

# LOVE SURROUNDS US

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# LOVE SURROUNDS US

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At the core of our Unitarian Universalist community are our seven Principles. The Principles encompass all the ingredients of a good and faith-filled life based on equality, freedom, peace, acceptance, truth, care, and love. This program explores all the Principles in the context of Beloved Community of family/home, school, neighborhood. Participants engage in activities that emphasize the love they feel in community.



## Coloring Sheets for Love Surrounds Us Stories!

Download and copy black-and-white line drawings, specific to the stories in this program. Invite children to color during storytelling or afterward, to help them recall the story. Download the [Love Surrounds Us coloring sheet packet \[325\]](#) (PDF, 17 pages). Or, find an individual coloring sheet with its story in the curriculum and download the single sheet. Above: A coloring

sheet appropriate to use anytime during your Love Surrounds Us program.



Rainbow ribbon sticks from the Tapestry of Faith program Love Surrounds Us at the [Morristown NJ Unitarian Fellowship \[326\]](#).

## Downloading the Document

You can download this program, save it on your computer, edit it, and print it.

- Download a [two-column Word document \[327\]](#) of the entire program.
- Download a [two-column PDF \[328\]](#) of the entire program.
- [Instructions for Downloading the Program \[329\]](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \[330\]](#)

# INTRODUCTION

## The Program

“It is not a matter of thinking a great deal but of loving a great deal, so do whatever arouses you most to love.”

—St. Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* (1575)

At the core of our Unitarian Universalist community are our seven Principles. The Principles encompass all the ingredients of a good and faith-filled life based on equality, freedom, peace, acceptance, truth, care, and love. This program explores all the Principles in the context of Beloved Community.

The program concentrates on the communities that are most recognizable to kindergartners and first graders—their Beloved Communities of family/home, school, neighborhood. Participants engage in activities that emphasize the love they feel in community.

Principles are introduced with opening activities and story. The processing through wonder questions is extremely important to allow children to see the Principles at work in the world. Rather than listing the ways love surrounds us when we are treated equally, participants engage in ways to identify equality by the love shown in community. By Session 16, children will be able to articulate all seven Principles.

Sessions based on the Principles allow children to articulate their faith in the world. Participants come knowing they are Unitarian Universalists, and leave knowing why, as the Principles help answer the question "Why do I belong?"

## Goals

This program will:

- Teach the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles
- Develop connections among love, the Principles, and the communities of home, school, faith, and world
- Lift up Unitarian Universalism and the Principles in activities and stories
- Teach children skills for forgiveness, love, sharing, acceptance, caring, and peace in a loving community
- Explore rituals that help us focus on and celebrate UU Principles.

## Leaders

Leaders who can exemplify loving relationships with children are the core of Love Surrounds Us. Memorizing the seven UU Principles is a small part of this program. Leaders need to be able to recognize the Principles in story, life, and the answers of the children as they wonder. Engaging with the Principles from a multigenerational perspective will deepen understanding and faith.

## Participants

Love Surrounds Us is designed for children in kindergarten and first grade. It may be helpful to think about developmental norms for this age group. Not all children arrive at each developmental stage at the same time, but knowing what to expect overall can be quite helpful, especially to first-time leaders of programs for five- and six-year-olds. In her book *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* [331] (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), Tracey L. Hurd discusses developmental characteristics of young school-age children (ages five through seven). Five- and six-year-old children are generally able to:

- Coordinate gross motor skills through sports and games
- Draw, write, and use tools with beginning skill
- Think about more than one thing at a time; show the start of logical thinking
- Enjoy pretend play, but learning to distinguish fantasy from reality
- Show interest in facts, numbers, letters, and words
- Learn rules, authority, and routines; may try to apply rules across different settings, such as using school rules at home
- Enjoy being correct; may apply rules too broadly or literally
- Use self as a reference point
- Learn through social interaction as well as through their individual actions
- Make rigid and/or binary statements about gender and racial identifications
- Are receptive to antiracist intervention and multicultural experiences
- Form first reciprocal friendships
- Develop increased altruism
- Are evolving from fascination with stories of wonder to a keen interest in learning and performing the concrete expressions of religion
- Start developing a sense of belonging to a faith community through the imitation of practices of adults by whom they feel accepted

Hurd offers a variety of strategies that speak to these developmental considerations and may help shape sessions effectively for this age group. Some of these include:

- Provide outlets for physical activity, room for movement during quiet activities, new physical challenges in games.
- Include small-motor challenges, such as drawing, writing, painting, or using tools such as scissors.
- Create and sustain routines, to give children a sense of control and opportunities to be "correct."
- Notice and talk about children's similarities and differences.
- Present complexities that help push children's thinking beyond simple dualisms; gently challenge children's natural moral rigidities.
- Provide opportunities for group work and group problem-solving.
- Respect children's desire to categorize.
- Support children in their beginning friendships, to help them build an emotional base for future relationships.
- Welcome the whole child and respect the child as an individual, a member of the religious education group, and a member of the faith community.
- Provide encouragement and love.

## Integrating All Participants

Adapting activities or using alternate activities will help ensure that every session is inclusive of children with a range of physical and cognitive abilities and learning styles, food allergies, and other sensitivities or limitations. Below is general guidance on adapting the activities along with some resources for implementing inclusion.

While planning sessions from Love Surrounds Us, be aware of activities that might pose difficulties for children who are differently abled. All spaces, indoor and outdoor, need to be accessible to anyone who might be in the group. Check the width of doorways and aisles, the height of tables, and the terrain of outdoor landscapes.

Find out about participants' medical conditions and their allergies, particularly to food. Each session mixes active and quiet, expressive and listening, and whole group and individual activities, along with alternate activities that you can substitute for core activities if they better suit a group. Different learning styles among the participants will become apparent as time goes on, let this information guide selection of activities for each session.

Before, during, or after telling a story in this program, offer children the accompanying coloring sheet and some crayons. Quietly coloring can keep minds and bodies focused while reinforcing the story's subject matter.

Some activity descriptions mention specific concerns or suggest specific adaptations under the heading Including All Participants. Feel free to devise your own adaptations to meet any special needs you perceive. You will know best how to provide a fully inclusive learning experience for the group.

The UUA offers as a PDF file, at no charge, the helpful book by Sally Patton, *Welcoming Children with Special Needs* (PDF) [332] (Boston: UUA, 2005). Patton explains how we practice and deepen our faith when we work to integrate all participants in a religious education program:

Ministering to children with differences helps us be more creative in our ministry to all children and reaffirm our beliefs. Lessons of compassion, caring, and acceptance benefit us all, young and old alike... We deepen our faith when we embrace and fight for the vision of an inclusive community.

Patton continues:

“(We) ... have much to learn from these people about compassion and forgiveness, persistence and courage, and most importantly, the wholeness of their spirit and the gifts they offer if we allow them to flourish. Listening to children's stories encourages us to see each child's uniqueness rather than their limitations... Parenting, loving, befriending, and ministering to children with special needs changes people. How we handle the change will either mire us in the prevalent belief system about disability and limitations, or it will set us free and alter our ideas about who we are and why we are here.”

Patton's book does not merely inspire, it provides a strategy for congregations to engage in, institutionalize, and internalize the spirit and justice of an inclusive faith community that deepens the faith of all participants. Consider reading this book and sharing it with congregational leadership.

## Families

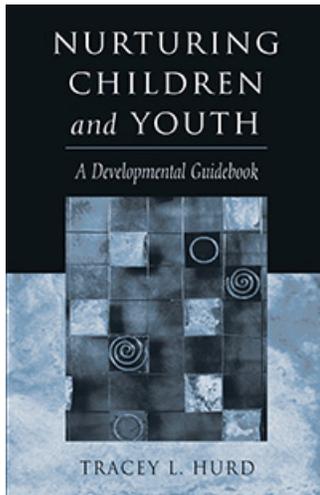
Families self define. No matter who belongs in a child's family, this program gives families many opportunities to discuss the sessions. Each session has a section called Taking It Home. It provides a summary of session activities for adults and activity suggestions to engage adults and children together. Whether you hand it out at the close of each session or email it to parents, Taking It Home will foster family processing. Faith is a journey. Questions and discussions that allow children to find their own answers are strong ways to encourage faith formation.

### Nurturing Children and Youth

#### A Developmental Guidebook

Tracey L. Hurd

From inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop



This book belongs to the Tapestry of Faith Toolkit Series provided by the UUA Faith Development Office. Toolkit Books provide background knowledge, inspiration, and practical guidance to program and lead UU faith development and to help us explore and live our faith in our congregations, neighborhoods, nation, and world.

**BUY THIS BOOK [331]**

# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Love Surrounds Us has a format that children will soon recognize. The Opening for each session identifies the UU Principles by different colors. The Closing pulls the group into community, affirming a mutual understanding they can take with them until the group meets again. Ribbon Sticks used in each session emphasize the way the UU Principles flow together.

Two sessions focus on each UU Principle. While most sessions can stand alone, it is best to do both sessions about any one Principle. By doing both sessions, children engage in a holistic experience of both receiving and giving love, connected conceptually to the words and actions of the Principles.

The program offers an ongoing project for individuals to reinforce and celebrate the Principles. The Heart Ribbon Magnet, introduced as Alternate Activity 1 in Session 2 [43], is revisited in six subsequent sessions as a five-minute alternate activity. By Session 14, the children have added seven colored ribbons to their Heart Ribbon Magnet, each color representing one of the Principles, and they are ready to take their magnets home as a reminder to apply the UU Principles in their daily lives. Beginning in Session 3, each odd-numbered session offers an alternate activity in which children can free-draw a poster to illustrate one of the Principles. You may wish to display a set of children's Principles Posters for the congregation at the conclusion of this program.

## Quote

A quote introduces the subject of each session. The quote may be read aloud to the group as an entry point to the session. However, the quotes are intended primarily for leaders, and are not always at a child's level of understanding or experience.

Co-leaders may like to discuss the quote as part of preparation for a session. Exploring a quote together can help each feel grounded in the ideas and activities you will present and can help a team of leaders get "on the same page". Quotes are included in Taking It Home for families to consider.

## Introduction

The Introduction presents the UU Principle that is the session's focus and gives an overview of the session concepts. It explains what to aim for and what to watch out for in planning and leading the session.

## Goals

Goals state general outcomes for the session. Reviewing the goals will help you connect the session's content and methodologies with the four strands of the Tapestry of Faith religious education programs: ethical development, spiritual development, Unitarian Universalist identity development, and faith development.

## Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives identify how specific activities foster specific outcomes for participants. While planning a session, apply your knowledge of the group, the time and space available, and your own strengths and interests to determine the most important and achievable objectives for the session and the activities that will serve them best.

## Session-at-a-Glance

The Session-at-a-Glance table lists the session activities in a suggested order, and provides an estimated time for completing each activity to conduct a 60-minute session. The table includes all the core activities from the Opening through the Closing. The table also shows a Faith in Action activity for the session. Faith in Action activities are not included in the core 60-minute time frame. Each Faith in Action activity emphasizes the session's Principle; you may wish to use it in place of a core activity. The Session-at-a-Glance table also presents alternate activities with their estimated times. Use alternate activities with or instead of core activities when they better suit the group or when you have more or less than 60 minutes for the session.

## Spiritual Preparation

Taking five or ten minutes to center yourself in the session's purpose and content will support and free you to be present with the children and provide the best possible learning experience. Each Spiritual Preparation exercise helps you focus on the session theme and reflect on the theme's connection to your own life and your Unitarian Universalist faith. The exercise will help you bring the topic to the group in an authentic manner and help you experience teaching as spiritual growth and faith development.

## Session Plan

The session plan presents every element of the session in detail, in the sequence established in Session-at-a-Glance. Additionally, the session plan presents Taking It Home with extension activities for families, a Resources section with all the stories, handouts, and other resources you need to lead the activities, and under Find Out More, additional resources to further explore the session topics. It can be useful to scan Find Out More before you lead a session.

**Opening:** Each session begins with a chalice lighting, a sharing of opening words, and the opening song. To ensure safety, obtain an LED/battery-operated flaming chalice or use a symbolic chalice. The Opening is a time for centering, both for individuals and the group. Shape the opening for the group, the space, and the culture and practices of your congregation.

**Activities:** Up to four activities form the core content of each session. The variety of activities addresses the different learning styles you may find among participants. Generally, the sequence of activities is designed to activate prior knowledge, pique interest, engage children in experiential learning, and help them process and apply their observations and new knowledge. Each session includes a story.

Games and physical activities are offered in many sessions while options of art projects are included in every session as well as a coloring sheet [333] specific to the session's story. Choose according to the learning styles, developmental readiness, energy level, and other attributes of the children in the group.

The suggested sequence of activities alternates listening and talking, sitting still and moving about, individual exploration and team or whole group exploration, to provide variation that will help keep kindergarteners and first graders engaged and on track. As you select activities to form a session that will work well for the group, keep in mind the benefits of a well paced session that includes different kinds of activities.

Finally, participants gather in a closing circle. This ritual affirms the love the group shared. Identical words are used in every closing and will soon be memorized by regular attendees.

**Materials for Activity:** This checklist lists the supplies needed.

**Preparation for Activity:** Review the bulleted preparation "to do" list for each activity at least one week ahead of a session. The list provides all the advance work you need to do for each activity, from downloading leader resources to organizing art materials.

**Description of Activity:** This section provides detailed directions for implementing the activity. For many activities, the description includes a rationale which links the activity thematically to the rest of the session and to the entire program.

**Including All Participants:** Adaptation to include all participants should always be part of your planning process. For certain activities, an Including All Participants section suggests specific modifications to make the activity manageable and meaningful for children with limitations of mobility, sight, hearing, or cognition.

**Faith in Action:** An important component of the program, Faith in Action activities give children practice at being Unitarian Universalists in the world. By design, Faith in Action activities engage leaders, participants, their families, other congregants, and sometimes members of the wider community, often outside the group's regular meeting time and place. They can provide a way for children to inspire and be inspired by other members of the congregation and strengthen bonds between the generations.

