

## Debbie Johnson, Religious Education Director



Unitarian Universalism has been a part of Debbie Johnson's life since her parent's marriage in 1966. After meeting at "Parents Without Partners" in Buffalo, NY, Debbie's parents discovered that Unitarian Universalism was a near perfect match for their thoughts regarding religion and their common philosophy of life. Debbie had the good fortune to live a UU childhood where asking questions was encouraged and having all the answers was not expected.

As an adult Debbie's UU faith has become an integral part of who she is. For over 12 years she has been involved as a parent, religious education (RE) teacher, and DRE (director of RE) in the UU congregation of Naples in SW Florida. It has been a time of discovery not only for her RE students, but for Debbie as well. Learning alongside nearly 50 UU children and their families was truly a privilege.

During the summer of 1997 Debbie's life took a unique UU twist. While visiting her hometown, she attended a service at the Amherst NY UU congregation where she had attended church as a child. She bumped into the parents of her high school sweetheart, and after just one lunch date to catch up, was reconnected with the "love of her life". Three days later, they were engaged. The following December, Debbie and Bruce were married on the beach in Naples by her UU minister.

Debbie just recently relocated to DeLand with her husband Bruce who is an environmental consultant for a large planning-engineering firm. They have two younger children ages three and five. Evan is a preschooler and interested in anything at all sport related as he is "all boy". Angelica is a kindergartener who loves to dance and "dress up". Their older daughter, Jenessa is a junior at UF. She hopes to attend Veterinary school following graduation next spring.

Debbie is a certified teacher in the state of Florida and has taught private preschool for 5 years, and public school (Kindergarten and 1st grade) for 11 years. She has been a Girl Scout volunteer for 12 years. Debbie enjoys opportunities that allow children to develop to their potential in an open minded and interactive atmosphere. Her current work as a GS leader for a group of Daisies (all age 5), and her willingness to lead RE are examples of these.