgiving Festival Service. Then in the evening we will gather for our annual Thanksgiving Festival Seder Dinner, which will close with these words, our Closing Words this morning:

In celebrating our own Thanksgiving, we give thanks for all pilgrims in every land and age who were not willing to build highways for tyrants, or smooth the path of the wicked, or lend their aid to hateful people. As we feast at this table of Thanksgiving, we acknowledge that we and our people have come in our father's and mother's bodies from many places of tyranny: from Egypt with Moses and the children of Israel to the Promised land; from England and Holland to Plymouth; from the tenements and ghettos of Europe to the New World; from the slave ships and plantations of old America into new life and new hope of freedom.

Session: To Be Scrooged or Not to Be Scrooged [December 7, 2008]

View movie SCROOGED, a modernized version of the Charles Dickens' classic, "A Christmas Carol." The central idea behind this session is that Charles Dickens, a Unitarian, gives us our Unitarian Universalist perspective on Christmas: It is a holiday whose meaning is the ever-present possibility of hope in human existence, brought on by the effect our lives have on others. This is the truth portrayed in "Scrooge's conversion," and symbolized by recognizing and celebrating Jesus' birth.

Instead of Opening Words, an Opening Game, and a Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity, they will attend Sunday worship while one member of their class lights the holiday candles.

4) MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION: Watch two different sets of scenes in Bill Murray's movie, "Scrooged." The first set of scenes needs to outline Murray's character as a "Scrooge-like" person. The second set of scenes shows the ghosts confronting Murray, and then focus on Murray's "conversion." This is called "Scrooge's conversion," and is a very important part of literary history, the Christmas season, and our Unitarian Universalist heritage.

Questions for discussion:

- 1) Why is it called a "conversion"? Conversion literally means "a turning around." How does the character "turn around"? Are there any requirements of his "conversion" that relate to specific ideas about Jesus, God, or heaven or hell?
- 2) What is the evidence that Murray has had a "conversion"? List all the ways he turns around or changes.
- 3) What causes him to change? What was going on inside of him when the "spirits" showed him various scenes from his life? What would such "spirits" show you?
- 4) How does a person's compassion towards others less fortunate, and attitude about giving and generosity, contribute to feeling the "spirit of Christmas"?
- 5) Why do we give gifts at Christmas time?
- 6) Who is the funniest character in the movie?

5) *Closing Words:*

Next week we will finish our look at Unitarian Universalism and Christmas by looking at Charles Dickens' real version, "A Christmas Carol," and looking at the differences between it and "Scrooged." The closing words are from Psalm 90:

Let thy work, O Lord, appear unto these, thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. And establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it.

Session: A Dickens of a Faith & More [December 14, 2008]

View Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" or read the book/play version out loud to compare depictions of "Scrooge's conversion."

Instead of Opening Words and an Opening Game, they will attend Sunday worship while one member of their class lights the holiday candles.

3) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity: A Unitarian Universalist Christmas Did You Know? [see below]

Answers: 1) T, 2) T, 3) T, 4) T, 5) T, 6) T, 7) F (it's the date the early Christians of Rome adopted from the Roman religion of Mithraism), 8) T (because Jesus was Jewish he believed in the unity of God, not the Trinity, and, hence, was a theological Unitarian), 9) T, 10) F (Santa Claus is derived from the early Christian Saint Nicholas)

A Unitarian Universalist Christmas

Did You Know?

For each statement about Christmas and Unitarian Universalism, indicate whether it is True or False.

- 1) *The author of "A Christmas Carol," the storyline behind the Bill Murray movie, "Scrooged," was Charles Dickens and he was a Unitarian.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 2) *The person who popularized the use of the evergreen as a Christmas Tree, in the United States, was Charles Follen, who was a Unitarian.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 3) *The holiday song, "Jingle Bells," was written by James Pierpont, who was a Unitarian.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 4) *The Thanksgiving/Christmas season song, "Over the River and Through the Woods," was written by Lydia Maria Child, who was a Unitarian.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 5) *The Pilgrims, our spiritual ancestors, did not celebrate Christmas.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 6) *The Christmas Carol, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," was written by Edmund Hamilton Sears, who was a Unitarian.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 7) *We celebrate Jesus' birth on December 25 because that is the date he was born.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 8) *Jesus was a unitarian.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 9) *During December we light candles on Sunday morning to recognize Advent and Hanukkah because religiously we come out of both the Christian and Jewish traditions.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------
- 10) *Santa Claus was a unitarian.*

TRUE	FALSE
------	-------

4) *MAIN ACTIVITY OF SESSION: Watch a similar set of scenes as was viewed last week, from the real version of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," or read from the book/play of the same name.*

On a piece of newsprint record the observations of the youth as to why this story, written by a Unitarian, is such a good reflection of who we are as religious people.