**Taking It Home:** Taking It Home helps families extend their children's religious education. Taking It Home resources may include games, conversation topics, ideas for incorporating Unitarian Universalist rituals into the home environment, and/or book or online sources to further explore session themes or stories. For each session, download the Taking It Home section, adapt it to reflect the actual experience your session will provide, print and copy it for children to bring home, or send it to all parents/caregivers as a group email.

**Alternate Activities:** All sessions offer two or more alternate activities. Substitute or add these to core session activities to fill the needs of the group. Some alternate activities are simpler versions of a core activity; some require more time than a core activity; some are particularly suited to adaptation for developmental or ability differences among the children in the group. Each session includes an option for one of two ongoing projects to complete over the course of the entire program.

**Resources:** Each session includes all the stories, handouts, and all other resources you will need to lead every element of the session.

Under the heading **Stories** find full text of the session's central story. Coloring sheets for stories in Love Surrounds Us can be downloaded individually or as a [packet for the entire curriculum \[334\]](#).

Under the heading **Handouts** find any material that needs to be printed and photocopied for participants to use in the session.

Under the heading **Leader Resources** find the components you need to lead the session activities. These might include pictures, patterns, or game pieces.

**Find Out More:** You will find selected resources to help you further explore session topics. These might include book titles, website URLs, sermon excerpts, or detailed biographical information about Unitarians, Universalists, or Unitarian Universalists mentioned in the session. You may find it useful to scan this section before leading the session.

## LEADER GUIDELINES

Being organized enough to be flexible is a good way to prepare for Love Surrounds Us. Try to memorize songs and chants ahead of time. Read stories through at least once so your storytelling has a good flow. Providing smooth transitions for young children builds their trust. In a secure environment where the leader is confident, children will respond with attention and love.

## IMPLEMENTATION

There is a huge developmental difference between children entering kindergarten and those finishing first grade. Keep this in mind when you choose activities. Read the Including All Participants sections for ways to adapt to developmental stages.

# BEFORE YOU START

You will need to assemble or order a few materials in advance. If you plan to use the activities below, follow through with the ordering or preparation suggested.

Session/Activity	Advance Preparation
Session 1, Opening	Obtain dowels (or pony tail elastics) and 1/8-inch ribbon in seven colors to assemble ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons (needed for all sessions).
Session 2, Alternate Activity 1, Heart Ribbon Magnet	Obtain refrigerator magnets, 1/8-inch ribbon in seven colors, and sheets of felt; this activity is done over multiple sessions.
Session 5, Faith in Action	Order family puzzle, item PE1246 from the online <a href="#">craft supplier S&amp;S [335]</a> .
Session 7, Activity 4, Flower Communion	Fresh flowers are needed if participants will not make tissue paper flowers for Flower Communion in Activity 3.
Session 10, Activity 3, Talking Sticks	Gather small, dry tree branches, one per participant, to make talking sticks.
Session 12, Activity 1, Peace Bowls	Order clay to make clay bowls.
Session 14, Activity 2, Shake-and-Make Animals	Purchase modeling clay to make animals.
Session 14, Activity 3, Rainforest Life	Ask congregants to save a large appliance box to make a rain forest tree. Purchase modeling clay.
Session 15, Activity 3, Recycled Photo Album	Ask congregants to save brown paper grocery bags that participants can use to make pictures on.

# RESOURCES

## From InSpirit, the UUA Book and Gift Shop

*Nurturing Children and Youth: [331] A Developmental Guidebook* by Tracey L. Hurd (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005)

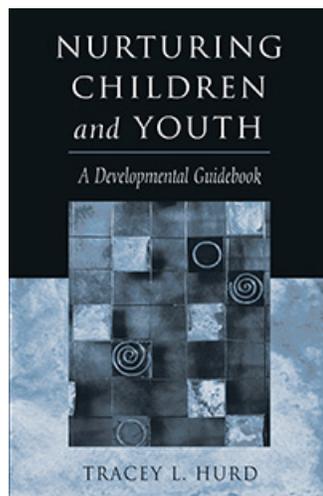
*The Gift of Faith [336]: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children* by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar *2nd edition* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2002)

## On the UUA website

*Welcoming Children with Special Needs [337]: A Guidebook for Faith Communities* (PDF) by Sally Patton (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004)

## Tapestry of Faith Arts and Spirituality Resources

Tapestry of Faith offers two multi-chapter resources online. *Spirituality and the Arts in Children's Programming [338]* is by Dr. Nita Penfold, creator of the Spirit Play program. *Making Music Live [339]*, by Nick Page, provides guidance for incorporating music into religious education, including how to teach songs even if you are not a musician.



### **Nurturing Children and Youth A Developmental Guidebook**

Tracey L. Hurd

From inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop

This book belongs to the Tapestry of Faith Toolkit Series provided by the UUA Faith Development Office. Toolkit Books provide background knowledge, inspiration, and practical guidance to program and lead UU faith development and to help us explore and live our faith in our congregations, neighborhoods, nation, and world.

**BUY THIS BOOK [331]**

# FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

Faith Development Office  
Ministries and Faith Development  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
24 Farnsworth Street  
Boston, MA 02210-1409  
[religiouseducation@uua.org](mailto:religiouseducation@uua.org)

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

Did you work with (a) co-facilitator(s)?

Your name:

***Overall, what was your experience with this program?***

***What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?***

***In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?***

***Did you enrich the program with any resources that you would recommend to others?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?***

# PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations. Please forward your feedback to:

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Ministries and Faith Development  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
24 Farnsworth Street  
Boston, MA 02210-1409  
[religiouseducation@uua.org](mailto:religiouseducation@uua.org)

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

***Overall, what was your experience with this program?***

***What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?***

***In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?***

***What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?***

# PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

There are seven principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism (UU) draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

These principles and sources of faith are the backbone of our religious community.

## SESSION 1: LOVE SURROUNDS US

# INTRODUCTION

We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love. — Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Catholic nun and missionary

This first session makes kindergarteners and first graders aware of their capacity to "do small things with great love." They learn that they are each an instrument of love in the world as they get to know each other and discover the strength of the word "love" in this beloved community.

Love Surrounds Us connects the love inside the Unitarian Universalist Principles with the love children can find and create in their beloved communities. Through story, activities, and relationships, children come to understand how they are uniquely fashioned to feel loved, as well as to surround others with love.

## Goals

This session will:

- Teach that we each bring love and receive love in this world
- Explore the word "love" as it applies to our beloved communities
- Experience the UU chalice as a symbol of love in relationship.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn the theme song "Love Surrounds Me"
- Connect love to themselves and others
- Discover the strength of the word "love."

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Love Surrounds Us Song	10
Activity 2: Story — The Wise Sailimai, A Muslim Tale from China	20
Activity 3: The Love Bowl	15
Faith in Action: Love Notes	20
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Mapping the Community	15
Alternate Activity 2: Love Is...	15
Alternate Activity 3: Helping Hands Chart	15

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

"Love" is a word that surrounds adults in both joy and pain. Think about your journey with the word love. Write the word in both cursive and print on a piece of paper. Center your mind on places where love has caused pain in your life. Center your mind on places where love has brought joy to your life. Through all these times, love remains strong.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- A multicolored cloth to cover centering table
- Ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons in a container (See Opening)
- Permanent markers
- List of participants

## Preparation for Activity

- Arrange a small centering or worship table with multicolored cloth and chalice.
- Place ribbons sticks (or wrist ribbons) in their container by the door.

## Description of Activity

Welcome each child as they enter. Help them find a ribbon stick or wrist ribbon and write their name on it. Ask them to sit in the large group area and hold their ribbons carefully. While they are waiting, invite them to look at each color and name it or turn to a friend and match the colors on their two ribbon sticks.

## Including All Participants

When participants are new or arrive late, be sure to include them. Give each new child or visitor a ribbon stick and write their name on it.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- A multicolored cloth to cover centering table
- 1/2-inch dowels, 18 inches long
- Spools of 1/8-inch ribbon in the colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet
- Duct tape
- Container for ribbon sticks
- List of participants
- Optional: Pony tail ties

## Preparation for Activity

- Obtain an LED/battery-operated candle at large retail stores such as Target, Michael's, and Bed, Bath, and Beyond.
- Obtain ribbon stick materials. [S&S World Wide \[335\]](#) offers 1/2 dowels under Arts and Crafts, or find at a hardware stores; spools of 1/8 ribbon are available at most craft stores; (optional) pony tail ties to make wrist ribbons are available in the hair departments of any drug store - purchase soft, covered elastics that will fit comfortably on a child's wrist.
- Make a ribbon stick (or wrist ribbon) for each participant, plus a few extra for newcomers or guests: Cut the ribbon to 16-inch lengths. To make one ribbon stick, take one piece of each color of ribbon and use duct tape to secure all seven pieces to one end of a dowel. For wrist ribbons, tie seven pieces of ribbon-one in each color-to a pony tail tie. Children can complete all activities wearing a wrist ribbon instead of holding a ribbon stick.
- Obtain a container large enough to hold all the ribbon sticks. You may wish to decorate the outside.
- Arrange a centering table with a cloth cover and a chalice, candle, and lighter or an LED/battery-operated candle.
- Set the container filled with ribbon sticks on the centering table.

## Description of Activity

Welcome all in love and acceptance, center around the chalice, and begin to form community.

Explain that the children will use ribbon sticks each time they meet. Give each participant a ribbon stick and help them name the colors on the sticks. Tell them they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Teach this opening chant and do it together while waving ribbon sticks.

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide each participant, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each child. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# ACTIVITY 1: LOVE SURROUNDS US SONG

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)

## Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1. Memorize the song, sung to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." Familiarize yourself with the teaching method described on the leader resource.

## Description of Activity

Participants learn the theme song to Love Surrounds Us called "Love Surrounds Me."

Have the children stand, if all are able. Guide them to begin with their palms together, centered at their hearts. Ask them to take a deep breath and circle their arms straight up over their heads with hands together. Arms will then separate and circle out to shoulders and around their bodies. Explain that love surrounds us just like our arms stretch and surround us. Say:

We will learn a song that tells us how the spirit surrounds us with a message of love.

Teach the song, using the rote teaching method:

Love surrounds us this I know

For my spirit tells me so

All of us to love belong

Fill our hearts and make us strong.

Yes, love surrounds us

Yes, love surrounds us.

Yes, love surrounds us,

My spirit tells me so.

After teaching the song, process the meaning of the words:

- Where are some places you feel surrounded by love? Why?

- Who are the people who surround you in love? How do they make you feel loved?
- How does love fill our hearts? What does it feel like?
- How does love make us strong?
- Why is it important to give and receive love?

## Including All Participants

Make sure to give children with mobility or other physical challenges their own way of stretching or singing. They can stretch while sitting or use one hand or their fingers to stretch and move. For very active participants, add a second deep breath and stretch to bring calm and focus.

# ACTIVITY 2: STORY, THE WISE SAILIMAI, A MUSLIM TALE FROM CHINA

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Wise Sailimai - A Muslim Tale from China](#)" [341]
- A basket for props
- Props: A small hammer, a hand mirror, a black pan (perhaps cast iron), [a picture of the ocean](#) [342] (Leader Resource 2), and several pieces of metal
- Four sheets of blank paper, and markers
- Optional: "[The Wise Sailimai](#)" [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [343], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Collect props for the story. You might use a plastic hammer; be sure the pan is not too heavy. Choose metal items safe for participants to handle, such as long, large bolts. Place all the props in the basket.
- Make four signs, each with a numeral 1, 2, 3, or 4, and place them in the basket.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [343] for "The Wise Sailimai."

## Description of Activity

Gather the children to hear a story. Pass out props, taking each out of the basket, one at a time, and saying:

This is a \_\_\_\_\_. We will hear about this in the story. Who would like to hold this carefully?

Take out the four number signs. Offer each to a volunteer, saying:

There are four important questions and answers in our story. Who would like to hold each number sign?

Then, introduce the story:

We will now read this story about a special girl named Sailimai. If you hear me say the prop you are holding, stand up and show everyone what you have. If you hear the question or the answer with the same number as your sign, stand up and show us your number.

Read/tell the story.

Afterward, ask each child to tell how their story prop was part of the story. Collect the props in the basket. Finish by asking the participants what is the strongest thing in the world (the answer is "love").

Process the story using these questions.

- Why did Sailimai help her father-in-law? Would you have helped your father-in-law?
- How did the king feel when young Sailimai knew all the answers?
- What did Sailimai learn about being part of a community?
- What did Sailimai teach her father-in-law and the king about love?

## Including All Participants

If any participants have physical challenges, form pairs to hold up props together.



"The Wise Sailimai," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Amy Paschall

Download the [coloring sheet by Amy Paschall \(PDF\) \[343\]](#) for "The Wise Sailimai."

[COLORING SHEET \(PDF\) \[343\]](#)

# ACTIVITY 3: THE LOVE BOWL

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A large, brightly colored plastic bowl

## Description of Activity

This activity helps participants think about the love in our world and in our lives that surrounds them and which they surround.

Gather children in a circle, on the floor or in chairs. Look into the bowl and say:

This bowl needs some love. I think I will put in all the love I feel for my \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. parents, the world, animals).

Hold the bowl for a child next to you and ask "What's in your love bowl?" Encourage each child to pretend to place in the bowl something for which they feel love. Model that the bowl is getting heavier and heavier with all the love in it. When all participants have put their love into the love bowl, process together, using these wondering questions.

- I wonder where the love is that we put in the bowl?
- I wonder why we cannot see the love in the bowl?
- I wonder if we can ever put in too much love in our love bowl?
- I wonder what ways we can share the love in our love bowl?

Have participants pass the love-filled bowl and take out love for themselves that they will continue to share when they leave the group. Say something like:

Now we are going to go around and share the love we each put in the bowl and take some out to give away to our family, our friends, our pets, the earth, and whoever and whatever else is important to us. As Unitarian Universalists, we remember that love surrounds us and we can surround others with love, too.

# CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the participants who participated in the session today. How did they grow in knowledge of one another? Which participants will need more help? Which participants can work independently? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: LOVE NOTES

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A clothesline and clothes pins
- Construction paper in a variety of colors
- Color markers
- Heart stickers
- Envelopes

## Preparation for Activity

- Cut construction paper into 6x8-inch pieces.
- Hang the clothesline in a place where all can see and reach it.
- Optional: Lightly sketch the word "love" on some pieces of construction paper, for younger children to trace over in marker.

## Description of Activity

Participants identify feelings associated with giving and receiving words of love.

Help participants write "love" and their names on as many pieces of construction paper as they wish. Younger children can trace the word and write their own interpretation of their name. Encourage them to decorate the notes with stickers. Help children hang the love notes along the clothesline with clothes pins.

Invite children to think about people they see in their daily lives who need love. Engage them to think and talk about this as they make love notes. Help children see both people they know and people they do not know as possible recipients of love.

Invite participants to look, in the weeks to come, for people who need a little love. Give each participant several love notes to take home in an envelope to deliver to people in their community. Invite the minister, or a lay visitation person, to take Love Notes off the clothesline to give to people who receive pastoral care, so they will have a physical note to hold with a participant's message of love.

Next time the group meets, be sure to follow up with participants about how they felt when passing out love notes. Ask if participants received love notes, and how that felt. Talk about the good feelings brought about by both sending and receiving written messages of love.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: MAPPING THE COMMUNITY

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- The addresses of the participants in the session
- A map of your community

## Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a map of the area where your congregation is located, large enough to show street names.
- Mark on the map the addresses of each participant and the address of your congregation.
- Display the map on a wall.

## Description of Activity

This activity helps participants identify beloved community as it relates to their group.

Show participants the map and point out where each of them lives. Show the location of the congregation you all share. Engage the children to discover together:

- Who lives the farthest from our faith community?
- Who lives the closest to our faith community?
- What things do we share in our community?
- How do roads help us in our community?
- Where are the places that we get groceries?
- Where do we get health care?
- Where are our schools?

Affirm that the beloved community is a group connected not only by the roads and activities we share but also, and more importantly, by our hearts and by the relationships we build.

## Including All Participants

This activity will unfold differently depending on whether the group lives in a concentrated area or more spread out. If your congregation serves a wide geographical area, obtain an adequate map to ensure all participants are included in the activity. If participants live very far from the congregation, talk about what reasons families might have for coming so far to be together with this faith community.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: LOVE IS...

15 minutes

### Materials for Activity

- 11x17-inch paper for all participants
- Books with photographs of people
- A variety of crayons and/or color markers

### Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a variety of books with photographs that show people from all parts of the world.
- Write "Love Is..." across a sheet of paper for each participant.

### Description of Activity

Participants will identify a worldwide community and opportunities for love. Show pictures of people from all parts of the world. Discuss with participants how you can tell that people are surrounded in love. Emphasize facial expressions and body language. Pass out paper and crayons/markers and invite children to illustrate their completion of the statement, "Love is..."

Provide an opportunity for participants to share their illustrations.

### Including All Participants

A child who is unable to draw on their own can dictate words to you. Write the words " \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) says" above "Love is..." and then write what the child tells you.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HELPING HANDS CHART

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Poster board or foam core, and markers
- Construction paper in multiple colors
- Sticky tack or removable-glue glue sticks

## Preparation for Activity

- Make a poster board or foam core chart. Title it "Kindergarten and First Graders Use Helping Hands." Make two columns and four to six large rows. The children will help you list the chores in the first column. The second column is where you will stick children's hand prints to assign chores.
- Cut hand prints the size of a child's hand, one for each participant plus a few extra, from different colors of construction paper. Spread the hand prints and markers on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Participants will help with chores in their meeting room.

Invite the children to help you fill in the chores on the sign. For each chore, use a short phrase (e.g., "clean up") and a symbol (e.g., a picture of a broom). This will allow participants to read the Helping Hands sign in word or symbol.

List four to six jobs on the chart. Then have participants write their names in a hand print of their choice. Explain how the chart will work; you might say:

Each time we meet, some of your hand prints will be next to jobs. If your handprint is on the sign, you will help with that chore.

Depending on the size of the group, rotate assignments each time you meet, or monthly. The chores might include:

- Put away art supplies.
- Clean tables.
- Put away ribbon sticks.

- Push in chairs.

## Including All Participants

If a participant cannot write their name on hand prints, use dots to outline the name so the child can write it by connecting the dots. If a participant cannot write, write their name for them while saying aloud each letter as you write it.

# TAKING IT HOME

We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love. — Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Catholic nun and missionary

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** The participants talked about how love surrounds them and how, as Unitarian Universalists, they are instruments of giving love in the world. In the story "The Wise Sailimai: A Muslim Tale from China" participants heard about a young girl who answered four questions for the king to save the life of her father-in-law. One of the questions was "What is stronger than steel?" The answer was love. Participants learned the song "Love Surrounds Me."

## **EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...**

- How the Spirit shows us the way of love
- Ways love surrounds your family each day
- Ways your family gives love to others each day.

## **EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...**

**A Family Adventure.** Take a family walk. Bring along a notebook and pencil. Observe ways nature surrounds us with love. Draw pictures to remind you of all the ways that nature brings themes of love into our lives. Take your nature book home and place it on the family dining table. Look through your pictures each night or at the dinner table.

## **Family Discovery.** Books to read:

- Toddler — *Baby, I Love You* by Karma Wilson (Little Simon, December 2009)
- Preschool — *Love You Forever* by Robert N. Munsch (Firefly Books, 1995)
- Early elementary — *The Way I Love You* by David Bedford (Little Hare Books, 2009)
- Upper elementary — *Learning to Love* (Yasmin Peace Series) by Stephanie Perry Moore (Lift Every Voice, July 2009)
- Young adult — *Love Is A Higher Law* by David Levithan (Knopf Books for Young Readers, August 2009)

**A Family Ritual.** Family Love Notes: Invite everyone to use sticky notes to write notes of love to other family members. Put the notes on the refrigerator, the bathroom mirror, or a door. Find creative places to leave unsigned love notes for others every day.

# THE WISE SAILIMAI, A MUSLIM TALE FROM CHINA

By Sarah Conover , Freda Crane

*A Muslim folk tale from Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs, A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents collected and adapted by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane (Spokane: Eastern Washington University Press, 2004); originally from Mythology and Folklore.*

Begin by saying, "Today we will hear a story about a wise young girl. She will teach us how love surrounds us in many ways."

Note: "Sailimai" is pronounced SAIL-ee-my. "Hui" is pronounced "Whee.

Long, long ago in the country of China, lived a young woman of the Muslim Hui people whose name was Sailimai. Although she was a farm girl, too poor to attend school, Sailimai nonetheless paid close attention to life around her. When an old woman in the village needed help, but was too proud to ask for it, Sailimai would know just the right time to visit. When children scraped their knees, Sailimai arrived to assist, even if they were not her own children. She may have been poor and unschooled, but Sailimai possessed a wise and deep heart.

Once, her father-in-law, a carpenter...

*(Leader: Who has the hammer that the carpenter used? Please stand.)*

...named Ali, was ordered by the emperor to make some repairs in his palace. Fearful of doing less than his best for the emperor, Ali pushed himself to work his very hardest, working both day and night. Yet, as it sometimes happens, the time came when Ali went beyond his limits. Dizzy with fatigue, hands shaking, momentarily careless, Ali tipped over the emperor's most precious vase. The pieces shattered—all too loudly—in the great hall. Servants came running.

Soon enough the emperor heard the story of his ruined, priceless vase.

"Bring this carpenter..."

*(Leader: Who has the hammer that the carpenter used?)*

...to me at once," he demanded.

Handcuffed and escorted by three guards, Ali, trembling, stood speechless before the emperor. The emperor drew his sword. As it hovered over Ali's head, Ali at last spoke up; "Forgive me your worship! I did not mean to break the vase. I promise to pay for it. I promise to pay!"

The emperor lowered his sword just a bit. "A poor, old Hui like yourself could never replace such a treasure. Do not jest with me!"

"Have mercy on me," Ali begged. "I will pay."

The emperor re-sheathed his sword with a sly smile. "Very well old Hui, I do not expect you to replace my vase. Instead, I will give you ten days to find me four things." The emperor hesitated in thought, tugging lightly on his beard. "The first thing you must get me...

*(Leader: Who has the "Number 1" sign?)*

"...is something more black than the bottom of a pan."

*(Leader: Who has the pan?)*

"Second: ...

*(Leader: Who has the "Number 2" sign?)*

"...You must find me something clearer than a mirror."

*(Leader: Who has the mirror?)*

The emperor waited a moment, watching Ali's reactions, but Ali stared blankly at the floor. The emperor continued. "The third:...

*(Leader: Who has the "Number 3" sign?)*

"...Something stronger than steel."

*(Leader: Who has our strong metal?)*

The emperor smirked. "And lastly,...

*(Leader: Here is the fourth thing. Who has the "Number 4" sign?)*

"...find me something as vast as the sea.

*(Leader: Who has the picture of the vast sea?)*

"...If you fail at any of these, I will chop off your head." Finished, the emperor smiled broadly, quite pleased with himself.

Ali looked stricken. "How," he wondered, "could I achieve these impossible tasks? Does the emperor simply wish to torture me for the last ten days of my life?" Sick with dread, he hung his head, turned away and headed home.

For the next week he could neither eat nor sleep. His family knew that something was terribly amiss, but Ali would not discuss it. "Please father," Sailimai said, calling her father-in-law by the customary term of respect. "What is the trouble? Perhaps we can help?" Begging and pleading, Sailimai at last coaxed Ali into talking. He cradled his head between his hands and wept as he named the emperor's four impossible tasks.

But Sailimai responded as if these were everyday requests. "This isn't a problem! Father, don't worry. I will have all these things when the emperor comes tomorrow. I shall present them to him myself."

Ali assumed that Sailimai was trying only to comfort him. He didn't want her to get in trouble with the emperor too. "Don't be foolish, Sailimai," he warned. These four things do not exist. The emperor just wanted to make me suffer further before killing me."

Sailimai persisted. "Father, I really do have these things. I know you don't believe me now. But wait until tomorrow. I will show them to both you and the emperor!"

And so it was that the very next day, the tenth day since the broken vase, the emperor appeared—surrounded by troops—at Ali's door. "Old Hui! Come forward and give to me the four things you owe me," bellowed the emperor.

Ali came outside with Sailimai by his side. They both bowed humbly, never daring to meet the emperor's gaze. Sailimai then stepped forward. "Your majesty," she said, "The four things you requested are ready to be presented. Please name them one by one."

"The first thing I must have," said the emperor, "is that which is more black than the bottom of a pan."

*(Leader: Who has our "Number 1" sign?)*

He touched the sheath of his sword with a glint in his eye.

Sailimai answered, "This, your majesty, can be found in the bottomless, greedy heart."

The emperor hid his surprise. This girl, he reassured himself, cannot be so smart. She is a farm girl. He nodded briefly, "The next thing you must present is something more clear than a mirror. Do you have that?" he asked.

*(Leader: Who has our "Number 2" sign?)*

Sailimai answered: "Yes, knowledge offers a clarity greater than any mirror."

The emperor looked dumbstruck. "Well," he stammered, "Do you have something stronger than steel to give me?"

*(Leader: Who has our "Number 3" sign?)*

"Love," said Sailimai, "is the strongest thing in the world."

Knowing he had been bested, the emperor stood speechless. Ali glanced at Sailimai, and stood a little taller. At last the emperor cleared his throat and made his last request.

*(Leader: Who has the "Number 4" sign?)*

"And what do you have, that could possibly be as vast as the sea?" he asked.

"A virtuous heart is as vast as the sea, your majesty." Her head lowered, Sailimai smiled and said not more.

Flustered and humbled, the emperor sputtered, "It's time to leave. Old Hui, you are hereby pardoned!" He turned to his troops and shouted, "March!"

As the Emperor of China distanced himself, Sailimai held her father-in-law's hand. Together, she and Ali bowed in relief and gratitude to Allah. Because of Sailimai's wise heart, Ali could now live a long and happy life.



"The Wise Sailimai," Love Surrounds Us, illustration, Amy Paschall

Download the [coloring sheet by Amy Paschall \(PDF\) \[343\]](#) for "The Wise Sailimai."

[COLORING SHEET \(PDF\) \[343\]](#)

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: ROTE TEACHING, LOVE SURROUNDS US SONG

*To the tune of "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." Lyrics by Ruth Gibson, in Treasure Hunting Take Two, self-published by Gaia Brown and Ellen W. Schneider.*

The rote teaching method for singing involves these steps:

- Sing the entire song to participants as they listen.
- Sing first line and ask participants to repeat the line.
- Sing the second line and ask participants to repeat the line.
- Sing the first and second line together and ask participants to repeat the line.
- Sing the third line and ask the participants to repeat the line.
- Sing the fourth line and ask the participants to repeat the line.
- Sing the first through fourth lines and ask participants to repeat.
- Continue in the same manner for the second verse.
- Sing the entire song.

Love surrounds us this I know

For my spirit tells me so

All of us to love belong

Fill our hearts and make us strong.

Yes, love surrounds us

Yes, love surrounds us.

Yes, love surrounds us,

My spirit tells me so.

# LEADER RESOURCE 2: OCEAN PICTURE FOR STORY

Print the picture to use as a prop for the story.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\)](#) [344] for printing.



