

## Preparation for B119 —What Does Religion Mean to Me?

This is the first of several occasional Small Group Ministry sessions on some of life's Big Questions. We begin with the topic of religion because, as the Rev. Joan Gelbein (who is retired from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington), puts it, "In many ways, religion is the Mother of all Big Questions."

As you ponder the idea of religion and what it means to you, consider the following questions and choose the two or three that you'd like to talk about. (For some interesting reading on the topic, see the sermons listed below.)

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1. Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?
2. How does religion manifest itself in your daily life?
3. Does religion provide you with answers to any of life's Big Questions? Does it provide any answers to questions and problems that arise in everyday life?
4. Do you believe, as Rev. Gelbein does, that religion is "the Mother of all Big Questions?" Why or why not?
5. Do you make a distinction between religion, spirituality and faith? What do each of these words mean to you? How are they related?
6. The Rev. Ricky Hoyt said in a sermon, "*If Unitarian Universalism is liberal religion then apparently we resemble religion in that we get together in congregations and sing hymns and listen to a sermon and have snacks together afterward. But religion means doctrines, and God, and scripture, and all those other things that we don't do, or at least that we don't always do. ... So we might be tempted to conclude that liberal religion is only religion in its superficialities, not its substance, but that's a trap we should avoid. In fact, the phrase liberal religion is not meant to separate our kind of thinking as not being religious, but rather to enlarge the concept of religion to include many ways of thinking.*" Do you agree with Rev. Hoyt? Do you think of Unitarian Universalism as a religion?

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- "Born Again Unitarian Universalism," by the Rev. Forrest Church, <http://www.allsoulsnyc.org/publications/sermons/fcsermons/bornagainuism.html>
- "Exploring the Big Questions: Why Do We Need Religion?" by the Rev. Joan Gelbein, [http://uufnorthiowa.org/featured\\_sermons/2003/whydoweneedreligion.htm](http://uufnorthiowa.org/featured_sermons/2003/whydoweneedreligion.htm)
- "I'm Spiritual... But Not Religious," the Rev. Robert Hardies, <http://www.all-souls.org/sermons/20020908.htm>
- "Liberal Religion," by the Rev. Ricky Hoyt, <http://www.revricky.com/sermons/liberal.html>
- "The Religion of Tomorrow Here Today: Our Part in the Creation Story," by the Rev. Charles Blustein Ortman, <http://www.uumontclair.org/sermons/20020414ReligionofTomorrowHereToday.shtml>
- "Spiritual Not Religious," the Rev. Bill Clark, <http://fpc.lexington.ma.us/sermons%20by%20bc/spiritual.htm>
- "Unitarian Universalism: Path and Practice," The Reverend Patricia Tummino, <http://uumiddleboro.org/Previous%20Sermons/sermon%2010-14-01.htm>