

UUFN TEACHERS GUIDE

Teaching Teams

Why teaching teams?

UUFN teachers and advisors work in teams with an overlapping flexible rotation system. In addition to safety considerations, the principal benefit is greater continuity from week to week. Continuity becomes a challenge since many of our children are not present on a weekly basis. The problem is compounded by the fact that our children are from a broad geographical area that includes parts of three different states and many different school systems. While some of our children are frequently together at times other than Sunday morning, many of our children never meet except when they are here on Sunday morning or at other UUFN events. Moreover, when teachers feel they are alone in their work and have little idea of the classroom dynamics in previous weeks, continuity suffers.

Sample team schedule

Teaching teams are free to set up a schedule that they feel will work best for them. Here is our most widely used method— On a given Sunday, Teacher 1 leads and Teacher 2 assists. The next Sunday, Teacher 2 leads and Teacher 3 assists. The next Sunday, Teacher 3 leads and Teacher 4 assists. And so forth.

Often at the beginning of the year, teams put together their calendar so that teachers without prior teaching experience assist experienced teachers who lead the class sessions for the first few weeks. Then, new teachers can begin to take the lead as more experienced teachers assist.

Keeping a team coordinated

Harvey regularly shares information with team members throughout the year. E-mail has become an important tool. When messages are sent to the whole team and responses are made using “reply all”, everyone generally is in touch with what is going on. Ideally, one member of each team serves as team coordinator (1) to make sure that the team gets together periodically, (2) to check with other team members periodically to see how things are going, and (3) to make sure information is shared with all team members, especially when unforeseen changes need to be made.

Each team should meet together periodically (*e.g.*, Sunday morning during Coffee Hour or prior to the RE hour) to reflect on how things are going, both in the classroom and in terms of the teaching schedule. Harvey welcomes the opportunity to meet with a team, if invited. At any time, teaching teams, as well as individual teachers, are welcome to schedule a consultation with Harvey.

Ethics, Permission Slips, Behavior Issues

A code of ethics for our teachers and advisors

We follow the *Unitarian Universalist Association's code of ethics for adults who work with children and youth*. The heart of that code is that “leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with children and youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with children and youth which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.” We ask all our teachers and advisors to review this code and to sign a covenant of agreement to abide by it.

Number of adults required in the classroom

For safety, there should be two adults in each classroom at all times. Given our team teaching approach, normally this will not be a problem, as two teachers are scheduled for each class session anyway. However, if a second teacher is unavailable, a parent or other adult known to the teacher may assist. If you have any question about this, please see Harvey. Also, for religious education sponsored activities and field trips, no matter how small, at least two adults ought to be present.

When are permission slips required?

Sometimes classes meet for an extended session, an hour or so beyond the normal meeting time, such as for a pizza party or a play rehearsal. When that is to be the case, parents should be notified in advance, but permission slips are not required.

If a class is going to have an activity at another location (off-site) or participate in an overnight event at the Fellowship, children are required to have a permission slip signed by their parents. Parents should be given notice of the event and receive permission slips in advance. Also, if teachers or parents will be driving groups of children, Harvey can provide them with our driver's guidelines for fieldtrips.

If there is something about a lesson you don't understand or find uncomfortable, don't hesitate to consult with other team members or Harvey.

A classroom covenant of classroom behavior

We encourage teaching teams to develop a written covenant of classroom behavior with the children at the beginning of the year and to post the covenant where it can be seen whenever the class meets.

Dealing with disruptive behavior

When a child breaks the covenant of classroom behavior, the teacher may interrupt the session to point out the part of the agreed upon covenant that is being violated and ask the child to modify behavior. The important thing is that the teacher's response be fair, even-handed, respectful and non-punitive.

An additional approach is to redirect the child's attention away from disruptive behavior as soon as such behavior is observed. The second adult in the classroom can be especially helpful by keeping an eye open for signs that disruptive behavior is beginning and by acting quickly and subtly, if possible, to redirect the child's attention. Occasionally it helps to change seating patterns.

When disruptive behavior continues

We ask teachers to consult with the director of religious education on classroom management issues that persist. Teachers may also choose to speak with a parent of the child. Often parents can provide insights into the source of the child's behavior that a teacher would otherwise have no way of knowing.

