

Summary Grid of Unitarian Universalist Congregations Studied for the VQT Best Practices Research Initiative

	<u>All Souls – DC*</u>	<u>First UU, San Diego, CA*</u>	<u>Fox Valley – Appleton, Wisconsin*</u>	<u>UUCA Atlanta, GA*</u>
Size – Membership	750	774 475 attend per week on average	570	760 members/ 300 pledging member families/250 pledging friends; 300-400 attending services (adults); 700 active in groups
RE Program #'s	265	134 youth & children registered – 105 attend per week on average	200 registered	300 children and youth (150-200 attending)
Adult Program #'s	150 adults	6-80 young adult; 500 adult	Majority of members participate in one or more programs annually – 15 – 50 per program	Approx 300+ (don't really keep annual #)
Type of Governance	Policy Governance	Policy Governance Ministry Teams	Policy Governance Ministry Teams	Policy governance Ministry Teams; Lay ministers
RE Staffing	1 FTE DRE – Lay RE committee 3/4 PT children's assistant 1/4 Youth coordinator 2 paid child care on Sundays	1 FTE DRE 1 FTE RE/AE Assistant 1/2 FTE Youth Coordinator Lifespan Education Ministry Team (co-led by a staff member and lay leader) has committees (Adult Ed, Children's RE, Youth Programs) and reports to the Council.	1 FTE DRE Paid nursery coordinator	1 FTE DRE 3/4 FTE youth coordinator 1/2 FTE RE asst. Child care coordinator
Volunteers	Strongly encouraged but not required	“Cooperative” – each family with child in RE expected to contribute minimum of 6 hrs/year, variety of ways to contribute	Strong volunteer leadership (43 teaching RE No “requirements” to participate Well organized, strong communication; weekly feedback from teachers collected	Mandatory training for teachers; DRE recruits, maintains all relationships with volunteer teachers and leaders, weekly feedback from teachers; well-organized

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Adult Enrichment Staffing	1 FTE Adult Spiritual Development Minister – Lay committee	1 FTE Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator 1/4 FTE Adult Coordinator	DRE responsible for adult programming; strong lay leadership	Sr and Asst. Minister oversee with 2 lay leaders
Adult programming	Extensive topical programming Developing a formal program called “Creating a Soulful Path” based on Jen Crow (Rochester) Active, independent “Young Adult” program.	Adult RE - Spirit in Practice	Extensive topical programming based on survey of adult needs/desires. COA for adults being tested this year. No fees for programs (except retreats).	Four areas: UU Core ID/theology, Spiritual Practice, Life Skills, Leadership/Service; Many short courses taught each semester; 4-5 special workshops per semester (many with family focus); 2 Ongoing courses: Intro to UUCA, Explore UUCA – both for new comers; Daylight focus lunch group for people of age.
Non-Sunday events	Various	Home Connections – a monthly e-mail for families with children w/readings, stories, questions for discussion. Supports involvement. Wed. Mid-week meals.	Fellowship Wednesdays 2X mo. Saturday afternoon Worship Sr. High RE moving to Weds, so Sr. High can attend worship services.	Wonderful Wednesdays; interest group sponsored dinner (fundraiser); vespers service; IG Tai Chi; Popcorn Theology; adult educ.; music and arts programs for all ages
Children’s Programming	Tapestry of Faith/Themes	Tapestry of Faith	Strong curriculum: Spirit Play, Free to Believe, Spirit of Adventure	Fully developed & well organized at each grade level; Tied to principles & sources; Tapestry of Faith at nearly every age group; UUCA service project at each grade; weekend retreats/CONs for children and youth; children’s choir; multiple summer camps.

