

Faith Formation Annual Report 2018-2019

This report covers the lifespan faith formation program at UU Church of Nashua and Sadie Kahn-Greene's second year as the settled Director of Faith Formation.

Budget: The Faith Formation program operated with the following budget, exclusive of staffing expenses:
Children & Youth FF: \$5600 Adult FF: \$1300 Total FF Budget: \$6900

Children & Youth Faith Formation Teaching Teams and Program Notes for 2018-2019

This church year consisted of:

Twenty-Four Sundays with faith formation classes, five mixed ages AREA days, Twelve All Ages worship services, Six Children's Chapel, and over forty Wonder Boxes!

Chalice Children (Pre K-K)

Teaching Team: Jenn Morton, Cindy Hudson, Megan Holmes & teen assistant Camille Trembley.

Total students who attended this year: 16, Avg. Attendance: 6. Leaders set up a welcoming class circle time with stories, chalice lighting with electric candles, and a wide variety of engaging crafts, and games. Classes closed with parents joining the circle to sing peace and joy. Teachers worked with the Soul matters resources to create crafts based on the Themes of the Sunday Service. Sadie assisted in gathering books and helping with ideas and materials as needed.

Principle Pals (1st-2nd Grade)

Teaching Team: Dick Widhu, Victoria Agnew, Jim Woolsey, and teen assistant Anthony Iovino.

Total students: 12, Avg. Attendance: 4. Sadie developed lessons and gathered books and materials that connected to the Wonderbox stories in the Sanctuary or Chapel. Lesson plans did not always get sent out to teachers until Thursday or Friday before each Sunday, making for some last minute communication and questions. For next year the plan is for the curriculum used to be shared further in advance and collaboratively planned by teachers next year.

Helping Hands (3rd-5th Grade)

Teaching Team: Jodie Holway, Joanne Iovino & Billy Earley, and occasional teen assistant Doug Eberle.

Total students: 14, Avg. Attendance: 7. Sadie developed lessons and gathered books and materials that connected to the Wonder Box stories in the Sanctuary or Chapel.

Director of Faith Formation Notes about Using Soul Matter Curriculum Resources:

Connecting classes to Soul Matters. - I shifted the faith formation 1st-5th grade curriculum to the Soul Matters program, which we received by email each month. My goal was to connect faith formation to the monthly theme as well as offer follow up activities that relate to the wonder box stories each Sunday. The soul matter's curriculum is not as strong of a curriculum as I hoped it would be. Many of the suggested lesson plans did not present an appealing choice for our 1st-5th graders. As a result, for each Sunday, I would work to make suggestions for teachers by creating a lesson plan for 1st-5th graders that connect with the wonder box story. This method worked better some weeks than others.

Crafting Lesson Plans for teachers. - I thought It would be helpful if I created lesson plans for each class based on my wonder box story. I misjudged how much time that would take for me. I found that some teachers felt it took away how much autonomy and ownership they had in from their roles as faith formation volunteers. I fear my attempt at helping support teachers ended up giving them lesson plans that they didn't connect with or think would work for their class. I do know that this is not the experience of every teacher, for some this worked, and for others, it didn't. My goal next year is to continue connecting faith formation to our monthly themes and Wonderbox stories, but in a different way that has more collaboration and ownership for teachers. (See notes about next year's faith formation program on page 4 of this report for more information.)

Crossing Paths (6th-7th Grade) Teaching Team: Jason O'Neil, Karen Murray & John McCannon
Total Students:12, Avg. Attendance: 6. This class used the new Soul Matter curriculum, which is an updated version of Neighboring Faiths (a curriculum used at UUCN for many years). This curriculum has engaging activities that use games, videos, conversations with meaningful metaphors, and guidance for four field trips to local houses of worship. This year was Part Two of a two-year class.

ROPES: A Coming of Age Year (8th-9th graders): Leaders Krista Earley, Dan Earley, Lee Guerette (from Sept - Mar.) & Mentor Coordinators:Ginger Hedges and Sadie Kahn-Greene.. Mentors for youth were: Brenna Woods, Donna LaRue, Dave Hudson, Lindsey Hedrick, Jim Woolsey, Laurie Goodman, Michelle Morrison & Rhonda Cook-Moore. 8 ROPES youth participated this year (one did not finish the class), Avg. Attendance: 5, Saturday retreats: 2, and field trips:2. ROPES met on most Sunday mornings in the youth group room from 10:30-11:15.