5) *Closing Words:*

Next week we will be in the worship service for the entire time, helping lead the congregation in its annual Christmas Festival. We will also be doing the ushering for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. The last Sunday of this month we will take a vacation! Closing words are adapted from Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Within each one of us is the soul of the whole universe; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every one of us is related; the eternal One. When it breaks through our intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through our will, it is virtue; when it flows through our affections, it is love.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Session 8 [January]

To begin a month devoted to understanding our worship and liturgy, the following two-page work sheet is to be distributed to the youth twenty minutes before the beginning of worship. The leader will go over the written paragraphs, addressing any initial questions. The youth will then attend and participate in worship, answering the questions as best they can during the context of worship.

[Worship/Liturgy two-page worksheet below]

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGY OF ALL SOULS COMMUNITY CHURCH
Youth ROOTS

Liturgy means “the people’s work” and it is a word to describe the entire event of worship. Our liturgy has both an intellectual and an emotional component. It contains words that are repeated every week, and words that are spoken once in any given week. Our liturgy has both variations and routine. It is meant to be dramatic; that is, it is meant to move the individual worshipper such that at the end of it he or she knows something more about themselves and their world. The aim of liturgy and worship at All Souls is to liberate the mind of its ignorance, narrowness, and prejudices, and cultivate in the heart a love for all souls. The aim is to free the spirit.

The form of our liturgy is ancient, derived from the Hebrews (Jews) during the time of the Babylonian Captivity, around 580 BCE. This form of liturgy is called, “synagogue style worship,” and is characterized by readings (in the Jewish tradition it was from Scripture) and a commentary on that reading (which we call a sermon). There is more that happens but it is the presence and centrality of these two ingredients – readings and a commentary on those readings - that makes our liturgy “synagogue style.”

Our liturgy is divided into three parts. The First Part is where the community gives praise together, in gratitude for the gift of life. The Second Part (which includes the readings) is where in the context of community each individual is offered time to contemplate words of wisdom from the past; in our case, from Jewish, Christian, or other world religion’s scriptures, or from other sources. This is a time for introspection, for the individual to think upon successes and failures, triumphs and burdens of the past, and seek forgiveness from God directly, in the depths of his or her own soul, and direction for one’s life. And, this is the time for the individual to prepare his or her mind and conscience for new insights and meanings that the individual will discern in Part Three. The center of Part Three is the sermon, whereby the called spiritual leader (the minister) of the community delivers a spoken address witnessing to his direct engagement of a spiritual issue. It is not designed for the speaker to tell the listeners what they should believe. Rather, through the individual minister speaking truthfully in love, of what he thinks and believes, the mind and heart of the hearers will be invigorated such that each might discern what they think and believe individually.

Of course, as is the case with a Free Church such as ours, the interpretations of our liturgy will be as various and different as there are individuals in our community.

During worship this morning, try to discern the emotional and spiritual movement of our liturgy such that you can answer for yourself the questions that follow:

1. What begins Part One of our liturgy and how is it meant to make you feel?

2. Why are the same words used every week for the Invocation?

3. Where did the covenant come from and why is it recited? (HINT: If you don't know where it came from, ask church founders)

4. Who wrote the Doxology and in what year? (HINT: Look up the words in the Index of First Lines of Hymns in our hymnal.)

5. Who wrote the words of the first reading, which begins Part Two? How could that be considered "Scripture" to us?

6. How do you use the time during the prayer?

7. What do we call the "break time" between Parts Two and Three?

8. How does the last stanza of the hymn that begins Part Three speak to the aim of our liturgy and worship? And what are the hymns for?

9. How was the sermon a commentary on the readings?

10. How does the last stanza of the closing hymn, ending Part Three, "sum up" this Sunday's particular service?

11. Did you notice that at the beginning and near the very end of our liturgy the community sings together. What do you think is the purpose of that and how do you think that is supposed to make an individual feel?

12. What closes our liturgy, and how is this closing suppose to make people feel?

13. How have the worship services of the churches you visited been different and similar to ours?

Session 9 [January]

The central idea behind this session is to review the youths' experience of our worship and liturgy through the critical reflection occasioned by the worksheet, so that they might better understand how worship serves the mission of All Souls; i.e., to liberate and cultivate the human spirit.

