

Children's Religious Education FAQs
Fall 2021
Updated August 31, 2021

Below are some potential FAQs parents/caregivers may have about the upcoming months in the Religious Education program for children (current as of August 31, 2021). **Please note that ALL program details and plans are subject to change anytime due to the ongoing nature of the Covid-19 pandemic.**

When do in-person worship services and Religious Education (RE) classes begin?

At this time, the plan is for outdoor, in-person worship services to resume on Sunday, September 12 at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Services are expected to run approximately 30 minutes. Children are encouraged to attend the worship service with their family. With the exception of preschool, all formal RE activities for children will begin the following Sunday, September 19.

What is the age range for children's programming? For the Fall 2021 semester, children's programs are being designed for children in 7th grade and younger, or the homeschool equivalent.

Are we meeting in-person, on Zoom, or both?

Both, at least during September and October. The Unitarian Universalist Association recommends planning for [Multiple-Platform Operations](#), which provides a flexible range of both online and in-person opportunities for engagement. Activities in September and October include, on alternating weeks, online gatherings on Zoom and several in-person Religious Education gatherings for children and their families at offsite locations in the St. Louis area. MOST gatherings, either online or in-person, will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Are we meeting indoors, outdoors, or both?

For September and October 2021, all in-person gatherings will take place **outdoors**, including worship services, Religious Education activities, and youth group gatherings. Should the weather be severe or prohibitive, activities will be cancelled or moved online.

When and where will RE gatherings occur? It will depend on the week and the activity. Beginning September 19, activities will rotate between Zoom and in-person gatherings at offsite (non-Eliot) locations, with MOST gatherings taking place at 10:30. **As of today, the in-person gatherings are scheduled for the following locations:**

- September 26 at [Powder Valley Nature Center](#) (10:30-12:00)
- October 10 at [Suson Park & Barnyard](#) (10:30-12:00)
- October 24 at [Fillmore Park](#) (Time TBD)
- October 31 at [Simpson Lake Pavilion](#) (10:30-12:00)

- ****Note:** We have outdoor pavilions rented on October 10 and October 31 at the respective sites for families to picnic or socialize for extended time. These sites also have playgrounds by the pavilion.

What is the primary focus of RE sessions in September and October?

The main focuses of most sessions are connection, interconnectedness, relationships, and fellowship, especially as it connects to nature and the outdoors. The outdoor format for in-person gatherings provides a new and unique opportunity to explore the following:

- Our relationships with the natural world and ways we are stewards of the Earth
- Connections between humans, animals, trees, and nature
- The Interconnected Web (7th UU Principle)
- Connections with our wider Eliot community and its congregational leaders
- Opportunities for connection and fellowship with each other, especially after being apart for so long.

Are we required to mask during RE activities? YES. All Eliot members and friends who are two (2) and older are required to wear masks during Eliot activities, regardless of their vaccine status. This is a congregation-wide expectation. The only exception is while consuming food and drink (during offsite events) or for infants & toddlers who are not yet two years of age.

May we attend both the worship service AND Religious Education?

YES. We are structuring the timing so that families and children wishing to participate in RE can also attend the 9 a.m. worship service. RE will begin at 10:30 MOST weeks.

Is the Eliot Chapel facility open during outdoor worship services and Social Hour?

Not at this time. There IS access to the **single-stall, all-gender restroom** located near the sanctuary for any essential personal care needs. This restroom has a **diaper changing table** available and is stocked with a **first aid kit**.

Why are RE activities not taking place on Eliot property?

It primarily comes down to available outdoor space, as well as an attempt to offer NEW outdoor experiences for children and families which provide opportunities and the necessary space for fellowship and programming. With the desire to offer outdoor worship services, Religious Education activities, Social Hour, and Youth Group each Sunday morning, available outdoor space on the property is limited.

Is nursery care available during the outdoor worship services?

Not at this time. All activities are outdoors in September and October. Infants, toddlers, and children under the age of 2 (as of August 1, 2021) should remain with their families during the service.

Are activities available for preschool-age children during the worship services?

YES. For preschool-age children who need more freedom of movement, supervised outdoor play will be provided (weather permitting) on the Eliot Chapel Nursery School playground. Supervised playtime will be led, most weeks, by Tim Bubb, LaTosha Crayton, Heather Flick, and Anna Beck.

Are any RE activities being provided for children at Eliot during worship services?

Not at this time (except for preschool). Children in kindergarten and older should attend the outdoor, 30-minute service with their families. Religious Education (either online or in-person) will begin at 10:30 most weeks.

Can we stay after the worship service to socialize?

YES. Eliot members and friends of all ages are encouraged to participate in **Social Hour on the back field**. We have purchased a number of outdoor games and equipment (sports balls, Yardzee, footballs, bean bag toss, etc.) to be available on the field, especially for older children (older than 6). **We strongly encourage older children and their families to socialize in the back field.**

Families with young children (generally ages 6 or younger) may play on the Eliot Chapel Nursery School (ECNS) Playground during Social Hour **so long as parents/caregivers actively supervise their children at all times**. The playground is operated, maintained, and funded by ECNS and is designed primarily with the needs of children ages 6 and younger in mind. The [Family Playground Expectations](#) outline the responsibilities of parents/caregivers during Social Hour time on the playground.

What about longer-range plans (November 2021 and beyond)?

At this time, Eliot staff members have been asked by Rev. Barbara to plan programs and activities in short increments (4-6 weeks at a time). The overall circumstances will be re-evaluated in early October. Planning for November and December will begin shortly thereafter and be largely guided by the circumstances and conditions at the time of reevaluation.

What about the Our Whole Lives (OWL) programs for children?

At this time, all Our Whole Lives sexuality education programs remain on hold, including programs for both children and youth. More background information and OWL resources, including parent & family resources for when OWL is on hold, can be found [HERE](#).

What protocols are in place to reduce the risk of spreading or catching Covid-19 in the children's program?

In addition to the Eliot-wide protocols, the following protocols and expectations are in effect:

- [Nursery & Preschool: Health & Safety Protocols](#) (developed in collaboration with the Eliot Nursery School director)
- [Health & Safety Protocols for Kindergarten-7th Grade](#)

- **As of September 2021:** All workers (staff and volunteer) who work directly with children under the age of 12 are required to be vaccinated for Covid-19. This policy will be reviewed when children become vaccine eligible.
- Parents and caregivers are expected to keep their child(ren) home when they are sick, are showing possible symptoms of Covid-19, had close contact with a person with COVID-19, are awaiting test results, or tested positive for COVID-19. This expectation also applies to all adults in the Eliot community, including the staff and program volunteers who work with children.

Will we be receiving resources for exploring Unitarian Universalism at home as a family?

YES. We are excited to share [Soulful Home](#) with registered families. This resource is developed by the Soul Matters Sharing Circle and designed for families to explore monthly themes and UU values and identity throughout the month in the course of daily life (during meals, bedtime, in the neighborhood, and more). The first edition will be shared by email in early September.

We look forward to a great year together. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have additional questions.

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