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Youth Programming	Coming of Age (24 high school participants)	COA program for teens has a concurrent program for parents related to “letting go”	Middle school – Popcorn Theology and Compass Points plus social justice focus on Fellowship Wednesdays Sr. High – COA every 2 years; Wheel of Justice curriculum No fees for RE	YAC: youth /adult council – advisors, parents; teens. UUCA annual service project for each age group. Sunday RE: Gr6: Amazing Grace; Gr7: Neighboring Faiths; Gr8: Coming of Age (trip to Boston); Grades 9-12: Compass Points/youth input; 2 retreats to the Mountain/yr; CONS at UUCA; youth choir
Intergenerational	Variety of activities. Most successful: weekend retreats, social justice activities	Theatre group, affinity groups, entertainment exp(community life ministry team)	First 15 min. worship 1X mo; Fellowship Wednesdays 2X mo. Sr. High helps plan worship 1x mo	Annual art show; Wonderful Wednesdays; 1 st Sunday shared worship theme; 1 st Sunday kids/youth stay longer in service; Moravian Love Feast; Animal Blessing
Evaluation methods	Not collected	Enrollment; participation; consistency of attendance. No surveys.	No formal evaluation; participation levels. Weekly teacher feedback.	Weekly teacher feedback – no formal evaluation
Observed Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively multicultural Very strong growth in RE involvement past 8 yrs. Strong young adult program Diversity Vibrant social justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family ministry model Men’s programming Significant programming across lifespan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth RE programs/COA Team ministries Integration of principles Strength of programs w/ limited staff/ use of lay leaders and volunteers A “Resource” congregation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COA 8th grade TOF curriculum Team ministries/lay ministry/pastoral intern program Social groups by age group OWL offered for different ages Communication practices: All Church Software; focus groups; Children’s family handbooks; emails & wkly newsletters, etc.

	<u>1st Unitarian – Dallas</u>	<u>First Unitarian Portland, OR</u>	<u>First Unitarian, Rochester, NY</u>
Size – Membership	1650	1200	1100
RE Program #'s	400 (nursery-12)	450 children/ 150 youth	300+
Adult Program #'s	Not collected	Not collected	Not collected
Type of Governance	Policy Governance	Policy Governance	Moving toward Policy Governance
RE Staffing	1 FTE Children and Youth DRE 1 FTE RE Administrator + 1/2 FTE RE Assistant FT Youth Programs Coordinator Caregiver coordinator	DRE for children DRE for youth FT assistant	Asso. Minister spends ¾ time on RE PT Admin (24 hours per week) 1/4 FTE Youth Minister Coordinator (works directly with the teens)
Volunteers	For RE, done through Family Ministries Network: combination of tasks, community building and spiritual growth.	71 teachers (60% w/ no children in RE), 50% teachers stay for next year. Recruits in April.	Used to be required. Difficult to recruit. Want to attend services. Looking for creative solutions.
Adult Enrichment Staffing	1 FTE Adult DRE PT assistant	1 FTE Director Adult programming	Associate Minister spends about 1/4 time on Adult Enrichment Programming. Volunteers facilitate and start many of the programs.
Adult programming	Forum (Adult Sunday School) and “Spiritual Conversations” (both held between Services); Discussion Group at same time as services; Humanist Group; series of classes 2 Men’s groups	Was not able to gather detailed information on Adult programming	Strong variety; New programs: Starting Point – bridges gap between UU 101 and more on-going deepening (4 two-hr sessions), originally intended for new people, but now everyone wants it! “Wellspring” classes – much deeper than a covenant group; started w/ 1 group of 8, now facilitators for other groups; example of staff responding to a need & getting congregation to sustain it!

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Non-Sunday events	Classes throughout week; groups meet	Try to have 2 socials a year New Parent Orientation	Friday Fun most Fridays – movies, song circle, game nights, coffee house, generally doesn't attract families
Children's Programming	Tapestry of Faith Family Ministry Network	Bibloleon, Free to Believe from Shelter Rock; turned "Haunting House" into "Our House Our Homes"	Not using workshop rotation; Web of Life; You, the Creator
Youth programming	Grades 7 and up have worship as part of their classes. Coming of Age—9 th Youth group very structured YRUU—10 th -12 th All high school do end of year trip	New Program – Our Sustainable Earth (Youth) Use Shelter Rock Curriculum	Very popular theater group – use an intern – really attracts the teens; youth coordinator is great - did Guerilla Art all around town (huge hit!) Really helping their teens get in touch with the needs of the world
Intergenerational	Children in beginning of service; IG worship only 2 X year, IG programming has generally not been successful, people segregate. Most successful events are social justice events or social events that work for all ages (Mardi Gras party).	Not much; not enough space. Xmas Eve Service	Full intergenerational services uncommon; kids in service first 15 minutes
Evaluation methods	Tracking enrollment, participation in entire series of classes	% of attendance	None noted
Observed Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer involvement--Family Ministry Model • Comprehensive, wrap-around Sunday programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong volunteer program • Good example of how to recruit volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult programming to deepen spiritual growth • Testing of curricula • Focus on hospitality