High School Youth Group Advisors: Sadie Kahn-Greene, Lindsey Sylvester, Ginger Hedges, Roy Goodman, Brenna Woods (Sept-Nov) Marissa Volpe (Mar-June). At the beginning of the church year, Sadie made the difficult choice of asking Monica Staples to step down from youth ministry at UU Nashua after 11 years in the role. After receiving feedback that Sunday evenings were hard for youth, we shifted youth group sessions to Sunday after church starting in November. Sunday afternoons also proved to be a challenging time for high schoolers to attend. Three youth and two adults participated in the Youth Ministry Revival in Bethesda, MD in early March - thanks to a success Faithify fundraising campaign and holiday youth sale! The youth returned and led the Youth service on Mar. 17th to share their learnings from the revival. More youth participated in other ways with the congregation throughout the year. Two youth served as worship associates, 3 youth were faith formation assistants, several sang in Christmas choirs, and 10 helped with special events. Total youth who attended youth group programs this year: 9, Avg. Attendance: 2-3 youth, overnights: 1, field trips: 4.

Hallway Rovers

We brought back rovers to both the parish house and the faith formation wing this year to provide a welcoming presence in the hallways during Sunday morning faith formation classes. Rovers this year were: Allison Jutras, Paul Cardone, Tiff Holmes, Livia O'Neil, Will Kahn-Greene, and Maggie Woolsey.

All Ages Faith Formation Programs for 2018-2019

AREA (Alternative Religious Education Activities) Volunteers: Kathleen Griffis and Meghan Holmes, this year we offered AREA days in October, December, and February.

Ice Cream Social with water play activities took place for everyone in the parking lot after the Water communion. Michelle Morrison, Jenn Morton, and Eileen Herring, Priscilla Bernasconi, Mia Taylor, and Erica LaValley helped with this event.

Pumpkin carving and all-ages potluck on Oct. 27th.

We have about 20 carvers attend, and it was a fun, low key evening with science experiments led by Peggy Cardone! The Atwell and Hiland families were wonderful helpers at this event as well!

Carol Sing Potluck w/ community bag donations on Dec. 15th. We had over 45 members of all ages attend the sing-a-long, and we filled over 100 bags for the community dinner guests!

Beginning in Jan, Rev. Allison and I joined with the new FUUN team to share coordination for more all-ages events. The Fellowship and Fun Team annual report lists these events!

Adult Faith Formation Pathways in 2018-2019

Here are the adult faith formation program offered in 2018-2019 categorized by their Pathways which are part of the Adult Faith Formation Road Map. As full presentation about these pathways can be found on the UUNashua.org under Adult Faith Formation as well as on the bulletin board outside the church office.

Faith in Action

- Monthly Racial Justice Study Group met 3rd Monday and later in the year 3rd Tuesdays of every month, led by Jodie Holway, Sadie Kahn-Greene, Garvin Warner & Rev. Allison Palm avg. Attendance ranged from 4-8 adults. This program will continue next year but might meet at a different time.
- Welcome & Inclusion Workshop on Feb. 17th - Guest presented CB Beal led this that morning's worship as well as an after church program for 35 participants. It cost \$1000 for CB's worship & workshop. Depending on available funding, we hope to repeat programs like this!
- Switch-it-Up Sunday on Mar. 31st ~ 100 adults participated and were sung out to 5 different racial justice themed workshops while Children stayed in the sanctuary for worship. We hope to repeat this kind of program next year with different themes.

Faith in Community

- Five Covenant groups continue to meet monthly. DFF Sadie Kahn-Greene led monthly meetings for covenant group leaders. These programs will continue next year.
- Our Young Adult group moved to Sunday afternoons. Rev. Allison and DFF Sadie support Maggie Woolsey in leading this group. This program will continue next year.
- UU Hikers Group held all ages hikes once or twice a month throughout the year. This program will continue next year.

Faith in Life

- Death Cafe - hosted by Eileen Herring and Karen Campbell on Mar. 23rd. About 12 adults participated. This program will continue next year.
- Caring for Aging Loved Ones Support Group - led by Kathy Fletcher & Sharon Machado met monthly with about 2-3 participants each month. This program will continue next year.
- Online UU Parenting Group met monthly online led by Cecile Bonvouloir & Sadie Kahn-Greene attendance ranged from 2-5 participants. This program will continue next year.

Faith in Knowledge

- Unitarian Universalist History DVD & Discussion Group: led by Kevin Emery Ross. 1st Mondays - Attendance ranged from 3-5 participants. This program will continue next year.
- Starting Points Class UU 101 met 3rd Thursdays evenings and led by Rev. Allison Palm & Karen Thomas. This program will continue next year.
- Book Discussion Groups Books: Daring Democracy (only met once due to low attendance) Honest Direct & Respectful (avg. 4-6 participants), & Christ fro UU's (avg. 3-5 participants). Book Discussion may or may not happen again next year.

Faith in Spirit

- Poetry As Practice Night met 4th Monday evenings led by Roy Goodman. Avg. Attendance around 4 participants. This program will continue next year.
- Yoga As Practice Night met 4th Monday evenings led by Pat Ladew. Avg. Attendance was 1 participant. Unfortunately, this program won't continue.
- Worship Workshop. Rev. Allison led this four-week class for Summer worship service leaders to help write sermons and plan their summer worship service. Avg. Attendance was 6 participants. This program will continue next year.