*Photo by Christy Olson.*

## FIND OUT MORE

### Recommended Books

*For Every Child: United Nations Children's Fund* (New York: Phyllis Fogelman Books)

*Love Is...* by Wendy Anderson Halperin (Aladdin Books, 2003)

## SESSION 2: LOVE SURROUNDS US SHARING

# INTRODUCTION

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. — Maya Angelou, poet and author

In this session, children use positive words and actions as they learn and live our First Principle, affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Participants will discover that these attitudes and actions are also taught in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

The Principles and the Sermon on the Mount give us ways to be in relationship with one another and the world. Both documents pass on a guide for living that is important for each child to have as they grow.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the first Principle, "We believe each and every person is important"
- Connect the first Principle to specific words and actions that are respectful
- Link first Principle to the Beatitudes from Christian scripture.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Actively explore the song "Love Surrounds Me" in a circle game
- Experience respect for others in activities that appeal to several different learning styles
- Experience how our words and actions impact others.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story — Jesus Teaches the Beatitudes	15
Activity 2: Love Surrounds Us Circle Game	15
Activity 3: Respectful Role Playing	15
Faith in Action: Respectful Words and Hands Posters	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Heart Ribbon Magnet	15
Alternate Activity 2: All People Are Important	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Most of us have been hurt by the words or actions of others. This can happen in any of our beloved communities. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Focus on a time when you were hurt by another's words or actions. How had you felt about this person before the hurtful words or actions? How did you feel about the person after the hurt?

From there, consider: What does it take to transform your hurting heart? How can understanding others better help take us from hurt to acceptance? As you breathe, feel love surrounding you. Accept the healing power of breath.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Red construction paper, five large sheets
- Permanent marker
- List of participant's names
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.
- Cut the red construction paper into five identical circles. Spread the circles out around the large group area.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. This activity emphasizes the color red and the first Principle and allows children to review the theme song.

Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite them to stand on a red circle and match the ribbon on their stick with the red circle. When the ribbon is matched, children may sit down with their sticks until all are ready for the Opening. Sing the theme song "Love Surrounds Me" to indicate it is time to begin the session.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new participant or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Red cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together.

Welcome the children. Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Introduce red as the color that represents the first Principle. Have them say the first Principle together: "We believe each and every person is important."

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned to the container and the children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY, JESUS TEACHES THE BEATITUDES

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Jesus Teaches the Beatitudes \[345\]](#)"
- A copy of a Bible, *New Revised Standard Version* or another version
- Optional: "[Jesus Teaches the Beatitudes](#)" coloring sheet [346], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story, including the biblical passage from Matthew 5:1-11.

## Description of Activity

This story is based on the Sermon on the Mount, one of the most well known of Jesus' teachings. Show the Bible and explain that the children will hear one story from a whole book of stories.

Use Matthew 5:1-11 to show the participants how the scriptures are set up with verses and chapters. Say in your own words:

The Beatitudes are ways that Jesus taught people would be blessed. The First Principle explains that everyone has worth as human beings. How we treat each other is important. We are called on as Unitarian Universalists to treat each other with respect and kindness whenever we can.

Ask:

- How do we learn about the right way to show others we care?
- Who are the people who teach us in our lives to be kind and respectful?
- How does our first Principle tell us how to treat others?

Pause after each question so participants have time to think and engage in discussion. Then, read the story. When you are done, process with these questions:

- What kinds of people did Jesus mention?

- Raise your hand if you have ever been someone in the Beatitudes. (Repeat some examples: Who has ever felt sad? Who has ever been gentle? Who has been a peacemaker?)

Say in your own words:

Jesus was saying everyone is blessed. Who knows what "blessed" means?

"Blessed" in our Unitarian Universalist faith is part of our first Principle: We believe each and every person is unique and valuable, no one more or less than anyone else. Since we are all unique and valuable, we are all blessed. We all deserve to be treated with respect. It's up to us to treat everyone as well as we can. Look around this group. Every single person is blessed.

It was important to Jesus to teach people how to act with each other. Why do you think people listened to Jesus? How do you think people felt after Jesus finished speaking on the mountain?

Jesus' teachings have been taught for more than two thousand years. Many people follow him because he taught love and kindness. Unitarian Universalists also learn from Jesus' teachings.

# ACTIVITY 2: LOVE SURROUNDS US CIRCLE GAME

15 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Identify a large, open, indoor or outdoor space to use for this activity.
- Read the Description of Activity and be sure you understand the game directions.
- Be ready to tell a way "love surrounds you," to start the game.

## Description of Activity

Kinesthetic engagement with the song helps children understand the theme.

Form a circle of children and co-leaders, holding hands. Gather the group in a circle. Say, in your own words.

Who remembers the song we sing in our opening time? Now we will sing "Love Surrounds Me" and do some fun actions as we sing. Then we will sit down and play a game using respectful and loving words. Please stand in a circle and join hands.

### "Love Surrounds Me" Song with Actions Circle Game

Love surrounds us, this I know (circle left, walking)

For my spirit tells me so. (circle right, walking)

All of us to love belong. (walk in four steps)

Fill our hearts and make us strong. (walk out four steps, then drop hands)

Yes, love surrounds us, (individually, twirl around one way)

Yes, love surrounds us, (individually, twirl around the other way)

Yes, love surrounds us, (back to circle)

My spirit tells me so. (sit down)

### "Love Surrounds Me" Circle Game

Choose a volunteer to begin. Say you will show them how to play the game. Then, stand up and tell one way love surrounds you each day (Say: Love surrounds me when I \_\_\_\_\_.) Now, walk toward the volunteer and say "\_\_\_\_\_ (child's name), you are loved, too. Will you play the game?" Invite the child to stand and tell one way love surrounds them each day. Then guide the child to walk toward another participant and invite them to share by saying, "\_\_\_\_\_ (second child's name), you are loved, too. Will you play the game?" Direct the first and second child to exchange places. Prompt the second child to share one way that love surrounds them and then invite another to take their place in the circle and share. When everyone has shared and exchanged places, have everyone stand and sing the song with the actions again.

Processing questions for after the game:

- I wonder how it feels to be invited to play a game.
- How do you feel if you do not get chosen to play?
- How did it feel to exchange places?
- Were the actions to the song fun? Why or why not?

## Including All Participants

Adapt the movements to include children with mobility limitations. Use wrist ribbons (Opening) to allow a seated child to make movements.

# ACTIVITY 3: RESPECTFUL ROLE PLAYING

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Respectful Role Playing Cards \[347\]](#)

## Preparation for Activity

- Make two copies of Leader Resource 1. Keep one copy intact and cut apart the other to make the cards.

## Description of Activity

This activity helps participants integrate ways to validate the first Principle by engaging them to act out events that could happen in their everyday lives.

Invite a volunteer to choose a card. Read the card aloud and invite the child to choose someone to help them act out the card. Be sure participants use respectful words when inviting someone to help them. After each role play, lead the group to process with the questions on that card.

## Including All Participants

Some first graders read and would like the opportunity to read their own cards.

# CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Children understand respect by feeling respected. Think through your time together. Were there times when respectful words or actions were not used? How can you help children understand respect better in future sessions?

# FAITH IN ACTION: RESPECTFUL WORDS AND HANDS POSTERS

30 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- 11x17-inch drawing paper
- Poster captions on card stock or sticker paper
- A variety of crayons and/or color markers
- Glue
- Poster-mounting squares or tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Create these poster captions, either by printing them off the computer on card stock or writing them on sticker paper: Hands Are Made for Caring, Hands Do Not Hit, Hands Can Help Others, Use Words That Help, Use Words That Heal, Use Words That Show Respect.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

## Description of Activity

Children design posters with positive themes and respectful words.

Distribute sheets of paper. If you have prepared the words on stickers, help participants stick the words across the bottom of the large papers. If the words are on card stock, help participants glue them on. Each participant can make several posters.

Read the words on the posters to participants. Talk with each participant about their ideas before they color.

After posters are illustrated, meet as a large group and process the activity using these questions:

- Why is it important for our hands to be used in positive ways?
- How will the posters help others learn about respectful words and actions?
- How will the posters help you remember respectful words and actions?

When posters are finished, walk around the congregation or neighborhood and put up the posters. Find appropriate places to display them, such as community bulletin boards found in grocery stores and libraries.

## Including All Participants

Adapt coloring tools to the age of the children. If the children are very young use large crayons. Older children can handle color pencils and markers.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: HEART RIBBON MAGNET

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Magnets
- Flat magnets at least 1x2 inches
- Felt, in at least two colors
- Craft glue
- Seven rolls of 1/8-inch ribbon: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet
- Sharp scissors or one-hole punch
- Permanent marker

## Preparation for Activity

- Purchase magnets on which you can glue felt and the appropriate kind of craft glue.
- Cut felt into three-inch squares-enough for all participants plus a few extra.
- Cut hearts out of felt in contrasting colors, one for each participant plus a few extra. Make the hearts small enough to glue onto the squares.
- Punch or poke seven holes along the sides of each felt heart.
- Cut 16-inch lengths of the red ribbon, one for each child. You may wish to cut 16-inch lengths of ribbon in the other colors now, too; set these aside to continue working on Heart Ribbon Magnets in future sessions.
- Set felt squares, felt hearts, magnets, glue, and lengths of red ribbon at work tables.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects the color red and the first Principle as children begin making a Heart Ribbon Magnet-a reminder of the UU Principles to take home at the close of the program. This activity reappears as an Alternate Activity, with different colors of ribbon, in the sessions that introduce the remaining six Principles.

Tell the children the red ribbon represents the first UU Principle "We believe each and every person is important." Tell them they will begin making a Heart Ribbon Magnet now that will, when completed, have a different color ribbon for each of the seven Principles. They will start their magnet with a red ribbon because they are talking about the first Principle today.

Invite participants to choose a felt square, a felt heart, and a length of red ribbon. Help them glue their square of felt to a magnet. Next, help them glue their heart shape to the square. Make sure they do not put glue behind the holes you have poked in the edges of the heart shape. Leave the edges loose so children can string ribbon through each of the holes.

Now show children how to fold the red ribbon in half, push the folded end into a hole on the side of the heart, and insert the two loose ends of ribbon through the loop formed by the folded end. Pull the ribbon through tightly.

Write children's names on the back of their Heart Ribbon Magnets and set aside the magnets and remaining colors of ribbon to continue this project in future sessions.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ALL PEOPLE ARE SPECIAL

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Magazines to cut up that include photos of individuals who are not well known
- Corrugated cardboard
- Wooden tongue depressors (wide craft sticks; plain or in colors) and permanent marker
- Craft glue
- Adhesive magnetic tape and scissors

## Preparation for Activity

- Obtain materials. Find wooden tongue depressors and adhesive magnetic tape at a craft store such as Michael's or A.C. Moore.
- Cut pictures of individual people out of magazines. School alumni magazines and real estate agency's magazine ads are good sources for images of individuals who are not well known. An online source for downloading pictures is the National Geographic website. Cut all the pictures to the same size. Make sure you have a picture for each child and some extra, so children can choose.
- Cut the corrugated cardboard into pieces the same size as the pictures you have cut out.
- Write "All People Are Special" across one tongue depressor for each child.
- Display pictures on a work table. Set out corrugated cardboard, tongue depressors, and glue.

## Description of Activity

Participants make a framed picture of a person they do not know to illustrate the first Principle concept that each and every person is special, whether or not we know them, and whoever they are.

Invite children to choose a picture and glue it to a piece of cardboard, then glue a border of tongue depressors around the picture. Make sure each participant glues one tongue depressor with words on their border.

Place a strip of adhesive magnetic tape on the cardboard back of each child's picture. Invite them to take their pictures home to display on the refrigerator.

As participants work, discuss that when we see a picture we really do not know anything about the person in it except their appearance. Their faces might show an emotion, but we do not have much other information. Ask these questions as they work and complete their project.

- I wonder if it is possible to believe someone is special, even if we do not know them.
- I wonder if our looks really tell all that is special about us.
- I wonder who we can teach the first Principle to at home, at school, or someplace else?

# TAKING IT HOME

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. — Maya Angelou, poet and author

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** we learned how we use respectful words and actions in our relationships. Respectful words and actions illustrate the first UU Principle, "We believe each and every person is important." The children heard a story about Jesus teaching the Beatitudes and explored how those lessons affirm our UU beliefs. We played a circle game and role-played situations in our lives where respectful words and actions are needed.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** respectful words and actions and the first UU Principle at dinner, in the car or at bedtime.

- I wonder why some people are not respectful. How could they change their attitude to one of respect?
- Why is everyone important?
- How do you feel when you know that others respect you and think you are important?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...** making a stop sign together. Whenever someone feels disrespect, use the stop sign to stop the interaction so you can discuss feelings.

**A Family Adventure.** Take the family as a group to a soup kitchen or clothing closet. Work together to show respect to people you encounter with material needs greater than yours. Use smiles and respectful words to make each person feel important.

**Family Discovery.** Books to read:

- *Wake Up, World* by Beatrice Hollyer (Henry Holt and Co., 1999)
- *Rabbit Ears Treasury of Christmas Stories, Volume Two: Gingham Dog and Calico Cat, Lion and Lamb* (audio book), by Amy Grant and Christopher Reeve (Listening Library, 2008)
- *Being Respectful: A Book About Respectfulness (Way to Be)* by Mary Small (Picture Window Books, 2006).

**A Family Ritual.** Write each person's name on tongue depressors or wooden ice cream spoons. At a meal, invite each person to place their name in the middle of the table and name one way they were respected or one way they respected another.

# JESUS TEACHES THE BEATITUDES

*An adaptation of Matthew 5:1-11, Christian scripture.*

Jesus was a teacher. He lived thousands of years ago, in the part of the world we now call the Middle East. Jesus taught people how to use words and actions in a loving manner.

There are many different ideas about God. Jesus' idea about God was that God is a kind father who wanted us to treat each other kindly and with love.

People loved to listen to Jesus. One day there were so many people waiting to be taught by Jesus, he had to climb way up a mountain. Sitting on the mountain, he could see far away. The people just kept coming. There were families with children and teenagers and elders. There were fishermen and farmers and shepherds. Some shepherds had their sheep and goats, stopping on their way home from grazing.

