

**UUCWI RE Program**  
**A Bridge From Home to Church**  
**A Family Guide to UUCWI RE Program**  
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Parenting is a complex job. It is one requiring a great deal of patience, understanding, and love - both for your children and yourself. Becoming a mother or father is an evolving process that needs to be nurtured. It is important to have a community around you to celebrate as your child grows and develops, to listen during times of struggle, and to offer support when needed. Church is one place where you can find this kind of community - people from different backgrounds, of different ages, with different interests, coming together freely to create a micro-community of tolerance, respect, and compassion in search of truth and meaning.

UUCWI RE programs offer children a liberal religious education. Often children ask profound, life questions that seem beyond their years. They are still so open to the world and the mystery around us. UUCWI RE classes give children a place where these questions are heard. The answers are often offered as “wonderings,” allowing children space to find their own truth in the world. In addition, UUCWI RE classes share with children the background of many different philosophies and religions, allowing them to explore these ideas in an open and trusted environment. Children will be exposed to a variety of spiritual thoughts in the various places they attend - schools, playgrounds, clubs, and other social activities. We want to offer a foundation so that in these moments, they can think for themselves and not be swept into a new belief system because of peer pressure, fear, or misunderstanding. UUCWI RE programs strive to create a safe place for children to listen, ask questions, and discuss the big questions of life.

Children often ask the deepest questions to their parents. The trust that has been established over the years allows children to talk to parents even when the topic may be scary. During adolescence, this may seem less obvious, but still those questions exist, even if in code. Parenting demands us to stretch our comfort zone, constantly reevaluate our own decisions and beliefs, and consciously meet the needs of our children. We must answer our children’s questions age-appropriately, honestly, and openly. And we must be ready to hear our children’s own answers to these questions. It helps to discuss these kinds of questions with your partner or other support person in advance, so that you don’t feel caught off guard during a conversation with your child. But, there will always be those times that your child asks a question you don’t know how to answer and it is important to be able to tell your child, “I wonder about that. Let me think about it and we can talk about it later” or something to that effect. You can also bring these questions to your child’s Religious Education Director or other members of your church for discussion. There is no single answer, but as a community we can support one another in offering children a place where we can talk about issues such as spiritually, religion, social justice, life and death.

Community is an investment from all the people involved. It is not formed overnight. In order to create a RE community for your child, many people share their gifts and time. Teachers volunteer with incredible integrity and commitment. Other congregation members bring snacks, make crafts for the program, offer classroom supplies, and organize special events. The RE program is also dependent on parents prioritizing attendance as often as possible. The more regularly your child attends RE class, the more connections they will make with the teachers and other students, the more trust they will develop for those people (allowing them to ask the big questions and share their life’s joys and concerns,) and the more deeply they will understand the UU principles that are shared during class. It is not easy in our modern society to set aside Sunday morning each week for church. But, for those parents that are willing to do it, it is a gift for their family and the church congregation as a whole.