Physical discipline by teachers or students is never tolerated.

Resources: Books, Craft Supplies, Snacks, People

About the RE library

Many of the books recommended in your curriculum are in our RE library. We also have many alternative titles. You may wish to browse through the RE library catalogue or shelves for additional alternatives. In addition, your public library may be able to secure the book for you.

The RE Library is located in the UUFN Board Room behind the main office.

Books are shelved alphabetically by author's last name.

Check out books, even if picking them up just before the RE hour and returning them right after, by filling out the library card located in the back of each book. Please return books promptly after use as other classes may wish to use them. However, you may keep books in your classroom as long as you have checked them out properly. That way we can keep track of where they are if someone else needs them for a lesson.

Please do not shelve books when you return them. Just place them in the designated return box located next to the bookshelves.

Craft Supplies

Many of the craft supplies you will need are available in the classroom closet or rolling storage bin. Additional supplies are kept in a white cabinet in Klevans Closet, the storage closet that projects off the far end of Fahs Hall near the exit door. You are free to take supplies from these storage areas as you need them. If you need some craft material that is not in one of these areas, check with Harvey—the sooner, the better! Basic supplies we have on-hand include markers, construction paper, white paper, pencils, glue, and scissors. There are also collage materials, fabric scraps, yarn, paint and more.

A wide variety of supplies are squeezed into a very small space. So, when you are searching for supplies, removing them for use, or returning them, please try to leave the storage areas in at least as good order as you found them. Contact Harvey if you need help locating materials. And please let him know if you use the last of any supply materials.

If you need materials not available in the supply closet, please see Harvey. Remember, the sooner you ask, the more likely you will receive what you need when you need it.

You may also purchase needed supplies yourself and receive reimbursement, if the purchase is within reason. (If you think a purchase may be too expensive, check with Harvey or the Religious Education Committee chair, Karen Barker, before making the purchase.) If you purchase supplies, keep a receipt so that you can be reimbursed.

You *must* have a receipt to receive reimbursement. Give your receipt to Harvey and a reimbursement check will be sent to you in the mail.

Snacks

UUFN supplies minimal classroom snacks for Sunday mornings. Members of the teaching teams prepare the snack for their respective classes. Teachers can stock their classroom supply of food snacks, cups and napkins from the grey snack cabinet located just inside Klevans Closet on the right. A supply of food snacks, cups and napkins may be stored in the classroom closet or portable storage units. Pitchers for water, labeled for RE, are found in each classroom and can be filled in the Fanny Farmer Kitchen off of MacKinnon Hall. Please *be sure to empty, clean and dry pitchers at the end of class and store them in the classroom for use the following week.*

Serving a snack is not required, but, if used, we recommend small servings of snack food and a paper cup of water for each student. Ziploc bags are provided to store unused snack.

Teachers may prepare healthy alternative snacks or organize parents to provide them. Sometimes a special snack is part of a lesson plan. Reimbursement is handled in the same way as for craft supplies.

Harvey will let teaching team members know if we are aware of any students with food allergies in their class. If there is *any* question as to whether a food item is safe for a child, consult with the parent before serving. When teachers are planning to use special foods with young children, they should let parents know at the time they sign their children in on Sunday morning.

People with special skills

If you need someone with special skills (artist, musician, etc.) to be a guest for a class project or segment, let Harvey know, and there's a good chance we can find just the person. You may also wish to check with other members of your teaching team. The more advance notice you give, the more likely the need can be met.

Classroom Set-up and Routine

Create an appealing space

We encourage teaching teams to make the space appealing to the age group they're working with. For individual class sessions, teachers may arrange the room in whatever way will best suit the class' needs. However, depending on which room is being used, there are things that need to be taken into consideration. At the end of every session make sure that supplies are stored and that the room is left in good condition for use by other groups.

Using the *Olympia Brown* or *Theodore Parker* room

Other UUFN groups use the Olympia Brown room and, occasionally, the Theodore Parker room. Because the Olympia Brown room is sometimes rented to outside groups or even UUFN groups that are careless in putting things away, folding chairs and tables are sometimes removed from the room and not returned. If you find you need some extra folding chairs, look first in Walden Lounge. Then look in the Klevans Closet at the back of Fahs Hall. Look for the tables in Walden Lounge or Kelvans Closet.

