

Children's Faith Development Program Expectations

We welcome your family to TPUUF's Lifespan Faith Development program where we cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect and kindness. Our goal is for every child of any age to come to know the value of a loving community and realize their own ability to contribute to the community. We promise to offer opportunities to engage, learn, cooperate, and grow as we explore life, love, and the mysteries of existence.

At Thomas Paine we will create an open, loving, and safe atmosphere for our children and youth to grow and learn. As our children and youth explore the world and try to find their place in it, we -- the religious education professionals, volunteers, and representatives of the congregation -- will try to spark them to wonder and embrace the spirit of life by engaging sacred and secular texts, using hands for social justice and service, celebrating the seasonal journey, marking life transitions, and entering moments of worshipful silence to access what we "know but cannot say." All to help each child or youth find a place to belong and explore Unitarian Universalist values.

Every child of any age will learn our **covenantal** expectations below:

- What I say matters. And what I hear others say matters, so I will pay attention to others speaking.
- Learning is important. I will cooperate with adults and the other children or youth, so that everyone is able to learn.
- In order to keep everyone safe, including myself, I will not leave a group without permission from the adult leader/teacher. In addition, I understand that children age 11 and younger will only be released to their parents or guardians.
- The beauty of TPUUF and the work of others in my community are important. I, and many others, come to TPUUF to experience them. I will show that I value them by treating the building and grounds with respect.
- We are part of a community. Attending Sunday services, CFD Classes and other special events means that each member of our community will honor the expectations and guidelines for that event and space.
- We honor our young people and recognize that all people have varying needs for their own self-care and comfort. When I do not attend class, I can quietly use the Family Worship Space in the back of the sanctuary or, if needed, listen to service via the speakers in our lobby ONLY under the supervision of my parent/guardian. This ensures the safety and comfort of our young people and our congregation.
- I will help create **another covenant** with my classmates and adult leaders to agree on how we should treat each other when we are together.
- I am learning and growing, and sometimes, I may act in ways that are disruptive to the group or learning atmosphere. When this happens, I accept that the adults and leaders have the responsibility to work with me to redirect my behavior. This includes:
 - Expecting adults to tell me about my disruptive behavior, and I accept their role in doing so.

- If I cannot re-direct my behavior, I will take a short break from the group apart from the common space to breathe, gather my thoughts, and re-consider my actions.
- If I still cannot re-direct my behavior, I will visit with a religious education staff member or other adult acting as such to think about what I can do so that I can return to the group and practice community-building, respect, and gentleness.
- If when I return to the group (that same day or the next) I cannot re-direct my behavior, I will be immediately asked to visit with a religious education staff member, who will work with me and my parents or guardians to develop a short-term alternative to Sunday morning's faith development activity at TPUUF.
- I recognize that my religious community has limited options to provide such an alternative without my parents or guardians full involvement.
- I expect to be safe from physical violence (e.g., unwanted touching or hitting) and verbal abuse (e.g., being yelled at, hurtful name calling and teasing).
 - If anything like this happens to me, I will tell the adult leader immediately.
 - If I do anything like this, I know that I have to leave the group immediately to be with my parents or guardians or the religious education staff.

As we learn and grow, working to find our place in the world, we sometimes act in ways that disrupt our community. Our role as a religious community is to promote the ability to participate in the community – within ourselves, in a group, and in the world. To accomplish the religious education ministry's goals here at TPUUF, we expect everyone -- adults and children -- to treat each other with RESPECT and GENTLENESS.

Faith Development Program Covenant

Positive participation and interaction are the foundation for a healthy, constructive learning environment for everyone. Our seven UU Principles guide us in our behavior in the classroom and beyond.

We believe each and every person is important.

- Follow adult's instructions. A safe learning environment is essential.
- Children ages 5 - 11 must remain in their classrooms or supervised areas until picked up by their parents.
- Children must have adult supervision in classrooms.
- On fellowship grounds only gentle play is appropriate.
- Be respectful to everyone with kind words and behavior.

We believe all people should be treated fairly.

- Be respectful of differing opinions and religious values.
- Take turns listening and talking.
- Be helpful and kind to one another.

We believe we should accept one another and learn together.

- Try to attend fellowship regularly. Your classmates and teachers depend on you.
- Participate in the lessons and activities planned for the day to the best of your ability.
- Welcome newcomers and include everyone in activities.
- Share what you learned in CFD with family and friends.

We believe each person is free to grow by exploring ideas and values together.

- Feel free to share your ideas with the group.
- Listen to the ideas of others.

We believe everyone deserves a vote about the things that concern them.

- Participate in developing your classroom covenant.
- Express your opinions constructively.
- Respect the decisions of the group.
- Share your feelings and ideas about the CFD program with your parents/guardians, CFD teachers, the DLFD &/or the minister.

We believe in working for a peaceful, fair and free world.

- Participate in CFD and fellowship-wide social action projects.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Do your best to get along with others.
- Be willing to listen to reminders about your behavior.

We believe in caring for our planet Earth & every living thing that shares it with us.

- Help us to recycle.
- Use only what you need.
- Help take care of our fellowship building and participate in clean up.
- Be careful with our fellowship equipment, furniture, special objects and sculptures, as well as the belongings of others.
- Move safely through our space.
- Be gentle with the plants and animals that inhabit our fellowship grounds. Learn about the areas where it is okay to play and areas where quiet reflection is preferred.

In the spirit of affirming healthy relationships among adults, children, and youth, the TPUUF congregation worked together to draft and adopt a Safe Congregation Policy. This policy establishes guidelines for a community where all children, youth, and vulnerable adults are safe.