	<u>First Parish – Concord MA</u>	<u>Jefferson Unitarian, Golden, CO</u>	<u>Unity, St. Paul, MN</u>	<u>Neighborhood UU – Pasadena</u>
Size – Membership	1200	775	832	720
RE Program #'s	360	400	361 (in grades 3-8 with caps on enrollment for classes at services)	190
Adult Program #'s	50 to start – 30 regularly attend	Not collected	Not collected	50
Type of Governance	Standing Committee; which is responsible for policies, business affairs and organizations.	Board/Council model	Policy Governance	Not collected
RE Staffing	1 FTE DRE 1 curriculum coordinator PT Assistant (15 hrs/week) PT Youth Programming Director	1 FTE DRE PT Assistant	1 FTE DRE PT Assistant PT Director of Youth and Young Adult Programming	Associate Minister of Lifelong Learning 1 FTE DRE children & youth – RE Committee 1 PT (25 hrs./wk) assistant 1 PT Preschool teacher Paid nursery
Volunteers	Parents required to participate in RE – skills inventory on parents	Not collected	All families with children in RE are asked to contribute 10 hours per year; RE fees are waived for people who are teaching	Parents are REQUIRED to help, have guidelines (available on website)
Adult Enrichment Staffing	Director of Wright Tavern	Minister of Social Responsibility leads adult programming	PT Director of Youth and Young Adult Programming None for adults	DRE is responsible for adult programming

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Adult programming	Wright Tavern; Spirit Practice (available from UUA) considered successful	Formal program called “Lifespan Education and Adult Programs” – collection of courses and meditation groups	Wed night classes & Covenant Groups; three services on Sundays	Adult programming revolves around 4 themes (RISE): Relational, Intellectual, Spiritual and Ethical. Lifelong learning catalogue lists all programming which includes many affinity groups. Small fee for most classes. OWL program for adults.
Non-Sunday events	Senior Youth group Sunday evening	none	Wellspring Wednesdays	Many programs and classes held throughout the week. Weekly Chalice Lighting Circle held every Tues evening. OWL dinners held several Sunday's per month.
Children’s programming	Workshop rotation – Spirit Play and Story Play for K-1	K-1: Discovering Year Grades 2-3: Free to Believe Grades 4-5: Bibleodeon Children’s choir	Spirit Play for ages 3-6; Workshop Rotation for Grades 1-6	Monthly themes for all ages (including worship services); rotate every 3 yrs. Pulls from many curricula. DRE w/ RE Committee oversight/input. Structured lesson plans. OWL program for K-1 and 4th - 5th grade
Youth programming	7th-used to do Drama Play, doing neighboring faiths, also kids doing art as social statements—body sculpture 8th grade—First half is preparing and doing a play/second half is OWL 9th grade—Coming of Age 10th—YRUU Youth group –Sunday evening Youth Service trips—2 per year	Middle school: Neighboring Faiths; 8 th grade – Coming of Age 9-12 Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. (YRUU)	Grade 7-8 -comparative religions, 13 weeks w/ choice of 2 classes. Grade 6-8 -music ministry instead of RE, kids pick poem or sacred text and set it to music Grade 9—OWL & COA each ½ year at the 4:30 service Tower Club—Youth Group—start with worship, have dinner, 2 hours of social justice or social activities	Grade 6-7 - Neighboring Faiths, 2 year program. Grade 8 - Rites of Passage Grades 7 -9 - OWL Grades 10 - 12 - OWL

