



The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica

September 22, 2011

Dear Preschool Parents/Guardians:

We have just launched our new program year, and this year our congregation's Religious Exploration program will offer our preschoolers the *We Are Many, We Are One* curriculum, led by our wonderful new Preschool RE teacher Carmen Santos. We are very excited about our program for this year, and think you and your children will be, too.

With an emphasis on psychosocial development, the fundamental objectives of the program are for young children to feel support and affirmation for their individuality, to experience a sense of belonging and importance as members of a group, and to connect with the classroom and congregation as an open, straightforward place where all aspects of life can be explored and celebrated.

We Are Many, We Are One encourages young children to:

- learn how to play and work cooperatively
- express their feelings about themselves and others
- see congregations as places for making and caring about friends
- appreciate how we are all alike yet different
- view nature as a source of gifts that needs our care
- celebrate the different religions and cultures of the world.

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 10:15/12:15.** 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 UCCSM RE Updates 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's Chapel on 1st 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 UCCSM 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,

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