

CoA 2015-16 Schedule *Revision date:3/29/16*

8th Graders in 2015-2016

Attend OWL Classes AND these Coming of Age sessions & Activities

Oct. 18 –12:30 to 1:00 pm – East Wing – Orientation for parents & Youth

Oct. 25 –11 am - First 8th gr CoA– Team Building & UU Values

Jan. 3 – 8th CoA- UU Theology-Ethical Behavior Starts with Us!

Feb 21 – 8th CoA- UU Beliefs – What is Good & Evil?

Feb. 28 – 8th CoA- UU Justice – What does Social Justice look like?

March 13th - 8th OWL make up day

March 20th – FINAL 8th OWL CLASS & POTLUCK CELEBRATION after class

March 27th CoA attends Easter Sunday services or help to hide canned food for the children to “hunt” for & find and other activities

April 3 – Lower Level - 9:15am Movie w/ liberation theme & 11 am Create Joy

April 10 – 8th CoA- UU HISTORY – Our UU Story

April 17 (spring Break no class)

April 22-23 – CoA Boston Heritage Trip. Depart the church Friday morning and return Saturday evening. NO CLASS on Sunday, April 24th

May 1st Multigenerational Day Go to Musical Service

May 8th – (Mother’s Day Wkd) – Bring Flower – start in Service – then UU SPIRITUALITY – Spiritual Practice & What is Prayer?

May 15 - 8th CoA- UU LEADERSHIP

May 20-21-22 - CAMP JEWELL – Medicine Walk both 8th & 9th

May 29th (Memorial Day Weekend) Go to 10 am Youth Service / see 9th graders do Credo’s

June 5 – Celebration Sunday; 8th CoA takes part in 10 AM service

9th Graders 2015-2016 –go to Youth Group + stay for ADD ON Sunday sessions – 12:30-2:00 pm for Credo Writing & Consider Question: Who Are You?

March 6th - ONLY 9th graders - Meeting House Main flr

Fri. March 11 + Fri. April 22– 9th gr. meet 7:00-9:00 pm ,

March 13 –(clocks spring ahead) + ONLY 9th graders

March 20 - ONLY 9th gr. CREDO & Gratitude statement due – Mtg Hse 3rd flr

Sat.. May 28- 7pm- Rehearsal for Youth Service – 9th graders Credo’s

May 6 –12:30-2:00pm, AND Go To Camp Jewell – for wkd or Sat. Day Pass

May 29 (Memorial Day wkd) –9th gr.will present their credo’s as part of the Youth Service + 9th grade families Gratitude ceremony after the Youth Service + luncheon

Coming of Age 2015-16

The Unitarian Church in Westport

What is ‘Coming of Age’ (CoA)?

COA is a rite of passage marked in our community for youth that begins during 8th grade. It includes *Our Whole Lives*, Sexuality & Values class as part of this

Youth will present a credo (belief statement) during the Youth Service in 9th grade. And Parents will have the opportunity to participate in a **Gratitude Ceremony** honoring their child’s growth.

After taking part in CoA the youth may decide to join our congregation as a voting member in their own right – at age 14 according to our by-laws.

CoA asks youth to reflect upon: what it means to be a UU, their spirituality and values, and how they will be involved in the greater community and it is important to note that UU’s continue to question.

“Youth Program at the Unitarian Church in Westport is meant to be a ‘Rite of Passage’ Program, stretching unbroken from the beginning of Coming of Age until the completion of Bridging in Senior year of High School” ~Cal Wacker, Youth Program Director

Coming of Age Stages:

8th grade-(Preparation) - OWL & CoA sessions

9th Grade (Preparation & Severance) in Youth Group & CoA
Question: **WHO ARE YOU? + Present Credo’s in Youth Service**

10th Grade (Severance & Threshold) in Youth Group
Question: **WHAT DO YOU WANT?**

11th Grade (Threshold) in Youth Group
Question: **WHY ARE YOU HERE?**

12 Grade (Threshold & Incorporation) in Youth Group & Congregation
Question: **WHERE ARE YOU GOING?**

What will we study and learn in CoA?

- To identify and clarify core values that guide our daily lives. Classes based on The Coming of Age Handbook For Congregations by Sarah Gibb Millspaugh with additional sections on Gratitude by Maria Mendoza Smith, and Heroes Journey by Cal Wacker
- Book This I Believe and web-site of the same name
- Community service: putting our values into action by serving others. We require they attend the group session in the fall, and in addition one individual community service opportunity (could be working a Voices Café event, or Help with younger children, or a soup kitchen, or family beach clean -up etc.)
- Community building: creating a trusting and bonded group and introducing youth to others in our Community.
- UU history: interacting with the past to gain inspiration for the future.
- Leadership: developing skills to run meetings, manage conflicts, and public speaking skills.
- Worship: Requirement Attend a minimum of 4 Sunday services to experience community worship. You may go to a 9:00 am service before group or attend a Summer Service, and at least one multigenerational service.

How do I fit in? (Parents)

Parents support their youth's commitment to CoA by encouraging a cheerful expectation of attendance. Parents will also be asked to chaperone and volunteer on an as need basis (such as Camp Jewell). Parents are deeply involved in the CoA Gratitude Ceremony, and share gratitude statements with their children as part of that service. Parents organize the Celebratory Pot luck or luncheon following the 9th graders presentation of Credo's and before the Gratitude Ceremony.

Questions or suggestions can be directed to DRE Mary B. Collins
mary.dre@uuwestport.org 203 – 227-7205 x 15

How do I fit in? (Youth)

Read this flyer and ask questions about the program. Then, decide if you will commit to the Coming of Age program. In the program, you will:

- Get to know yourself better, discover what matters most to you.
- Review www.NPR.org/series/4538138/this-i-believe and www.storycorps.org
- Be part of an inclusive, meaningful community of youth contributing to social justice through service
- Explore your own religious beliefs more deeply and learn how to explain them and write a well-crafted Credo Statement.
- Experience multiple ways to connect with what is spiritual – those things that put you in touch with your best self.
- Understand the role worship plays in our community and be a full participant in a variety of worship services. When completed – you may become a voting member of the community as we move into the future.

What activities will we do?

- Spring field trips –**April: CoA Boston** Heritage Trip, **May: Camp Jewell** - Leadership Development w/Youth Group & Congregational retreat
- Community service chosen by the group or individually.
- Attend and create different worship experiences 9th graders with Youth Group.
- Overnights a.k.a Lock-Ins - Activities to move, make you smile as well as think about things you don't normally get the chance to. If we have volunteers to host it at the church or it will be at Camp Jewell

Do I have to attend every session?

Our expectation is that you will make a commitment to active participation, and that you will attend most, if not all of the class sessions.

In 9th grade you will *stay after Youth group* several sessions to work on your Credo or "This I Believe" Statement & Gratitude Statement for presentation (think what peers do to prepare for confirmation or a bar mitzvah in other faith traditions).