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Intergenerational	Some IG services throughout the year; there is an extended children’s message. Lenten suppers are IG.	Family/community ministry – include all in activities, music, social action. Women Spirit group includes older girls	Wellspring Wednesdays - 6:00 pm supper, short IG service, followed by age appropriate classes or occasional social justice activities. Pancake breakfasts –held monthly	First 15 min worship 1X mo + 4/5 intergenerational services/year.
Evaluation methods	Conduct surveys after each workshop rotation	“Pulse of the congregation” survey and focus groups	Conducted sporadically. In first three years of new curriculum, solicited feedback from teachers about lessons.	No specific evaluation method noted
Observed Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wright’s Tavern program for adults—also open to broader Concord community • Youth programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated social justice minister – Minister of Social Responsibility • CURK (Community of Unitarian Unv. Raising Kids) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong Wednesday model--Wellspring Wednesdays • Online payment options for pledges—good, updated website • Workshop Rotation Model • Great RE volunteering form – clear expectations • Strong Men’s programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE structure & strong RE communicate to congregation (good use of website to communicate programming) • Lifelong learning catalogue • Congregational monthly themes cut across all worship and programming (i.e. generosity, justice, love, etc). • Offer OWL for 5 different age groups including adults
Notes	Currently undergoing building reconstruction.	New DRE hired in September		

	N. Parrish, N. Andover, MA	UU Comm. Santa Monica	First Unitarian – Madison
Size – Membership	360	450	1500 +
RE Program #'s	Not collected	Not collected	500 children; 30 youth
Adult Program #'s	Not collected	Not collected	300
Type of Governance	Not collected	DRE reports to Minister – Minister reports to the Board	Modified policy governance
RE Staffing	Not collected	1 FTE DRE PT Pre-school teacher (6 hours week)	1 FTE MRE 1 FTE DRE 1 FTE program assistant PT child care coordinator PT Summer Fun Coordinator
Volunteers	Not collected	Parent rights and responsibilities – participation expected	120 teachers; 40 classroom coordinators
Adult Enrichment Staffing	Not collected	Adult programming was not focus of interviews	MRE; DRE; volunteers for adult education library
Adult programming	Not collected	Not collected	Not collected
Non-Sunday events	Not collected	Not collected	Saturday service

	N. Parrish, N. Andover, MA	UU Comm. Santa Monica	First Unitarian – Madison
Children Programming	Around the church year; chalice children; much written by DRE	Dropped rotational themes, was not “user friendly” per volunteers. Grades now have a topic “identity”. Use Spirit Play, Neighboring Faiths is a 2 yr program.	Tapestry of Faith; Bibleodeon; Web of Life; Exploring Origins (created by members of Madison)
Youth Programming	Not collected	Not collected	Grade 7 - social justice: care for the earth Grade 8 - modified OWL + Love U2 = Mind, Body and Soul
Intergenerational	Church retreat; lots of big events for all with high participation	Social justice Sunday 1X month, all ages get involved, lots of off-campus work.	Services for all ages four times per year – 3 year rotating theme – tell story around theme Multigenerational events three times/year Thanksgiving Dinner Two Sunday services/ year = all music
Evaluation methods	Not collected	Participation and how members/ children react to offerings	Look at attendance/participation numbers; feedback forms parents fill out
Observed Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding programming Youth programming Family milestones – kits/gifts for each life stage Well defined goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong RE identity for each grade (helps parents and children know what to expect). Social Justice Sundays for RE Green Sanctuary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity in programs Programs constantly under revision Willingness to try new things Commitment to RE ministry from congregation Services for all ages
NOTE	DRE recently departed, so timing for interview not good; Gail Forsyth gone to UUA – will be good resource as we implement LFSI initiatives.	Contacted specifically for Way Cool Sunday School programming; did not conduct full interview	

Notes:

Not collected= Information was not available for one or more of the following reasons: information not on website, staff unavailable, not the purpose of the interview (Santa Monica)

*=site visits made