Feel free to use the walls in these rooms. Generally speaking, pushpins may be used in corkboard and masking tape on wallboard. Occasionally, pushpins may be needed to secure heavier materials to wallboard. *Please do not use cellophane tape on walls.*

The closet in each of these rooms is available for storage of your materials.

Using the *Fahs Hall* classrooms

These rooms are shared with the *Willa Road Childrens Center*. We have their generous permission to use any of their furniture and, for our Preschool/Kindergarten class, playthings ***as long as we put things back just where we found them.*** So far, we have not found a practical way to share wall space in these rooms. However, we have three-fold presentation boards that stand alone available for your use. These can be used as portable mini-walls.

The cleaning service will empty trashcans and vacuum floors in these rooms. If you have brought any furniture into the room for your class session, be sure to put it away. Before you leave the room, please be sure to check that doors leading to the outside of the building are securely closed and locked, lights are turned off, and doors leading into Fahs Hall are locked.

Using *Fellowship Hall*

Folding tables are stored in the vestibule. If they have are missing, check Klevans Closet.

Although you may put things on the walls during sessions, because this space is rented for outside use, items must be taken down at the conclusion of the session. Please, no cellophane tape.

There is some storage space in the foyer closet. A plastic storage bin may also be used. Renters frequently use Fellowship Hall on Sunday afternoon. So, be sure to pick up stray paper off the floor and, if necessary, vacuum. A vacuum cleaner is in the vestibule closet in Fellowship Hall.

When a larger space is needed

Fahs Hall (with kitchen) is available for sessions requiring a large, open space or cooking. Reserve use with Harvey to avoid conflict with another class. Some activities may also take place in the play area outside the building.

When a lesson calls for advance communication with parents

We have e-mail addresses, in addition to postal addresses and phone numbers, for the parents of most of our children. You may communicate directly with parents using *Congregation Builder* group broadcasts or, with advance notice, Harvey will be glad to make the contact for you.

Recommended classroom routine

From week to week, the particular students in attendance frequently vary. In addition to the teaching team approach, a regular routine enhances continuity in the classroom. Here is one approach that works well:

9:45 - 10:00	Children arrive. Personally welcome each student. Have an activity set up that requires little supervision. Record attendance. Take time to speak with parents, especially of new students.
10:00-10:15	Opening Circle. Light chalice. Introduce lesson.
10:15-10:50	Conduct lesson developed from the curriculum, including stories and art activities.
10:50-11:00	Snack (if included), clean-up and dismiss.

Include more than one learning style in a class session

There are many different ways in which people learn, such as...

- By reading, writing and listening to others
- By talking things out
- By thinking things through and experimenting
- By finding patterns and creating designs
- By hands-on activity
- By music, tone, rhythm and timing
- By working together with others
- By looking within

The primary way of learning for one person may be very different from that of another.

Many teachers, as they plan a lesson, make sure that in the course of the session there is sufficient variety to allow access by more than one learning style. Also, while one teacher may be adept working with one learning style, another teacher is likely to be adept working with another. One of the beauties of the teaching team is that, by becoming aware of which teachers are most suited to which styles, teachers can plan so that over the course of weeks quite a few learning styles are employed. Moreover, by having two teachers in the classroom, teachers can learn from one another and broaden their skills.

Safety Issues

Registration and sign-in

All regular classroom participants must be registered. Registration forms for parents to fill out and sign are available in the attendance book or can be gotten from Harvey. In line with our safe congregation practices, visitors are required to register their children.

Children in the Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1-2 classes must be signed in *and* out of class by a parent or guardian. Preschool/Kindergarten and Primary children should be kept in the classroom until a parent picks them up. (If a parent neglects to pick up a child a few minutes after the service ends, one of the teachers may wish to seek out the parent.) Older children may be dismissed when teachers are certain the service in MacKinnon Hall has ended. When all children have been picked up or left the classroom, the teachers may leave.

In case an injury occurs during a class session

For minor injuries, first-aid kits are located in classroom closets and storage cabinets, the hallway outside the Olympia Brown Room and in the Fahs Hall kitchen. Band-Aids and cold packs may be used for minor cuts and bumps. It is a good practice to tell a parent what happened and what you did.