Jesus called his friends to come and sit by him on the mountain. Then all of a sudden it got quiet. People were ready to listen to Jesus. They watched him and listened to his words. Jesus taught all the people of all ages a lesson called the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes teach us how to treat other people. The Beatitudes teach us how to act. Jesus knew our relationships with each other are the most important thing about life. Let's listen now to the words from Jesus, the teacher. Listen for what kinds of people he asks us to pay attention to:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they will one day get to heaven
- Blessed are those who are sad, for they will be comforted
- Blessed are those who are gentle, for they will have all the earth
- Blessed are those who seek justice, for they will make a difference
- Blessed are those who forgive, for they will be forgiven
- Blessed are those who treat others with kindness, for they will see God
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God
- Blessed are those who try to do the right thing, for they will go to heaven.

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: RESPECTFUL ROLE PLAYING CARDS

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You are building with blocks. Someone comes over and wants to play. Show us what might happen. What are some respectful actions and words to use when sharing blocks?

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You are in the library. You want to read a book about airplanes. Someone is already reading the only book not checked out about airplanes. Show us what might happen. What are some respectful actions and words to use when in the library?

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You are coming to the door of a toy store. A mom with a stroller is trying to get through the door, too. Show us what might happen in the doorway. What are some respectful actions and words to use when going through a doorway?

-----

It is time for dinner and you are very hungry. You go to the kitchen and see that your Mom is rushing around to get dinner ready. You wish dinner was ready now. Show us what might happen in the kitchen. What are some respectful actions and when you are waiting for dinner and really hungry?

-----

Your next door neighbor is elderly. You are roller skating on the sidewalk. The neighbor's newspaper is sitting in the middle of the sidewalk. Show us what might happen. What are some respectful words and actions for living in community?

-----

A new child comes to your class at school. She wears different clothes and is shy. You notice she wears a head scarf. She doesn't talk loudly. Show us how this might look in your school room. What are some respectfully actions and words to welcome a new child to your class?

-----

You are at a birthday party. You really like the toy you brought for a present. When it's time for games, you decide to go play with the birthday boy's new presents. Show us what might happen. What are some respectful words and actions at a birthday party?

-----

You are eating out at a restaurant. There is a two-year-old at the booth next to you that keeps jumping up and looking at your food and making noise. Show us how this might look. What are some respectful words and actions in a restaurant?

-----

You are riding your bike or scooter around the block. The children and teachers of a local daycare are out taking a walk on the sidewalk. Show us how this might look. What are some respectful words or actions to use when you are sharing the sidewalk?

-----

It is a holiday and an adult brought you a present. You open it and you do not like the present. Show us what might happen. What are some respectful words or actions when you are accepting a gift?

## FIND OUT MORE

### The Beatitudes

The text of Matthew 5: 1-11 in the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible reads:

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Read a [Christian analysis of this biblical text \[348\]](#), "An Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew" by Allen Ross, on a [Bible study website \[349\]](#).

## SESSION 3: NEW FRIENDS

# INTRODUCTION

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, "What! You too? I thought I was the only one." — C.S. Lewis, British novelist

This session explores how every friendship is surrounded in love. To make a friend is to discover ways we are alike. To meet new people and look first for how we are alike, rather than different, can be a challenge.

Whenever we are in relationship with others, we have an opportunity to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of each person and to better understand ourselves. Participants will play games, hear stories, and role play ways to surround others in love.

## Goals

This session will:

- Engage participants with the first UU Principle, that each person is unique and valuable
- Identify the gift of new friends
- Expand the theme Love Surrounds Us to include those we do not know.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Explore how we are all alike
- Connect with new friends in their immediate surroundings as well as the world
- Discover ways we show others they are important.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Poem — Like Me	10
Activity 2: New Friends Big Book	20
Activity 3: Friendship Mosaic Group Mural	15
Faith in Action: Introducing Special Olympics	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: We Match! Game	15
Alternate Activity 2: Friendship Finger Play	10
Alternate Activity 3: Poster — First Principle	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Friendship is changing in our world. Often friends are those who you see little but email or text daily. Think about your friends at each of these ages: elementary school, junior high, high school, in your twenties, in your later adulthood. Discern the commonalities of those friendships. How are they alike? Where are the places you met friends at each age? Think about five- and six-year-old children today and their friends. Have the places young children meet friends changed? What about for you? How do you meet new friends in your life? Say a blessing to all those friends you have now and those not yet met.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each participant as they enter. Help them find their ribbon stick. Direct them to the large group area. Ask them to sit and find their red ribbon. As others arrive, engage the children to repeat the words of the first Principle, "We believe each and every person is important."

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Red cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together.

Welcome the children. Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Remind them that red represents the first Principle. Have them say the first Principle together: "We believe each and every person is important."

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned to the container and the children are in the circle, light the chalice.

Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: POEM, LIKE ME

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the poem "[Like Me \[350\]](#)"
- Pictures of children
- Optional: "[Like Me](#)" coloring sheet [351], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Collect multiple pictures of children from around the world. You can purchase the book [Global Babies \[352\]](#) from the Montessori Services website.
- Print out the poem (Story - Like Me) and prepare to present it with the questions that are interspersed.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \[351\]](#) for "Like Me"

## Description of Activity

This activity helps participants look for ways they are like others when meeting new friends in new places.

Gather participants around you. Ask them to raise their hand if they have long hair. Mention that more than one person shares this trait. Now ask the participants to raise their hand if they like ice cream. Comment on the number of people who share a love for ice cream. If you know something that is true about the whole group, use that example, as well.

Now ask the children what it means to be new to a school, faith community, or neighborhood. How does it feel to be new? How does it feel to have someone new come to your group?

Tell them they will hear a poem about a little boy who has a new person in his class at school. The little boy is talking to his Dad. First the little boy thinks of all the things that are different about the new boy. Then he begins to realize there are many other ways the two boys are the same.

Read the poem aloud one time through, without stopping for the process questions.

Then, read aloud one stanza at a time. At the end of each stanza use the process questions.

Talk with the children about why it is important to remember that every person is important.

Now, pass out one picture per person. Ask participants to look at their picture and think of ways in which the person in the picture is just like them. Explain that when we look at pictures we can only see physical things like eye color, or length of hair. Only when we get to know another person are we able to find common likes, feelings and goals. That is why it is so important that we are open to all people as new friends we want to know better.

## Including All Participants

This poem is by the parent of a child with Down Syndrome. Because "special ed" is mentioned in the poem, be particularly aware of participants in your group who may have special needs or have family members that have special needs. Talking about ways in which we are alike requires sensitivity to those children. Continually help children identify ways in which they are alike physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.



"Like Me (poem)"; "Love Surrounds Us, illustration, Nancy Devard

### COLORING SHEET

"Like Me" (PDF)

Illustration by Nancy Devard

# ACTIVITY 2: NEW FRIENDS BIG BOOK

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- 11x17-inch sheets of paper for all participants
- Two 12x18-inch sheets of poster board
- Crayons, color markers, color pencils
- Permanent black marker
- A single hole punch
- Yarn and scissors

## Preparation for Activity

- Stack the copy paper and poster board together and punch four evenly spaced holes down the left side.
- Use the poster board as covers and tie yarn loosely through one hole temporarily to show the participants how the book will look. Write the title "New Friends" on the front in large letters with the permanent marker.

## Description of Activity

Participants talk about meeting new people and how to show them they are important (first Principle).

Gather children together around the table. Show them the empty book and explain:

Today we will fill the pages of this book together. Then we will read the book.

Put the book down and lead a discussion with these questions.

- Have you ever gone somewhere new?
- How does it feel when you are a new person?
- How do others treat a new person?
- What does it mean to welcome others?

- Whether you are new or not, why do we need to show others that they are important? Give some examples of how you might show new friends they are important.

Continue, in your own words:

Today we are going to make a book about showing new friends they are important. Each of us will make one page for the book. Then we will put the book together and read it.

Show them how you untie the book and hand each child one blank page. Ask each participant to draw a picture showing a way they might show a new friend they are important. Ask participants to fill up their whole page with their picture.

As children color, travel around the room and ask each participant to tell you about their picture. Write one statement in permanent marker as a caption for the page that uses the participant's own words. For instance, if Tiana says, "This is a dog" you might write, "Tiana lets her new friend see her dog" or "Tiana will let everyone see her dog." Look for ways to use the participant's words in a short statement that uses words from the title and the first Principle.

When children are done, put all the pages together. Let participants see you tie the yarn through all four holes. You may want a final page that says "the end" as many kindergarten and first graders can read those words. Engage children in cleaning up materials. Then, re-gather the group and read the book to the participants. Have all participants write their names on the front cover under the word "by."

## Including All Participants

Older first graders may want to write their own sentence or at least a few words. Some participants may say that they do not want to color. Spend time talking through possibilities with those who do not know where to start. Leave the drawing open-ended so participants can draw their ideas.

# ACTIVITY 3: FRIENDSHIP MOSAIC GROUP MURAL

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Large mural paper
- White glue, small paper plates, and water color brushes
- A variety of bright wrapping paper
- Scissors
- Small hand mirrors

## Preparation for Activity

- Precut an assortment of wrapping paper to use as mosaic pieces. The pieces should be 3x3 inches square. The pieces can have a variety of edges such as waved, straight, or serrated.
- Pour a small amount of glue onto paper plates right before the activity.

## Description of Activity

In this activity, each child adds a piece of mosaic material to a group mural in celebration of all the things shared together. The mural shows that the world is more beautiful with all friends together.

Spread a large mural paper in the middle of the table. Put a glue dish between several participants. Pass out hand mirrors and watercolor brushes. Ask participants to look in the mirror and answer these questions. After each question, add a piece of paper to the group mosaic.

- Look at your eyes. Do your eyes crinkle when you smile? Look around the table. Are there others that have your smiling eyes? I wonder what things make you laugh. Let's add a piece of paper for all those that have crinkly eyes when they smile. (Allow time to glue papers.)
- Find your mouth. Have you lost a tooth lately? Are any of your teeth loose? Look around the tables. Are there others who have loose teeth or have lost a tooth? Add a piece of paper for those that are losing teeth or already lost teeth. (Allow time to glue papers.)
- Look at your hair. Have you ever had a haircut? Do you have straight hair or curly hair? Is your hair short or long? Look around the table. Who else has hair? Glue on a piece of paper to celebrate hair.

- Think about all the things we share in life. Now put a piece of paper in the mosaic for things shared as human beings: laughter, love, joy, music, dance, games, songs, and more. Fill up the whole paper with the wonderful things shared with friends.

When the mosaic mural is finished hold it up for all to see. Explain that friendships are full of color and the world is a more beautiful place because of new friends.

## Including All Participants

Younger participants may get into the gluing and lose the purpose of the activity. Leave time to close this activity to help younger participants remember that they are important. Say each name and thank them for their contribution to the group mural.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Today's session included potentially challenging topics for young children. Think about the discussions. Were there children who seemed upset about topics like Special Education, teasing, or being left out? Decide on different techniques for including all children. How can you show that each participant is important?

# FAITH IN ACTION: INTRODUCING SPECIAL OLYMPICS

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story (poem) "[Like Me](#)" [353]
- Optional: [Session 1, Activity 1, Love Surrounds Us – Song](#) [354]
- Optional: [Session 2, Activity 2, Love Surrounds Us – Circle Game](#) [355]
- Optional: Computer with Internet access, and a large monitor or digital projector
- Optional: "[Like Me](#)" coloring sheet [351], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Explore the [Special Olympics website](#) [356]. Click on "Find A Special Olympics Near You" to locate local games and resources. Use the "Stories" link to view slide shows and videos, and (optional) choose one or more to share with the group. Print pages you wish to share with children and their families.
- Consult with the religious educator to choose a day, time, and place for a family gathering. Invite the children's families to come and learn about Special Olympics and plan a way to support the national organization and/or local competitions. If you wish to engage the wider congregation, spread the word.
- Invite guest speakers who are knowledgeable about Special Olympics and/or athletes who have participated in Special Olympics games. Find out if any of the children's families have volunteered or participated in Special Olympics, and invite them to share their experiences, too. Support guest speakers by offering to print information they suggest as handouts.
- Optional: Set up and test equipment immediately before the presentation.

## Description of Activity

Children, their families, and the congregation learn about Special Olympics and plan actions to support the national organization or local games.

Welcome families and guests. Introduce the Love Surrounds Us program. Explain that the goals of Session 3 include an understanding of our first UU Principle, that each person is unique and valuable. Share the story (poem) “Like Me” [353] and invite participants to respond. You might prompt: What is the speaker in the poem saying to us?

Introduce the visitors. Invite each visitor to share their response to the poem. Then, facilitate speakers, any video presentation you have planned, and questions and answers. Make sure you allow time for the children to ask questions.

If there are local games that the congregation could help support, ask for a small group of volunteers to work with the religious educators or appropriate congregational leaders to develop a plan for next steps. Families may also choose to volunteer on their own, or perhaps work together with local groups (or other nearby Unitarian Universalist congregations). Make sure there are opportunities for the children to be actively engaged in the event.

If there are no Special Olympics games in your area, plan a fundraiser such as a “field day” with games that all ages can play, or a bake sale.

Close the gathering by having the children lead the song “Love Surrounds Me.” You may also wish to do the circle game from Session 2, Activity 2 [355] with the song.

Make plans to communicate with families and the wider congregation about next steps and to have participants gather, after the volunteer event, to process and celebrate their experiences. Remember to arrange for volunteers to take plenty of photographs or video!

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WE MATCH! GAME

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Decks of playing cards (a deck for every two participants)

## Preparation for Activity

- Divide each deck of playing cards in half so each pile has two aces, two twos, two threes, etc.

## Description of Activity

A card game gives participants a way to look at things that are the same.

Pair participants and deal each player five cards. Children will take turns showing a card to their partner. If the partner has a matching card they stand up and yell "We Match." The matches are placed in the middle in one pile. Each time someone loses a card, they draw a new card. When all the cards are matched in the middle, both players stand up and yell "We Match." This game is a winner for everyone.

After playing one game use these questions to process.

- How did it feel when you matched?
- I wonder why we get so excited when we find we have something like someone else.
- Why is it important to remember to look for ways we match one another?