1) Opening Words:

Next Sunday you will have the chance to help lead a special liturgy created by our congregation, in which the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is experienced by the people through the drama of the liturgy. We created it as a means through remembering Dr. King, the human spirit is more fully liberated and cultivated. The opening words for today speak to how each generation is called unto this task:

Why should not we enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? The sun shines also today. There are new lands, new men, new women, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and law and worship.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

2) *Opening Game (will be done at the end of the session when they join with others in the Church School, led by Cindy Schneider)*

3 & 4) *Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity and Main Activity:*

Review the two-page liturgy/worship worksheet addressing any unanswered questions (which, for example, the founders of the church might help with) and talking about the intent and aim of the service.

Watch the “Mr. Bean in Church” video as an example of someone who doesn’t know the liturgy of the church he attends and, therefore, struggles to participate in the service in a meaningful manner. List all the things about our worship that you would tell Mr. Bean ahead of time so that he could more fully participate in our service.

5) *Closing Words:*

What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

–Micah 6

Session 10 [February]

The central idea behind this session is to review the youths' experience of our worship and liturgy through the critical reflection occasioned by the worksheet, so that they might better understand how worship serves the mission of All Souls; i.e., to liberate and cultivate the human spirit.

1) Opening Words:

2) Opening Game

3) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity

4) Main Activity:

5) Closing Words:

Session ? [March]

The central idea behind this session is to give the youth an understanding of the history of the formation of All Souls Community Church; when and where it first gathered into a community; how its process of spiritual discernment came to shape the community as a religious embodiment of historic Unitarianism and Universalism; and how the Church is structured to fulfill its historic tradition in practicing congregational polity.

1) Opening Words:

All of you have had the chance to lead the congregation in the reciting of the Church's covenant, which is part of the beginning of our Sunday worship. It was adopted by the founders of the church as a way for us to remind ourselves what is important to us as a spiritual community. It is a modern adaptation of an older covenant, the one which formed what is now called The First Church in Salem, in 1629:

We covenant with the Lord, and one with another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all His ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us, in His blessed word of truth.

Our covenant reads:

We pledge to walk together in the ways of truth and affection, as best we know them now, or may learn them in days to come; that we and our children may be fulfilled. And that we may speak to the world in words and actions of peace and goodwill.

2) Opening Game [Pat provides]

3) Unitarian Universalist Identity Activity: All Souls quiz, to be given by the leaders orally

What happened the year All Souls Community Church was first "gathered," that hadn't happened for 1,000 years? [the millennium; it was 2001, the officially beginning of the 21st century]

What was the famous, cataclysmic national event that occurred the Tuesday between the first and second Sunday meetings of our church? [9/11]

This team won the World Series as Community in the Park was meeting in the park. [Arizona Diamondbacks]

What was the first public worship gathering for All Souls, and where was it held? [Christmas Eve at St. Cecilia's Music Society]

The movie, *Road to Perdition* won its Oscar two months after All Souls Community Church had its first Sunday worship service in this year. [2002]

The movie *Spider-Man* smashed box office records the same month and year that the first Youth ROOTS class concluded. When was it? [May 2002]

Shortly after our first Homecoming Sunday service, President Bush put the country on high alert for a possible terrorist attack because of this anniversary. [9/11/02]

Winona Ryder was convicted of grand theft and vandalism for stealing over \$5,500 of merchandise in this month and year when All Souls held its first Thanksgiving Seder. [November 2002]

Andrew J. Whittaker, Jr. of West Virginia claimed \$314.9 million Powerball prize the day after we held our second Christmas Eve Service on what day and year? [12/24/02]

Who are the two Presidents of the Board that All Souls has had? [Sue Belaski and Roger Gilles]

4) *Main Activity:*

The main activity will be twofold. First, it will consist of the telling of the story of the founding of All Souls Community Church. This will be done by adults in attendance.

Secondly, the youth need to prepare to do a video recording of a panel discussion with founding members of the church. This will involve deciding what tasks need to be done, dividing up the tasks, putting together a "shooting schedule" for the last Sunday in March, securing a video camera setup, deciding whom to recruit as panel members, and what questions to ask them.

5) *Closing Words:*

The closing words are from author Stephen Spender, and can be found in our hymnal, and will be the theme of this month:

*What is precious is never to forget,
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit.
Never to forget the names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's center.
Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honor.*