Generally the most appropriate response for injury other than minor cuts and bumps is to get qualified emergency or medical help. In general, you should get professional help when the injured person:

- is unconscious or borders on unconsciousness (including severe headache, seizure, and slurred or incoherent speech)
- is having trouble breathing
- complains of chest pain (like a feeling of pressure or tightness)
- has head, neck or back injuries
- is bleeding severely, or is vomiting or passing blood
- complains of severe and constant abdominal pain
- seems to have been poisoned, or
- has possible broken bones

In cases of serious injury—

- 1) First make the injured child as comfortable as possible. *Do not attempt to move him or her unless his or her situation presents an immediate, serious hazard.* Keep him or her warm. **Administer first-aid only if you have the proper training.**
- 2) **One adult should remain with the injured child while the other goes to call 911 to ask for emergency assistance.** Don't forget to give the address clearly and distinctly. You may be asked to observe the injured person and provide specific information about his or her condition. Do not hang up until so instructed by the dispatcher.
- 3) If the DRE is in the building, let the DRE know what is happening so that parents can be notified.
- 4) If the DRE is not present, notify the injured child's family. Avoid undue panic—explain the situation calmly and accurately. Do not attempt to offer a diagnosis of the medical emergency. Tell the family that you have called an ambulance and that help is on the way. If the ambulance has already arrived, tell the family which hospital the injured or severely ill person is being taken to.
- 5) If circumstances should involve police and other investigators, answer questions about the accident and give them contact information about the witnesses.
- 6) As soon as possible after the injured person has been provided for, and preliminary investigation has been made, fill out a Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Newark "Accident

Report Form" and give a copy to an officer of the Fellowship or a member of the staff. The Office Administrator or other officer or staff member of the Fellowship will notify our insurance company of the accident. Note: If the injury occurs while on a field trip or other activity away from the Fellowship, contact a staff member or officer of UUFN as soon as reasonably possible.

What to do if the fire alarm sounds during a session

If the fire alarm sounds during a class session, please help the children to remain calm and lead them from the building by way of the nearest safe exit. A sign showing nearby exits is posted on the inside of each classroom door. If possible, as you leave the room, take the attendance book along with you, so that we can double check to make sure that all children are accounted for. If you become aware of a fire, but the fire alarm has not sounded, fire alarm pulls are located at all the outside exits in the main building and Fahs Hall.

Do not call 911. The worship leader and associate will be responsible for seeing that 911 is called.

Keep the children in your class together as a group. Move by the safest route to the sidewalk in front of the building along Willa Road. As soon as *safely* possible, cross Willa Road and assemble the children on the West Park Elementary School lawn. Once there, double check to see that all the children in your class are accounted for. After the children have been accounted for, do not release children from your group until a parent/guardian picks them up. Make a notation in the attendance book that the child was picked up and by whom.

If the fire alarm should sound during a time when various classes are gathered together, the procedure is much the same. The activity leaders and teachers present should help the children to remain calm and lead them from the building by way of the nearest safe exit. Move by the safest route to the sidewalk in front of the building along Willa Road. As soon as safely possible, cross Willa Road and assemble the children on the West Park Elementary School lawn.

Note about the nursery: One parent of each child in the nursery is permitted, upon leaving the building, to go immediately to the outside entrance of the infant/toddler nursery to provide additional adult assistance in evacuating the nursery. A parent who does so should remain with their child with the nursery group until all the children are accounted for.

Fire extinguisher locations and fire suppression system

There are fire extinguishers throughout the main building, Fahs Hall, Fellowship Hall, and the part of the white house used in the religious education program. Please make sure that you know where these fire extinguishers are located. The main building is also equipped with a fire suppression sprinkler system throughout the building. This system uses water, not chemicals.

Food allergies

Harvey will let teaching team members know if we are aware of any students with food allergies in their class. If there is *any* question as to whether a food item is safe for a child, consult with the parent before serving.

Use of the playground during class sessions

RE classes are free to make use of the playground during the session, weather permitting. Please be sure children treat one another and the equipment with respect. Teachers *must* be present at all times. (Please note: The equipment is not designed for use by older children.) Return to the classroom for the end of the RE session. Once parents have picked up their children from the classroom, teachers are no longer responsible for the playground and access to the playground is from the breezeway door, not the classroom doors.