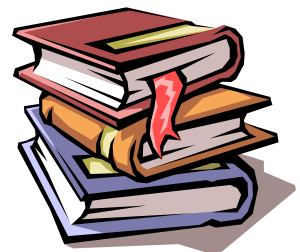


Painted by Charles Winston Peale, c 1818

Benjamin Rush

WE HELP MAKE THE WORLD BETTER FOR
EVERYONE.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ALPHABET
Please read the Overview before using this Plan.

R r Letter R introduces Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and a founder of educational programs in and outside of the church, as well as a reformer and physician.

MATERIALS: Construction paper Letter with hole punched in top, yarn for necklace
Snacks—Raisins, rice cakes

GETTING STARTED:

Welcome. After each person says his or her name, the group responds, "Welcome, (name)." For a child who is attending for the first time this year, add name to the letters that have been posted and to the attendance sheet, and make a nametag during or after the session. Leave an empty chair for someone who is not present or for someone who has not joined the group yet.

The *Letter of the Day*:

- Talk about the Letter.
- Give the Letter Necklace to a person with that initial.
- Talk about the things that the children have brought for the Letter, and/or Letter Bag.
- Put the things related to the letter in the Special Place

SPECIAL PERSON: Benjamin Rush (1745-1813)

Two hundred years ago, Benjamin Rush was very active in beginning the Universalist movement in this country. He was a good friend of John Murray (See M). Benjamin Rush helped start the first Universalist Sunday School in Philadelphia in 1791.

He was a doctor before we knew as much about the body and treatment of diseases as we do now. In fact, he kept learning and trying new ways to help people get well, and he was a teacher. Some of his treatments worked, and some did not. He was one of the few people of his time to recognize that mental illness could be diagnosed and treated, and

that people with mental illness needed better living conditions. He also regularly encouraged patients to sew, garden, listen to music or exercise during the day, things that we do now to get or keep well.

He was known for his caring of his patients. He was a surgeon in the army, but he is also remembered for wanting peace. He wanted the government to have an office for peace.

Benjamin Rush's religion was very important to him. He was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence that started the United States. He helped start a college and worked for higher education for women. He was one of the earliest people to write against slavery (one person owning another person) in 1733, and he worked to make things better for many people. He felt that his religion was a very important part of his living, making things better for everyone.

You see, we remember Dr. Rush for many things.

AFFIRMATION: *We make the world better for everyone.*

Remember. Think of someone who is not in the room with you. What do you "remember" about that person? Is it his or her smile, or the way that they treat you? Is it something special that the person does or did with you?

As the leader, talk about something that you will remember about each child after the session today, like "I will remember your smile," "I will remember your bright colored dress," "I will remember the picture that you drew."

THE LETTER R IN THE CHURCH

Reading. Reading is something that this age group is learning to do. Talk about the importance of reading as a way of expanding their knowledge and understanding and imagination. Many of their books will have illustrations. Talk about having

books that do not have pictures, so that they make the pictures in their mind.

Learning to read presents another area of diversity and individuality. While most people learn to read as they enter school, people can learn at any age – including as adults. People read at all speeds: some read faster, some slower. Some like to read out loud and some like to read quietly.

Involve the families in the discussion or reading. What books are read in the home? Possibly recommend -- and have available -- some books for families to borrow. Or have a "Read-In" in which children/families read stories and then tell what the stories mean in terms of things that we are learning about our own spiritual journey.

A-B-C

Animals: rabbit, raccoon, raven, reptiles, rhinoceros, rooster, rat

Body (add to the Body Picture): Ribs—these are not readily visible. If a skeleton was used under B for bones, refer to the location of ribs.

Calendar:

- Note the date of the session and any special events for the day, including birthdays.
- Note items beginning with that letter
- Note events between today and the next session.

CLOSING: Gather around the Special Place where the things related to the letter have been placed. "For the Letter R we give thanks. We have shared and learned about special people and animals and ourselves and our church. May we leave in love and peace. Next week we will meet again. Our letter will be ____ and our leader(s) will be _____." Make sure that people take home things that need to go.

Remembering Time: Ask people who grew up Unitarian Universalist or who have been Unitarian Universalists for several years to tell what they remember about the things that they learned growing up. What was different about when they were young and the church now?

The concept of remembering can be used at the end of the year for children to reflect on what they have done this year in religious education, what they liked and want to have continued, and what they would like to see changed. Part of remembering is helping make the present and future better.

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