

UU Kids Say... Church Through the Eyes of Our Children

Edited by Beth Graham

Whether called a church, a fellowship, a congregation, or a society, our Unitarian Universalist faith communities have always valued children. This is what our children have to say about their religious homes.

UU kids say church is . . .

. . . about what we believe.

Church is religion.

Church is believing.

Church is a place where people come to worship, to listen to sermons and services, to learn about God. Sometimes there is a choir there.

At church we try to make religious teachings work for us today.

At church we tell stories and talk about all kinds of people's ideas of how the world came to be. We talk about what other churches might do.

. . . rituals and customs.

Church is a place to worship and socialize.

Church is a place to make music.

Church is where we ring the bell.

Church is where we light the chalice.

Church is where we pray—and sing—and talk.

Church is lighting candles of hope.

At church we share our joys and concerns, and collect food and money.

. . . about people.

Church is where you make friends.

Church is where we think about giving.

Church is people, snacks, family, happiness.

Church is where we learn to cooperate with different people.

Church is a place to help.

Church is a place where no one is a stranger.

Church is togetherness!

At church we share our ideas, treasure other people and ourselves, and help others.

. . . feeling peaceful and good.

Church is a place of love.

Church is a place to be quiet and think.

Church is a place to be welcome.

Church is a place where you can feel secure.
Church is a place where you can get away from your troubles.
Church makes me feel special.
Church is a treat.

. . . about thinking and learning.

Church is a place of gathering where we talk about the problems in the world.
Church is a place to have fun and learn about others.
Church is a place where you can learn about other religions.
Church is a place where you can think.
Church is a place where you can share your ideas.
Church is a place where you can ask questions.
Church is a place where you can get answers.
Church is a place to be safe and to learn.
Church is fun and mind bending.
Church is a place where we go to learn about the UU ways. We can't sleep in on Sunday mornings, but I think it is worthwhile.

. . . fun.

Church is a place to do things.
Church is more interesting than staying at home.
Church is field trips.
Church is art.
Church is something to explore.
Church is not boring.
Church is cool.
Just because my church doesn't have any play equipment doesn't mean it can't be fun.

And . . .

Church is a place in nature, under a tree, with lots of animals and wildlife.
Church is rejoicing.
Church is beautiful.
Church is a place to feed the birds.
Church is something to look forward to.
Our church is not just a building. We are a group of people who join together because we share beliefs.
Everyone in church is part of your family. The kids are your cousins and the adults are your aunts and uncles.

Thoughts for Parents

The topic was Easter in the children's chapel service in a Unitarian Universalist congregation. After hearing the story, the children were full of questions. "Was Jesus a god or something?" "Why did they kill him?" "Didn't it hurt?" And the ultimate query, "What happens when you die, anyway?"

Whether responding to the sight of a dead bird, a tragedy in the news, or a beautiful sunset, children are seekers of meaning, attuned to the spiritual dimensions of life.

As Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar writes in *The Gift of Faith*, “Whether we wish it so or not, our children are religious, spiritual beings. . . . We cannot choose whether they will be religious, but we can choose how and to what extent we will support, guide, and celebrate this dimension of their nature.”

Parents are children’s primary religious educators and spiritual guides, but parents do not always feel equipped to fulfill this role alone. It is said, “It takes a village to raise a child.” The congregation can be the parents’ partner in this important endeavor.

What Parents Say About Church

My children have a religious identity and a faith that grows with them.

Their best friends are here.

They know that adults other than their parents really care about them.

They see people of all ages work together to make the world a better place.

It’s an antidote to the commercialism around us.

It’s a caring community that respects my child’s individuality.

It reinforces our values, and grounds us as a family.

It is always there for us, in good times and bad.

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