

CELEBRATING FAMILIES IN PAGANISM

Many children today learn about caring for the Earth at home and in school. The idea of saving the Earth is all around them in the media. In addition to those sentiments, contemporary Pagans also teach their children to celebrate the sacredness of the Earth.

PLAY AS A WAY TO THE SACRED

Play offers many ways to engage children in the sacred. Through play, learning is fun. Pagan and other Earth-centered religious traditions honor the playfulness and joy of the human experience as sacred.

Children love to make music and it can give them a sense of the Divine creator in themselves. Learning to use rhythm instruments can foster that joy. Making rattles and other musical instruments can be fun projects for the whole family. The instruments can be used in worship as well as informal play. Chants are also common in worship and they are easy to learn. Sing with children anytime.

Collections of stones, leaves, or any other curiosities, can provide the start of an altar. Memories of where an item was collected and how it was identified bring a sense of the mundane-as-sacred when "just a rock" is displayed in a place of pride.

Children also enjoy making their own ritual objects. Items like talking sticks, clay bowls, and flaming chalices (with flames lit only when an adult is there to supervise), are simple yet fun to make. When a child's creation is added to a place of honor in the family's religious practice it can take on even greater significance.

TELLING OUR STORIES

Children love to tell and hear stories. Storytelling is a celebrated form of expression among ancient and contemporary religious traditions. Encourage parents and grandparents to tell the stories of the family and encourage children to add their stories to the family heritage. Making books of family history is always fun.

Indigenous peoples all over the world have handed down stories of survival, tribulations and triumphs from generation to generation. Many of these stories are available in books. The parables of religious teachers are written in books, too. Reading these stories to children, and talking with them about what the stories teach us, is a wonderful way for families to pass on their

beliefs. This is also a good way to show that many stories, all over the world, share common challenges and offer unique wisdom to solving the problems people face.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Teaching about Earth-centered spirituality can be fun and joyous. One source of inspiration, plus talented teachers, exists within the Unitarian Universalist family. UU Religious Education curriculums are known for their incorporation of the sacredness of playtime, stories, crafts and the arts, bringing the richness of many religious traditions to our congregations. Another source for teaching about Earth-centered spirituality is the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans.

Invite your local CUUPS chapter to bring special programs to the religious education of our UU youth. Encourage them to bring their love of celebrating the sacredness of the Earth and all of Nature to the children of our congregations.

If you do not have a CUUPS group in your congregation and would like to contact someone for more information then write or call:



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