

III.a. Path to Membership Class

The Path to Membership is the name of the membership orientation session offered four to six times per year at JUC. From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on a Saturday morning, this session includes a complimentary brunch and child care, and though not required for membership, attendance is expected and typical. Usually, the only people who do not attend are those who have been members of other UU churches or those who have been visiting JUC as friends for several years.

We advertise the class to our prospective members via written announcements in our newsletter and order of service and with a verbal announcement. See III.b. *Path Advertise & Announce*. A sign up sheet is posted prominently and referred to in all advertising for the event. A few days before the class, our New Member Coordinator calls all those who have signed up to confirm their intention to come and their need for childcare.

The Path class is presented by our ministers, New Member Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator and is attended by the chair or a member of the membership committee. Our new member packet of information, including all paper work necessary for membership, is handed out to all participants.

The details of the Path class agenda can be found on a separate page. See III.c. *Path Class Agenda*. The most important parts include:

- 1) an introduction time during which participants share for two or three minutes about their religious roots and journey and why they came to JUC.
- 2) a "Four Corners" game which explores our theological diversity and highlights our acceptance of one another and the avenues we offer for exploration. See III.d. *Four Corners Game*.
- 3) discussions about our ministry programs and responsibilities and benefits of membership. See III.e. *Responsibilities, Benefits*.

After the class, those who wish to become members are given the opportunity to fill out the paper work and sign the membership book. All attendees are sent a note of thanks for attending by our New Member Coordinator. See III.f. *Path Class Thank You*.

This class may be broken into two shorter segments. It is advisable to give only a brief summary of UU history in the orientation session and to have a separate class which goes into greater detail about our historical roots. At JUC we have found it better to have the rest of the agenda items covered in a single longer session, since with multiple sessions, some people will attend only part of the whole series.

It is critical that the person or people who present the section which covers the responsibilities of membership be comfortable with talking about the expected financial and time commitments. Prospective members know that they will be called upon to support the church, but will pick up any discomfort felt by the presenter. A frank yet sensitive discussion that sets high expectations but which makes a point of showing compassion for individual circumstances seems to encourage new members to make a commitment without fear that they will be overwhelmed by the challenge.