

Coming of Age Service
Unitarian Universalist Church of Vancouver
May 25, 2025

Reflection on the Theme – Clancy Kelly

My name is Clancy Kelly and I, along with a few other members noted earlier, assisted Mellie with the Coming of Age Curriculum this year.

I would like to thank Mellie and Ashley for their guidance and support of this program. Thank you to the parents and youth for their commitment to the program and, to you the congregation, for providing the financial support for the Religious Education Program.

Over the past 20 weeks we have explored:

- UU Values
- Unity and Diversity
- Good and Evil
- Put downs
- Spiritual practice
- Connecting with the world around us
- Stillness, silence and meditation
- Your god project
- Life, death and the afterlife
- The practice of leadership
- Social action

Members of the Board met with us twice. We learned about the history of the church and what church leadership looks and feels like.

Traditionally this Coming Of Age Program is a yearlong program. We condensed this into a twenty week curriculum by doubling up on the Sunday RE classes. A tough ask. These youth and families followed through with their commitment. Thank you.

Today, you will hear from the youth. They will present their 5 Commandments which were established at the first meeting as part of our covenanting process.

So, my reflection on why I participate in the Religious Education Program.

In the 40+ years that Tracy and I have been members, I would guess that forty percent of my time has been spent with the RE Program. Much of it with the high school group.

I participate in RE because I like it. The energy, exploring minds, and freeness is refreshing.

Growing up as the oldest of nine children, children have been part of my entire life - either siblings, our own children or grandchildren. I was taught at an early age, by necessity to be helpful. I especially like watching children mature and navigate the trials and tribulations of friendships. Witnessing their ability to explore new concepts and take ownership of their feelings, is a beautiful thing.

I wish that I felt better about the world that we are leaving our children. I believe that we will get through this current political upheaval. It's not the first time that some of us have felt that the sky is falling.

I worry about the national debt that we are leaving for our children to pay. I worry about the climate that is approaching a tipping point. We owe our children and the children of the world a better shake.

However, today we will witness the positive creativity of these wonderful youth and find hope for the future.

So sit back and relax. We got this!

The Five Commandments by Leila, Savannah, Maria, Rosie, Anne, and Sarah

During one week, over in RE 4 with the couches and the whiteboard and the markers that we use to draw on our hands, we were talking about good and evil. We talked about how different traditions view evil and what they do about it. The Christian tradition has 10 commandments, some of which address bad behavior. So, drawing on our UU values, we made our own commandments.

We started off with don't kill and don't steal. There are significant consequences to killing. Not only for you, with the police and jail, and not even just for the person you killed who isn't alive anymore. But it has a huge impact on the people who loved that person, and they would miss them.

You also don't want to steal. You can't take things from other people - they might really need those things and even if they don't, that dragon just doesn't belong to you. Also, you could be stealing more than just a physical item - you could be stealing trust or someone's confidence or hope. You could get in really big trouble.

We listen and we don't judge. We take people's feelings into account - sometimes they're feeling bad about themselves and they need us to help them. They need support, not judgement.

To be in society requires kindness. If you are kind, you get along with people better. That's how you get friends (and power). They'll be there for when you need them and you're there when they need you.

When we talk about UU Values, it influences others to be kind. It helps to treat people like they're equal human beings. We also know what it feels like when we're treated equally and what it means to us.

There's a difference between being kind and being a people pleaser. You can't just do whatever makes other people happy. You don't have to agree, but you do have to be respectful. You can think 'that's a stupid way of thinking' but you can't say it.

You have to know when to tell the truth. We started off with 'don't lie' but it's more complicated than that. You don't have to tell the truth always when the truth is hurtful. If your friend had a bad haircut, do you tell them their hair looks terrible? You're not lying for yourself, you have to know whether it's dangerous for you or other people.

Being trustworthy is different than not lying. It's more about actions - relying on people to not spread a secret. You're not going to tell people about a secret crush. That's part of trust.

Common sense can keep you safe and out of trouble. It's the ability to think about other people's perspectives and act in a way that keeps them safe. You don't have to know everything but you do have to be able to see what they see.

The robot in the story - in the beginning he's stomping on his friends and family's toys. They don't play with him while he's just destroying things. But then he invites everyone to play instead of just smashing, and suddenly they're able to be in his world. The kid used common sense to realize he needed to bring the others with him.

All the commandments boil down to 'use common sense.' Use common sense to protect yourself. Use common sense to know when to tell the truth. Use common sense to not hurt others.