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FRIENDSHIP FINGER PLAY

10 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the Description of Activity so you are comfortable leading the finger play words and actions. You may want to memorize them.

## Description of Activity

This finger play underscores that all are important with good inside them.

Invite the children to follow you:

I am one and I have fun (hold up pointer finger)

Two is fine, if I am kind. (hold up both pointer fingers)

We get along and sing a song. (pointers jump up and down together)

When things go bad, we are sad. (pointers point down)

Principle one, teaches us a ton. (pointers point to either side of forehead (brain))

Every friend is important with good inside. (wiggle all the fingers)

When we remember this, our smile is wide! (pointer fingers trace lips in a smile)

## Including All Participants

If some children lack the fine motor ability for these movements, have the entire group use their arms instead of their fingers.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: POSTER, FIRST PRINCIPLE

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Poster - First Principle \[357\]](#)
- Crayons and/or color markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

## Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite children to think about an example they can draw of the first Principle: We believe each and every person is important.

# TAKING IT HOME

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, "What! You too? I thought I was the only one." — C.S. Lewis, British novelist

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** The children heard a poem about a young boy talking to his Dad. The child has a new boy in his class and is uncertain about the new child's attempt at friendship. The poem opens discussion about the first Principle and illustrates a family discussion about looking for ways we are alike in order to celebrate that each person is unique and important.

## **EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...**

- How does it feel to be teased by someone?
- What are some ways all people are alike?
- How can we tell others they are important to us?

## **EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...**

**A Family Adventure.** Visit a restaurant that serves ethnic food. As you eat, identify similar ingredients that are put together in new ways. For instance, pulled beef can be in tacos, barbequed beef sandwiches, or beef and broccoli. Ingredients are the same and put together differently, just like people. Each person is important to the whole group.

**Family Discovery.** Visit the [Teaching Tolerance](#) [358] website to learn about tolerance and the importance of each person; find stories, games, and new information for your family to explore.

Books on friendship include *Nikki and Deja: Birthday Blues* by Karen English (Sandpiper, 2010), *Milo Armadillo* by Jan Fearnley (Candlewick, 2009), and *How to Be a Friend: A Guide to Making Friends and Keeping Them* by Laurie Krasny Brown (Brown Young Readers, 2001).

**A Family Ritual.** Light a candle at dinner. As you light the candle repeat the UU Principles together as a family:

We believe each and every person is important.

We believe all people should be treated fairly.

In our congregations (and family), all people are accepted and we learn together.

We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.

Everyone deserves a vote about the things that concern them.

We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.

We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us.

# LIKE ME

*By Emily Kingsley in the book Free to Be... A Family conceived and edited by Marlo Thomas. Copyright 1987 and published by Bantam Books. Used by permission from the Free To Be Foundation.*

I went to my dad and I said to him,

There's a new kid who's come to my school.

He's different from me and he isn't too cool.

No, he's nothing at all like me, like me,

No, he's nothing at all like me.

*(Leader: Who can tell me some ways that the two boys are the same or different?)*

He runs in a funnyish jerkyish way,

And he never comes first in a race.

Sometimes he forgets which way is first base,

And he's nothing at all like me, like me,

No, he's nothing at all like me.

*(Leader: Who can tell me some ways that the two boys are the same or different? Do we all run the same way? Why or why not?)*

He studies all day in a separate class,

And they say that it's called "Special Ed."

And sometimes I don't understand what he's said,

And he's nothing at all like me, like me,

No, he's nothing at all like me.

*(Leader: Does anyone here ever go to special classes? Do we all talk the same way? Why or why not?)*

His face looks kind of different from mine,

And his talking is sometimes so slow.

And it makes me feel funny and there's one thing I know;

And he's nothing at all like me, like me,

No, he's nothing at all like me.

And my father said, "Son, I want you to think  
When you meet someone different and new  
That he may seem a little bit strange, it's true,  
But he's not very different from you, from you,  
No he's not very different from you.

*(Leader: I wonder how the new boy is not very different.)*

And I guess, I admitted, I've looked at his face;  
When he's left out of games, he feels bad.  
And when other kids tease him, I can see he's so sad,  
I guess *that's* not so different from me, from me,  
No, that's not very different from me.

*(Leader: How do you feel when you get teased? How do you feel when you do not get picked to play a game?)*

And when we're in Music, he sure loves to sing,  
And he sings just like me, right out loud.  
When he gets his report card, I can tell he feels proud,  
And that's not very different from me, from me,  
No, that's not very different from me.

*(Leader: Raise your hand if you like to sing.)*

And I know in the lunchroom he has lots of fun;  
He loves hot dogs and ice cream and fries.  
And he hates to eat spinach and that's not a surprise,  
'Cause that's not very different from me, from me,  
No, that's not very different from me.

*(Leader: Who likes hot dogs? Who likes ice cream? Who likes french fries? Who likes spinach?)*

And he's always so friendly, he always says hi,  
And he waves and he calls out my name.

And he'd like to be friends and get into a game,

Which is not very different from me, from me,

No, I guess that's not different from me.

*(Leader: I wonder why it feels good to call others by their name. I wonder why it's important to wave and smile at new people.)*

And his folks really love him. I saw them at school,

I remember on Open School Night.

They were smiling and proud and they hugged him real tight,

And that's not very different from me, from me,

No, that's not very different from me.

*(Leader: We all have families. Are our families the same? How are our families alike?)*

So I said to my dad, Hey, you know that new kid?

Well I've really been thinking a lot.

Some things are different... and some things are not...

But mostly he's really like me, like me,

Yes, my new friend's... a lot... like me.

*(Leader: Each and every person is important. Each and every person is both the same and different. Let's talk about why it is important to look for ways in which we are the same.)*

# HANDOUT 1: POSTER, FIRST PRINCIPLE

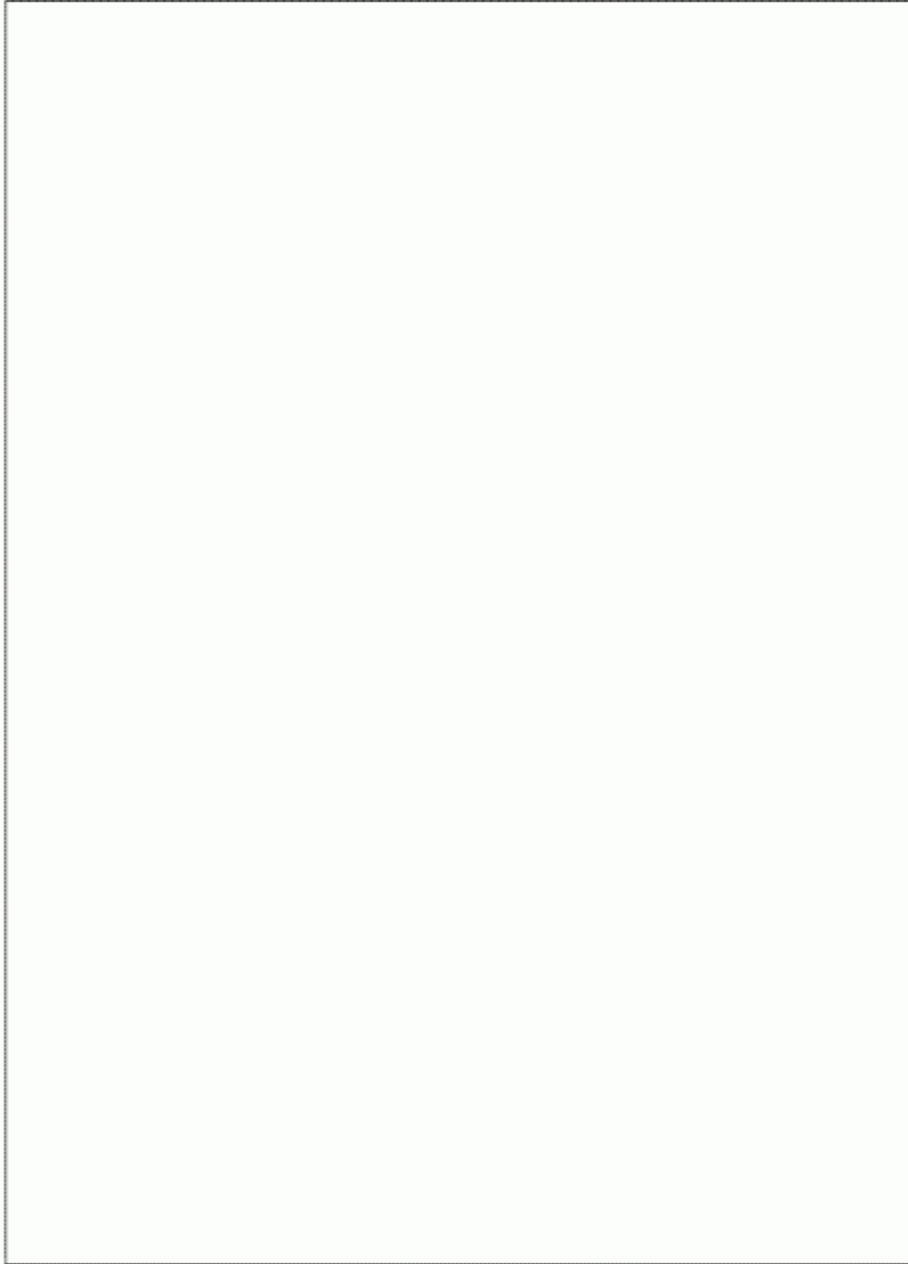
Unitarian Universalist First Principle

We believe each and every person is important.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[359\]](#) for printing.

## Unitarian Universalist First Principle



**We believe each and every person is important.**

## FIND OUT MORE

### **Materials about Teaching Tolerance**

*Rhinos and Raspberries Tolerance Tales for the Early Grades*, Southern Poverty Law Institute, Teaching Tolerance, 2006.

# SESSION 4: FORGIVENESS

## INTRODUCTION

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This session introduces the second Principle, all people should be treated fairly, and through this teach what it means to forgive. Kindergarten and first grade children will have experienced some form of forgiveness, either in the forgiving or being forgiven when they have said or heard, "I'm sorry." In Hebrew scripture, the story of Joseph tells of family forgiveness that takes time. Forgiveness is seen as difficult and much needed in family life.

Participants may shares stories about conflicts that have a "winner" and a "loser" and/or lack forgiveness. If you have the opportunity, note that treating people fairly does necessarily mean treating everyone the same. Emphasize that fairness is important but treating everyone exactly the same does not always make things fair, and is often not possible. Help children understand that while it is possible to spend one's entire life focused on unfairness, a healthier alternative is to acknowledge unfairness, model fairness, then forgive and move on.

## Goals

This session will:

- Identify words and phrases around forgiveness
- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist idea that we believe all people should be treated fairly (second Principle)
- Discover the joy in using the words, "I forgive you."

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Explore how love and forgiveness connect us, through a sewing project
- Experience a story of forgiveness drawn from Genesis 43:16-46:7 in Hebrew scripture
- Practice using the words of forgiveness "you are forgiven" and "I forgive you," in a game.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Connections Sewing Cards	20
Activity 2: Story — A Journey of Forgiveness: Joseph and His Brothers	15
Activity 3: Forgiveness Fun Game	10
Faith in Action: Forgiveness Project	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Heart Ribbon Magnet	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Forgiveness can be such a painful emotion for adults. Name the members of your family. Think of a time you needed to forgive. Think about the people and situation. Why did you feel the need to forgive? Are there times you need to ask for forgiveness? Think about how it feels to be truly forgiven by another. Celebrate the gift of forgiveness in your life by drawing a heart on paper and holding the paper to your heart. Breathe deeply and believe in the power of forgiveness.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. It emphasizes the second Principle.

Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door, move to the large group area, and find the orange ribbons on their ribbon sticks.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new participant or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Orange cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Introduce orange as the color that represents the second Principle. Have them find the orange ribbon and say the Principle together: "We believe all people should be treated fairly."

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (We believe each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red).

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## **Including All Participants**

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: CONNECTIONS SEWING CARDS

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Connections Sewing Cards](#) [360]
- Card stock
- A deep one-hole punch or sharp, pointed scissors
- Yarn and scissors, or pipe cleaners and clear tape
- Markers or crayons
- Plastic sewing needles for canvas-weight/card stock

## Preparation for Activity

- Obtain materials. Plastic sewing needles for canvas-weight materials are available at a fabric or craft store, such as [JoAnn Fabric](#) [361].
- Copy Handout 1 on white card stock for all participants.
- Punch a hole in each of the rectangles on the handout. Punch a hole at the bottom of the oval. If you do not have a deep hole punch, use sharp scissors to make holes.
- Thread about 18 inches of yarn onto plastic needles for all participants.

## Description of Activity

Participants connect themselves to families and friends with yarn to demonstrate how love and forgiveness surround them.

Gather participants together at work tables or on the floor. Pass out crayons and markers. Pass out Handout 1, but ask participants to wait until you explain the activity.

Say:

I wonder who your friends and family are. (Pause.) Where are some of the places that you have friends and family? Today we are going to make cards that show some of the people in our world. First we'll draw and then we'll connect all the drawings. Begin with the oval in the middle. There you will draw yourself and place your name. Let's do that now.

Offer to help children write their names, if they wish.

Then say:

Next we will draw pictures in the rectangles to show people in our lives. It can be families or teachers, friends or neighbors. You choose who you draw. Fill as many rectangles as you wish. Then we will do some sewing.

As participants finish, affirm their drawings. Ask about the people or places they drew.

Explain that they are going to try to connect themselves with each of the squares on the edges using yarn. Demonstrate sewing from the middle oval to a rectangle and then back to the middle and to another rectangle. Allow participants to sew on their own. There is not a right or wrong way to sew this. No matter which connections they make, it will still illustrate that love surrounds them through people connections.

If participants run out of yarn, tie a new piece of yarn onto the end. The most difficult part will be when participants try to pull the yarn too tight.

