



## The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica

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September 22, 2011

Dear 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade Parents/Guardians:

We have just launched our new program year, and this year our congregation's Religious Exploration program is offering an exciting new program for **2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders during the 9:00 service**. The **Theme Workshops** program will offer active, tactile workshops of all sorts that help young people put hands and feet on our monthly congregation-wide ministry themes. The class meets in the North East room of the cottage, formerly known as the "couch room," but now converted into a lovely classroom space for our youngsters to use on Sunday mornings.

Our themes for the year are:

- September – LOVE
- October – LOSS
- November – SERVICE
- December – HOPE
- January – WISDOM
- February – PEACE
- March – BROKENNESS
- April – RENEWAL
- May – FREEDOM
- June - COURAGE

The following are a few important administrative items about the structure of our program and the year.

- **Please pick your child up from RE promptly at 10:15.** Children through Grade 5 must be picked up from class by their parents. Class time lasts until 15 minutes after the hour in order to allow for a full hour of class time, and so parents have time to grab a cup of coffee before coming to collect their children. Please be prompt; RE teachers deserve to take part in coffee hour, too! Parents, please remember also that you are responsible for your children at all times when they are not in RE classes. Even though our church is a safe and loving place, it is not a good idea for children to roam the grounds without their parents. Staff and volunteers are not responsible for supervising children when they are not in our RE classes or official childcare.
- **All families participating in RE must complete a registration form for each of their children.** These forms are crucial because they include emergency contact information, space to share any special needs or allergies child may have and other important information to help us get to know your child. If you have not already turned in a registration form, one is included in this mailing. Please complete it and bring it on Sunday.
- **The UUCSM RE UUpdates email is sent weekly** to provide updates about what will happen in class this week, a calendar and announcements for upcoming events, at-home suggestions for engaging with the themes we're exploring this year, and more. This is a

primary means of communication with all of our RE families - if you are not receiving this email, contact me right away so we can get you on the list.

- **Parent participation required:** Your help is vital to the success of our RE program. All parents are asked to contribute some of their time to our RE program this year. There are many different ways to be involved, which require varying levels of commitment. **Please fill out the volunteer commitment form which is attached to your child's registration form.**
- **Snack Signup request coming soon:** We would like to ask parents to sign up to bring a modest snack for their child's class this year, taking the burden off of the shoulders of the volunteer teachers who already do so very much for our program. You will be contacted soon with a request to sign up for a few Sundays during the year. Information about any food allergies as well as suggested snack items will be provided. Sharing food together is part of what binds us together as a caring community of faith, and our kids take snack time VERY seriously! Please help us keep our tradition of providing in-class snacks going.
- **Children/Youth Choir:** Does your child like to sing? Seth Houston, our new music director, is starting an occasional children's/youth choir that will perform a few times a year during Intergenerational Services. Rehearsals will be from 9-9:15 on Sundays (meet in the cottage rather than going to the sanctuary for the first part of the service) for a few weeks leading up to the performances. Contact [Catherine@uusm.org](mailto:Catherine@uusm.org) if your child or youth is interested in participating. **The first rehearsal is THIS WEEK - Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup>!** The choir will also rehearse on 10/16 and 10/23 for performance in service on 10/30, as well as 11/13 for performance in service on 11/20. It is an incredible opportunity for young people in our church to participate in the music program, with guidance from our Music Director. I hope many of you will take advantage of it. Please plan to arrive by 8:50 so the group can be ready to start at 9:00 sharp – fifteen minutes isn't very long to rehearse!
- **Children's Chapel on 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays beginning in November.** On the first Sunday of each month, starting in November, we're trying something new: rather than attending the first part of the service in the sanctuary, all children will gather promptly at 9:00 under the shade structure behind the cottage for a 15-minute children's chapel service. Children will then go to their classes as usual. We'll post a reminder in front of the church on those Sundays.
- **Intergenerational services:** Throughout the year, we will have occasional Intergenerational services in which the children and youth are in the sanctuary for the entire service. These services help us celebrate being together as one UUCSM community of all ages, and also provide an important opportunity for young people to experience first-hand the way their parents worship in the sanctuary when they would usually be in their classrooms.

**Please return the registration form as quickly as possible. It can be turned in to my box in the main office, or at the Lifespan RE table in Forbes Hall during coffee hour on Sundays. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions.**

Thank you for your involvement; thank you for recognizing the need for religious education in your children and youth's lives...thank you for adding your presence to this community. We are thrilled to have your family among us and look forward to an exciting year together!

See you in church,

Catherine Farmer Loya,  
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