



Faith Development, Our UU Heritage, and Our Individual Faith Journey: Philosophy

Quest: A Spiritual Journey has been developed within a Unitarian Universalist (UU) faith community and is offered to other UU faith communities. Therefore, it is vital to create a solid and meaningful bridge between the on-going development of the UU faith tradition and the individual journeys and spiritual community experiences of all *Quest* participants and facilitators. A two-session class early in the *Quest* experience that focuses on understanding faith development through both one's own journey and the history and traditions of Unitarian Universalism is key for grounding and connecting the *Quest* experience to our faith tradition.

The focus of session one is the history and development of our UU movement as seen through the lens of faith development. An adapted model of faith development based on the work of James Fowler becomes the backdrop against which participants examine their own life's journey. Participants analyze how important phases of UU growth and change fit within the faith development model. In the second session, participants contemplate their individual spiritual journeys, using faith development and UU history as the foundation for their reflection. Through discovery about self and exploration of our faith tradition, participants deepen their understanding of how they connect to our UU faith tradition and how our faith tradition lives within each of them.

The classes are sequenced within the larger *Quest* program to come within a month of the first retreat. This placement is intentional. The classes occur early in the *Quest* experience to solidify that *Quest* is built on the foundation of Unitarian Universalist tradition. The classes also happen at this time as another opportunity to nurture the developing spiritual community. Participants and facilitators have spent one weekend retreat together thus far as a result of which many connections are unfolding. The two,

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2-hour class sessions provide an opportunity for these developing connections to be further nurtured. The design of these class sessions, like all of *Quest*, is experiential, creating opportunities for participants and facilitators to learn from and with each other.

The *Quest* minister in partnership with the spiritual program director facilitates the class sessions. While it may be logical for the *Quest* minister to take a key role in these sessions, given their role as minister and religious educator, it is vital that a collaborative relationship be maintained with the spiritual program director in how the class is facilitated. Integration group facilitators are highly encouraged to attend the class sessions so that they can support participants in holding a larger context of faith development throughout the *Quest* experience. This class is intentionally limited to the current *Quest* group. It may be tempting to open the class to others in the congregation, but doing so would work against the goal of developing a cohesive *Quest* experience.

In preparing for the classes, it is important to maintain consistency with other parts of *Quest*. Consider the beauty, comfort, and accessibility of the physical space for the classes. Opening and closing rituals that parallel those used in retreats and integration groups are used to mark this gathering time as sacred. The diversity of ways in which participants learn, and the stage of the spiritual community's development, are carefully considered in how the information and all the activities are presented. An attitude held by the facilitators that these class sessions are reverent and meaningful steps along the spiritual journey supports the deep connection of these sessions with the larger *Quest* experience.