Instead of yarn, you can use pipe cleaners. Show children how to use one pipe cleaner for each connection. Bend the ends of the pipe cleaners into the holes and tape them on the back of the card.

Process this activity using these questions:

- This activity shows how we are surrounded in love. Who surrounds you in love?
- How are other people important in our lives?
- These are the people we know the best. Why does it hurt us if they do not treat us fairly?
- I wonder how fairness connects to forgiveness.
- I wonder why we might need to forgive someone who treats us unfairly.
- Share how it feels to be treated unfairly.
- Share how it feels to forgive someone.

## Including All Participants

For the youngest participants, sewing might be a new endeavor. To keep frustration levels down, punch more holes and let them just sew in and out of whichever holes they wish. More holes will eliminate the long pieces of yarn that may get tangled. If a child lacks the fine motor capability to sew, work directly with them; invite them to tell you how they want the rectangles and the oval connected and do the stitching for them.

# ACTIVITY 2: STORY, JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS, JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Journey of Forgiveness, Joseph and His Brothers \[362\]](#)"
- 12 drinking straws or unsharpened pencils
- 12 small index cards
- Permanent marker, and tape
- Optional: "[Journey of Forgiveness, Joseph and His Brothers](#)" coloring sheet [363]

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- On the index cards, write the names of Joseph and his 11 brothers: Rueben, Naphtali, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Zebulum, Judah, Benjamin, Asher, Levi, and Simeon. Tape a straw to each card to make a small flag.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\) \[363\]](#). Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

This story and activity will help participants understand how long it sometimes takes for forgiveness to happen in the world.

Gather participants in the large group area. Have the story, process questions, and signs nearby.

Read the story "A Journey of Forgiveness: Joseph and His Brothers."

Following the story, process with these questions.

- Why do you think Jacob didn't seem to treat his sons fairly?

- Let's think about this. Does treating someone fairly mean that we treat them all the same? If your brother was one year old and you were eight years old and you got to go horseback riding, should your one-year-old brother get to go horseback riding? So how can we be fair but be respectful of differences?
- Joseph forgave his brothers. How long did it take him to forgive them? It took years for that forgiveness to happen. Joseph didn't even know where his brothers were when he forgave them. So how did the forgiveness take place? Forgiveness takes place with words. If we forgive someone and we don't use the words, how does that person know they are forgiven? Joseph told the brothers he forgave them when they came to Egypt for grain.



"Joseph and his Brothers," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Gail O'Connell

Download a [coloring sheet](#) [363](PDF) [363] for the story, "Journey of Forgiveness: Joseph and His Brothers."

# ACTIVITY 3: FORGIVENESS FUN GAME

10 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Clear an open space.

## Description of Activity

This adaptation of the game Red Light, Green Light gives participants a chance to relax while saying the words "I forgive you" and "You are forgiven."

Explain the game: One person, designated "It" or "the stoplight," faces away from the rest of the group. The group lines up as far as they can get from the stoplight. When the stoplight yells "Forgiveness" all participants can move forward. As they move they say, "We forgive you." This will help the stoplight hear when participants get closer. The stoplight can turn around and yell, "Stop!" at anytime to stop the movement forward. The stoplight should wait until all others have stopped moving forward, then turn away from the group again, saying, "Forgiveness." The first player to touch the stoplight gets to be the next stoplight.

Process the game after several times. Ask participants:

- When we play games, do we always forgive people who are the winners?
- What are some ways that our games can treat others fairly?

## Including All Participants

Participants with accessibility issues can use whatever form of movement works best for them. When the age span is great, it helps to have the stoplight ("It") or a leader vary the movement actions forward. Skipping, hopping, jumping or galloping will all work.

# CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

What did you learn about the participants' willingness, or not, to forgive others in their lives? Can you identify those that are hurting or feeling different? Take note of what worked well and what can be done differently next time. Notify the religious educator or minister about any issues that may arise.

# FAITH IN ACTION: FORGIVENESS PROJECT

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access
- Leader Resource 1, [Giving Box Pattern](#) [364]
- Markers, crayons, stickers, scissors and clear tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Watch the [video by Desmond Tutu](#) [365]. Set up equipment so you can show the video to the group. You may wish to show it twice, once at the beginning and once after processing.
- Prepare a note to parents. Copy it to send home with the children's completed Giving Boxes. The Description of Activity provides a sample note.
- Copy the Giving Box pattern on card stock for all participants. Cut them out for younger participants.
- Make several pages of labels that say: The Forgiveness Project , Helping people choose forgiveness

## Description of Activity

This activity introduces the Forgiveness Project and helps them to collect money to send to the project.

Watch the two-minute video together called "Archbishop Desmond Tutu endorses the Forgiveness Project." Use these questions to process:

- Desmond Tutu is the speaker on the video. Does anyone know about Desmond Tutu? (A black South African who fights for human rights. Tutu is a bishop in the Anglican Church. He is someone who fights for equal care and kindness to everyone, including the people who are poor, have an illness, or sometimes get hated and excluded. Desmond Tutu earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.)
- Who can tell me something you learned about the Forgiveness project?
- Why did Desmond Tutu say that forgiveness takes courage?
- What does it mean to choose to forgive?

Play the video one more time after the discussion.

Give older participants a Giving Box Pattern. Allow younger participants to make boxes you have pre-cut. Ask children to use coloring materials and stickers to decorate the box. Cut the slot for the coin drop. Tape the box together tightly. Put pre-printed mailing labels on the boxes.

Pass out parent notes that read.

Dear Parents,

We are learning about Desmond Tutu and the Forgiveness Project. This project helps victims and perpetrators have the courage to choose forgiveness. Stories are shared of those who choose forgiveness. An exhibit is being made to tell the stories of forgiveness. Please help me earn a few coins this week through extra chores or collecting cans for recycling. The money goes in my giving box to share with the Forgiveness Project.

Sincerely,

(Co-leaders' names)

## Including All Participants

For a young group or for children with fine-motor challenges, you can pre-assemble the Giving Boxes for children to decorate with stickers and the mailing labels.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: HEART RIBBON MAGNET

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Felt hearts mounted on felt squares and magnets, assembled in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1
- A roll of 1/8-inch orange ribbon
- Extra felt and magnets for new participants, plus glue, sharp scissors, and permanent marker

## Preparation for Activity

- Set on work tables the Heart Ribbon Magnets children began making in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1.
- Cut orange ribbon into 16-inch lengths.
- Review Session 2, Alternate Activity 1 to start Heart Ribbon Magnets for new participants.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects the color orange and the second Principle as children work on their Heart Ribbon Magnets—a reminder of the UU Principles they may take home at the close of the program.

Invite children to find the Heart Ribbon Magnets they began in Session 2. Distribute lengths of orange ribbon. Tell the children the orange ribbon represents the second UU Principle, "We believe all people should be treated fairly." Demonstrate how to fold a length of orange ribbon in half, push the folded end into the hole on the side of the heart next to the red ribbon, and insert the two loose ends of orange ribbon through the loop formed by the folded end. Pull the orange ribbon through tightly.

Help any new children or visitors begin a Heart Ribbon Magnet, following instructions in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1, and add both red and orange ribbons.

Set aside the magnets and remaining colors of ribbon for future sessions.

## Including All Participants

Partner very young children with an older child who can help them.

# TAKING IT HOME

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. (One) who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the children talked about forgiveness. Forgiveness is an action surrounded by love, both in forgiving and being forgiven, and the family is where forgiveness is first learned. Forgiveness is under-represented in the media; five- and six-year-olds may be more familiar with revenge, winning, and "I'm better" attitudes. The UU second Principle (We believe all people should be treated fairly) brings us the venue to discuss forgiveness. The group heard the Hebrew scripture story about Joseph forgiving his brothers. They talked about how difficult it is to forgive others. They played a game to practice saying "I forgive you."

## EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...

- When is it hardest to forgive?
- Why is it so hard to say, "I'm sorry"?
- How does it feel when your brother or sister does something unfair and does not say they are sorry?
- Who can hurt you more, strangers or people you are close to?

Share which you think is stronger, love or unfairness.

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Write the word FORGIVENESS across the top of piece of paper. Work together to think of places where forgiveness needs to happen, one place for each letter. Start with F for FAMILY.

**A Family Adventure.** Visit a history museum. Read the stories aloud and talk about situations that might need forgiveness.

**Family Discovery.** Books about fairness for preschool and early elementary children include *Being Fair* by Cassie Mayer (Heinemann Educational Books, 2007); *Zapizapu Crosses the Sea: A Story About Being Fair* by Diane Abad Vergara (Trafford Publishing, 2007); *Ser Justo/Being Fair* (Spanish) by Robin Nelson (Lerner Group, 2005); *Thank You God!: A Jewish Child's Book of Prayers* by Judyth Groner (Kar-Ben Publishing, 2003); *Let's Talk About Being Fair: An Early Social Skills Book* by Joy Wilt Berry (Gold Star Publishing, 2000).

Children in upper elementary grades can read *Being Fair: A Book About Fairness* by Mary Small (Picture Window Books, 2006).

Family resources for parents to read include *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Journey to Change the World... One Child at a Time* by Sarah Thomson and Greg Mortenson (Puffin Books, 2009) and *Once Upon a Time... Storytelling to Teach Character and Prevent Bullying* by Elisa Davy Pearmain (Character Development Group, 2006). Also explore the audio CD, *Free to Be ... a Family*.

**A Family Game.** Forgive and Forget [366]—a great family game using cards.

**A Family Ritual.** End the day by saying to one another, "Good rest, may you forgive everyone who hurt you today. May you feel the joy of forgiving."

# A JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS, JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

By Janeen K Grohsmeyer

Have you ever felt as if some grown-ups liked another kid more than they liked you? Maybe your teacher lets someone else get away with stuff you would get in trouble for. Maybe your mom or dad doesn't make your brother or sister do as much work as you have to do. Or your brother or your sister gets to stay up later than you, or they have more toys. Or your grandparents pay attention to the baby and ignore you.

It's not fair.

Sometimes, when we feel as if someone else is getting special treatment, when they're the teacher's pet or the parent's favorite, we get angry. We get angry at the grown-up for not being fair, and we get angry at the other kid for being the favorite one.

Once, a long time ago in a land called Canaan, there lived a man named Jacob. He had four wives and thirteen children: one girl and twelve boys. Wow! That's a lot of kids. Do any of you have 12 brothers and sisters? It might be hard to remember all the names. Jacob's boys' names were Joseph, Rueben, Naphtali (Naf-TAL-ee), Issachar (IS-sah-khar), Dan, Gad, Zebulum, Judah, Benjamin, Asher, Levi, and Simeon (SIM-ee-on). These brothers became the leaders of the 12 Tribes of Israel in the Hebrew world. I have flags with each brother's name to remind us how important the 12 brothers were to the Hebrew people.

*(Leader: Distribute the flags to volunteers. Say the names so non-readers will know which flag they are holding. Invite them to hold up the flags when you say the brothers' names later in the story.)*

Of those four wives, Jacob loved Rachel the best. Of those thirteen children, Jacob loved Rachel's two sons, Benjamin and Joseph, the best. Joseph was the favorite one.

And his sister and his brothers all knew it. They knew their father liked Joseph best. At meal times, their father let Joseph sit next to him and eat the best food. During the day, their father let Joseph stay in the tent and while they all had to go farm in the fields or take care of the sheep.

Their father even gave Joseph a beautiful coat to wear. It had long sleeves and was finely woven with shimmering colors. Whenever Joseph wore it—and he wore it all the time—everyone stopped and turned to look at him. Because in those days, long ago, clothes took a long time to make, and they were very expensive. Most people only had one set of clothes, and they were usually brown, or maybe grey or black. Nobody except the very richest people had blue or green or red or yellow clothes. Nobody except Joseph, that is. He had a coat that was all those colors, and more. I wonder how you would feel if you had a beautiful coat with long sleeves like Joseph.

So Joseph knew he was his father's favorite. He knew he was special. He even had special dreams, dreams that told the future. He told his eleven brothers about one of his dreams. "I dreamt that we were in the field harvesting the corn, and your eleven sheaves of corn all turned and bowed to mine."

The brothers didn't like hearing this. Who can wave their flag and help us remember all the brother's names?

*(Leader: Help and encourage the children to say the names on the flags.)*

Well, the brothers didn't want to bow down to Joseph. They didn't like Joseph. They were jealous of him. They were angry at him.

They seemed to hate him.

One day, when Joseph was seventeen years old, he went to the fields where his brothers were taking care of the sheep. As always, he was wearing his beautiful coat of many colors. His brothers grabbed him, tore his coat off, and shoved him into a pit. "Let's kill him," said one brother.

"No," said another. "We can't kill our own brother. Let's sell him as a slave."

And so Benjamin, Asher, Levi, Simeon, Judah, Dan, Zebulum, Gad, Rueben, Issachar, and Naphatali sold Joseph to slave traders for twenty pieces of silver. Then the brothers dipped Joseph's beautiful coat in the blood of a goat and ripped it all up. They took the bloody coat back to their father, Jacob, and told him, "Joseph has been killed by a wild animal."

But Joseph wasn't dead. The slave traders made him march for days, on a long journey to the land of Egypt, and there they sold him as a slave. People ordered him around all the time, and sometimes they would hit him. Joseph had never been treated like that before; he'd always been the favorite one. And Joseph had never had to work very hard before; his father had let him stay in their tent. Joseph wondered if he could ever forgive his brothers for selling him.

What do you think? Is it hard to forgive brothers and sisters?

But Joseph did what they told him to. He did the work well, and he didn't complain. His owner noticed and began treating him better. But after a while his owner got angry with him and put him in jail.

Joseph certainly wasn't the favorite one now. Not only was he a slave, he was a slave in jail. Joseph sat in that jail, day after day after day, alone and forgotten. Sometimes, he would wonder about his father and his sister and his eleven brothers. Was his father still alive? Did his sister still like to weave cloth? Did his brothers still farm the fields and take care of sheep? Had any of them married and had children?