Faith Formation Plans for 2019-2020

Sunday Morning Worship Choices

Sunday mornings will look a little different this coming September with “CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE” WORKSHOP CHOICES MODEL FOR FAITH FORMATION! (I’m opening to calling it by another name, this is the one we have for now).

Children in first grade and older can choose from a variety of workshops.

During the first three Sundays of each month, a new set of workshops will reflect the month’s theme. These workshop sets will consist of 3 or 4 workshop choices that use one of our core values.

Choices can include:

- ***The Wonder Workshop*** will create a space to learn about spiritual practices that encourage children to wonder and reflect. Other times this will be a workshop for questions and discovery. Activities for this workshop might include: yoga, weaving prayer ribbons and making prayer beads or science experiments and exploring the outdoors.
- ***The Courageous Community Workshop*** will create a space for building community through a variety of active games and activities, such as problem-solving challenges, scavenger hunts, and community building games.
- ***The Love in Action Workshop*** will create a space for hand-on projects that bring more compassion, love to our church, and the wider community. Activities can include, caring quilts, dog and cat toys for animal shelters, planting bulbs and cards for homebound community members.
- ***The Authentic Connections Workshop*** will create a space for building connections with Unitarian Universalist and our church community by creating worship service elements. Activities can include rehearsing music for worship, writing chalice lightings and poems or rehearsing worship skits and scripts.

This variety of choices will provide children with different learning styles and comfort levels to self-select with the help of their parents, a good match for them each Sunday.

Since workshops repeat for three Sunday in a row, this allows for our children who can’t attend every week to attend their first choice. If children come more than once a month, they can repeat their favorite workshop or make a different choice. Even though we have a few families that attend every Sunday, regular attendance for most families is once or twice a month.

Workshops will have a standard opening and closing rituals and covenant to provide continuity throughout the program. Suggested questions for reflection in all workshops will frame the theme as appropriate for each space. A team of volunteers called Faith Formation Associates would meet monthly to work with the Director of Faith Formation to support co-leaders in creating their workshops.

Since workshops take place during the first three Sundays of most months, the fourth Sunday will most often be an All ages Worship Service. This schedule allows some children to prepare for a role in that worship service through a children’s choir rehearsals, wonder box skits, or writing chalice lightings and prayers.

In this model, volunteers are asked to commit to one three-week session at a time rather than the full year or 1/2 year.

Youth Ministry Next Year

Our program next year will continue to offer a variety of choices for our middle and high school youth - what this looks like is still in the planning stages. Youth are welcome to join teaching teams and helping in children's faith formation workshops. We currently have a team of two advisors Lindsey Sylvester, and Marissa Volpe lined up for next year. Our new Ministerial Intern, Ben Atherton Zeman and Director of Faith Formation Sadie will support youth ministry as well. Anthony Iovino will be a senior next year and will use his leadership to helping form and organize youth events. The church is preparing to help host a Youth Pride Dance at the church on Sat. June 29th after the Nashua Pride march. This dance will be a new chance for outreach and to support Nashua LGBTQ youth. Our Whole lives will be offered for 7th-9th graders on Sunday mornings in 2019-2020 with OWL facilitators Andy Straussberg, Joanne Iovino and Michelle Morrison.

Faith Formation Staff

Sadie Kahn-Greene's Director of Faith Formation professional development/denominational activities included the LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Assoc.) Fall Conference in Houston, TX; LREDA Cluster Meetings in MA and NH. Sadie also attended the Northern New England District workshops "Healthy and Relevant Youth Ministry" in November and "Walking the Talk of Covenant" in May.

Ericka LaValley continued to be an incredible support to our Sunday morning as our Faith Formation Assistant this year. Ericka supports faith formation program preparations and administration for four hours on Sunday mornings during the program year and worked one hour during Sundays in July and two hours on Sundays in August. In addition to helping with Sunday morning set up, Ericka works as our lead adult if childcare is needed. This year we have seen an adorable addition of new babies and toddlers who enjoy the family corner during service. Ericka and our teen helpers work to support families in the family corner by playing quietly with little ones who need a bit more room than our pews provide. Ericka also provided childcare for a few after church programs when requested. Ericka also provides staff support on Sundays that Sadie has off.

We are lucky to have teens from our congregation that work as assistant Child Care Providers and as teen assistants with our younger classes. The teens Sadie hired for childcare assistants this year were: **Asher Thomas and Doug Eberle with Mia Taylor** as a substitute. These assistants now work directly with Ericka Lavalley to offer childcare if needed before, during, and after Sunday morning worship. They also help provide support in setting up materials and spaces on Sunday mornings. **Camille Tremblay and Anthony Iovino** joined as teachers in the Chalice Children Class, and the Principle Pals class and **Doug Eberle** assisted with our Helping Hands group.

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*Thank you for being such a wonder-filled community and for a year where we accomplished so much together!
I look forward to another year of Faith Formation with you all!*

Respectfully Submitted,
Sadie Kahn-Greene
Director of Faith Formation