Joseph didn't know. And he wanted to. Earlier, when his brothers had sold him into slavery, Joseph had been very angry with them. He had hoped that they would be torn away from their family and sold as slaves. He had wanted to hurt them the way they had hurt him.

But now as he sat in the jail, alone and far from home, and the days and the months and years went by, he began to understand why his brothers had been angry. Even though his brothers had done a horrible thing to him, Joseph missed them, and he wanted to see them again. Joseph forgave his brothers. But his brothers didn't even know that they were forgiven.

More years went by, and Joseph stayed in jail. Then one night the king of Egypt—called a pharaoh—began having a strange dream: a dream about seven thin cows who ate seven fat cows but stayed thin. One of his servants said, "Lord Pharaoh, there is a man in jail who knows about dreams. His name is Joseph."

The pharaoh sent for Joseph, and Joseph told him that the fat cows meant there would be seven years when food grew well, and the thin cows meant there would be seven years when food didn't grow. First there would be plenty to eat for seven years, and then there would be a famine for seven years and people would go hungry.

The pharaoh was impressed. He said, "Joseph, you are free, and you shall be my governor, in charge of all the land and all the food that is grown." For the next seven years, the farmers grew a lot of food, and Joseph made sure they stored most of it.

After seven years, the famine started, just as Joseph had predicted. No plants grew. But the people in Egypt didn't go hungry because they could eat the food that Joseph had stored.

But far away where Joseph's family lived, they hadn't stored any food. They hadn't known a famine was coming. Joseph's father and his sister and his brothers and their wives and children were starving. "Let's go to Egypt," one brother said. "I heard they have food."

His brothers made the long journey to the land of Egypt, walking on the same road that Joseph had walked as a slave all those years ago. When the brothers got to Egypt, they went to the pharaoh's governor, the man who was in charge of all of the food. They bowed down low in front of him, saying, "Please, sir, let us buy food for our families. We are starving."

Thus it was that the dream Joseph had told them about all those years before—the dream of the eleven sheaves of corn bowing down before Joseph's sheaf—had finally come true. But the brothers didn't know the pharaoh's governor was their brother Joseph. They hadn't seen him in more than twenty years. He'd grown up and was wearing different clothes. He'd changed.

He'd changed on the inside, too. He had forgiven his brothers for selling him into slavery, and he was happy to see them again.

He could tell his brothers had changed as well. They were worried about their father, and they took good care of Joseph's younger brother Benjamin, and they were sorry for what they'd done. They didn't hate Joseph anymore.

So Joseph said to his brothers "I am Joseph, your brother." And they were amazed, and worried that he would be angry with them and put them in jail or kill them. But Joseph said, "I forgive you. I welcome you. Bring our father and all your wives and children to Egypt, and live here with me."

So Jacob and his children and their children came to Egypt, and the entire family was together again.



### COLORING SHEET

"Joseph and His Brothers" (PDF) [363]

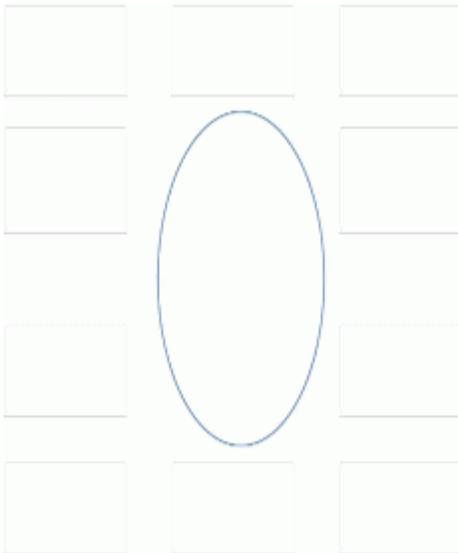
Illustration: Suzi Grossman

## HANDOUT 1: CONNECTIONS SEWING CARDS

We Are Surrounded by Love

### Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[367\]](#) for printing.

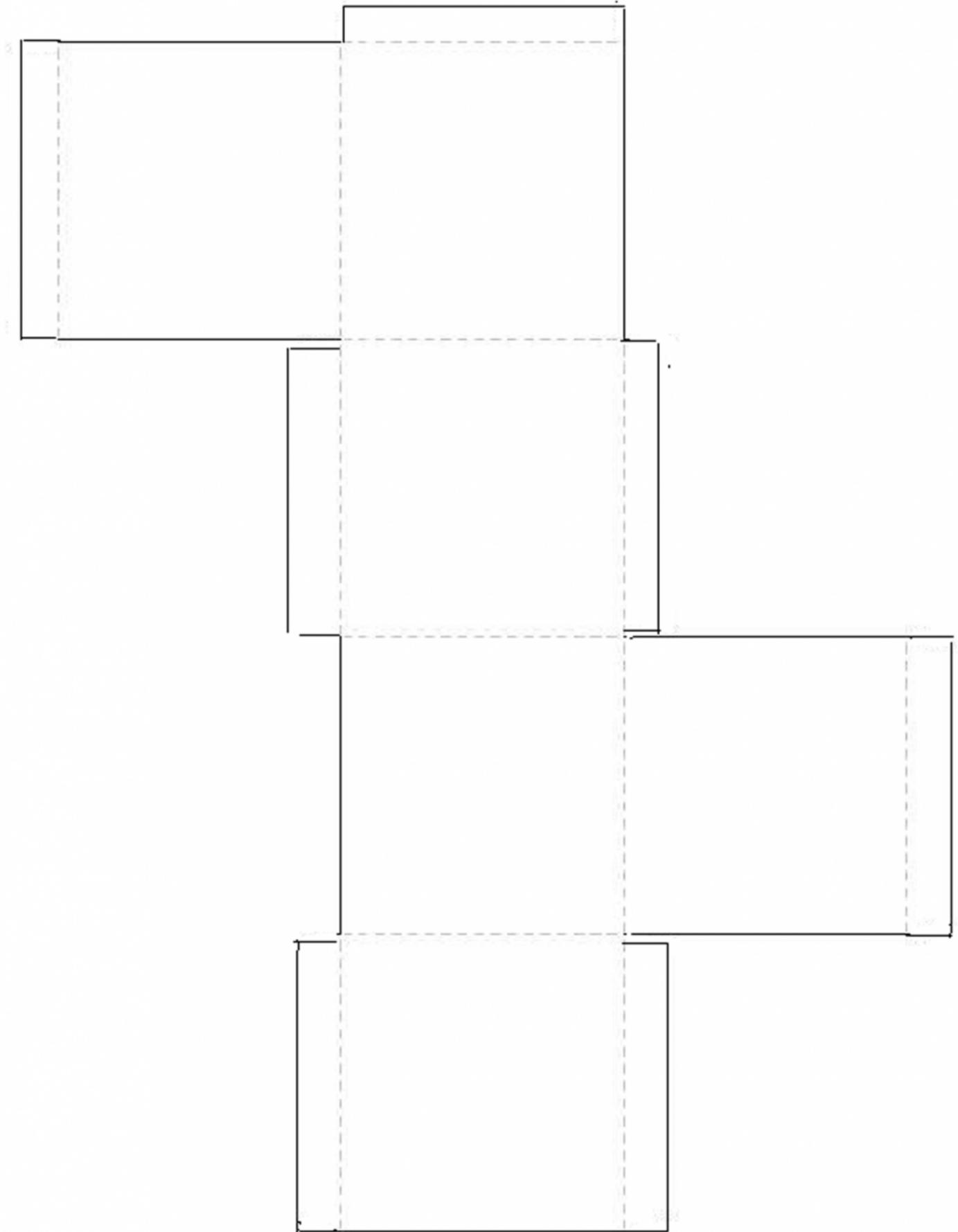


# LEADER RESOURCE 1: GIVING BOX PATTERN

Cut on bold lines. Fold flaps on dotted lines. Tape all edges to form a box.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[368\]](#) for printing.



# FIND OUT MORE

## **UU Principles for Children — from the [UUA Bookstore](#) [369]**

Order *Children's Principles and Purposes: Big Bookmark* and the book *Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults* by Kenneth W. Collier.

## **Forgiveness in the Jewish Religion**

Learn more about Jewish values and rituals around forgiveness on the [My Jewish Learning](#) [370] website.

## **Desmond Tutu**

Find out more about Bishop Desmond Tutu and programs for "creating a culture of peace around the world" on the [Tutu Foundation website](#) [371].

## **Red Light/Green Light**

Find variations, and instructions for other kids' games, on the [Games Kids Play](#) [372] website.

# SESSION 5: LOVE SURROUNDS US WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

# INTRODUCTION

We all know that families now aren't necessarily like Ozzie and Harriet (it turns out Ozzie and Harriet's family wasn't all Ozzie and Harriet)... family has a traditional context, but today it's not as simple as two parents with 2-3 kids... it's about relationships... it's about people who are bound together by love and a sense of being responsible for one another... it's spouses with no children, like Jeffrey and me... it's a group of women who meet to cook dinner together once a month... it's a one-parent family with adopted children... it's two men who've made a life together... at the end of the day, all we have is love... getting love, but even more, feeling love... — Ina Garten, chef and cookbook author

We believe all people should be treated fairly, without racial, cultural, socioeconomic or territorial boundaries—the UU second Principle. This session embraces all families on their daily journeys into beloved community: Love without boundaries.

Participants affirm all families through the story and activities. Families self-define, and some are marginalized when their definition is not fully acknowledged in the dominant culture. One example is same-sex couples and their children in states that do not yet recognize the right of equal marriage for all.

Families are the building blocks of all beloved communities. The Faith In Action activity invites the congregation to outreach to the local community in a unique way as families make puzzles and share them with people in the neighborhood. It is one way to let people know that Unitarian Universalists accept all families.

## Goals

This session will:

- Reinforce the second Principle, "We believe all people should be treated fairly," and apply it to families
- Teach that there are many different kinds of families
- Demonstrate that Unitarian Universalist love encompasses all types of families.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Identify their family
- Experience many kinds of families

- Engage in multiple ways to show love without boundaries with families.

## SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Who Lives with Me?	15
Activity 2: Story — Love Without Boundaries	20
Activity 3: Meditation on Breathing	10
Faith in Action: The Family Puzzle Multigenerational Event	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Beloved Community Family Picture Collage	20
Alternate Activity 2: Poster — Second Principle	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Truly feeling love without boundaries is a wonderful feeling. Close your eyes and visualize a place where you feel love without boundaries. Breathe deeply and add people to the place. Who are the people that help you feel love without boundaries? How is that love expressed? Do words or actions best express love without boundaries? Open your eyes. Say aloud. "I promise to provide love without boundaries to the participants in this group today."

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. It emphasizes the second Principle.

Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door, move to the large group area, and find the orange ribbons on their ribbon sticks.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Orange cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Remind them that orange represents the second Principle. Have them find the orange ribbon and say the Principle together: "We believe all people should be treated fairly." Say, in your own words:

Today we will talk about the love and care in all kinds of families. Just like the colors on our ribbons sticks are different, so are our families.

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (We believe each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red).

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: WHO LIVES WITH ME?

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- 11x17-inch drawing paper
- Crayons and/or color markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Set paper and crayons/markers at work tables.

## Description of Activity

Participants identify who lives with them.

Gather participants around tables with paper in front of them and coloring implements to share. Say these or similar words:

Today we are going to talk about who lives with you. Let's pretend the four sides of the paper are like the walls of where you live. It may be an apartment, a room, a duplex, a condo, or a house. Everyone's home is different.

Close your eyes and think of the people who live in your house. (Pause.) Now open your eyes and draw a picture of all the people that live in your house. When you are finished, we will share our pictures.

When all have finished, process with these questions:

- Who would like to share their picture first?
- Can you tell us the names of the people who live with you?
- Do any of your family members live in another place?

Make sure all participants who wish to share have a chance.

## Including All Participants

Be alert for clues that a family is separated, such as by divorce or travel. Be open to the child's responses and look for ways to acknowledge the uniqueness of their family. Emphasize that a house can hold a family but that many families are still a family when some of their members live in another place.

# ACTIVITY 2: STORY, LOVE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Love Without Boundaries \[373\]](#)"
- Beach towels or throw blankets
- Optional: "[Love Without Boundaries](#)" coloring sheet [374], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story several times.
- Place the towels or blankets on the floor.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the coloring sheet ([PDF \[374\]](#)). Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

Participants experience the story in a calm, fun way that emphasizes some story details.

Ask participants to sit on the blankets or towels. Ask if they have ever been to a family picnic. Explain that the story today is about different kinds of families at a picnic.

Read the story and process with these questions:

- Why did Ruben think his family wasn't a real family?
- Is there only one kind of family?
- Is it right to treat families differently?
- How can we treat all families fairly?
- What did you learn about families?

Download a [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [374] for the story, "Love Without Boundaries."



"Love Without Boundaries," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Amy Paschall

# ACTIVITY 3: MEDITATION ON BREATHING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- "Meditation on Breathing," Hymn 1009 in *Singing the Journey*, supplement to the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

## Preparation for Activity

- Memorize the meditation, which is a chant. If you are unfamiliar with how the chant should sound, ask someone who reads music or knows this chant to teach it to you.

## Description of Activity

Through breath, children work with the image of love coming into us and going out to others.

Ask participants to spread out and sit up tall. Sing the entire chant with the participants several times.

Process using these questions:

- When we are with our families there is a sense of peace. I wonder what your family is doing when it is peaceful.
- How is it possible to breathe in the peace of family and breathe out love?
- Does love surround us in our families? How?

Now add actions. With hands to the side begin the song. Raise hands for the first two phrases with hands meeting overhead on the word peace. Lower hands to shoulder height for the third phrase. Move hands creatively while chanting the last phrase.

If time allows, ask two older participants to sing the lower melody as participants breathe in and breathe out. Process the meditation using these questions:

- How is our body surrounded by love when we breathe out?
- How does love surround us in the care our families give us?
- How can we surround others in our families with love?

Affirm positive answers. End by saying that participants can try and think of this meditation during difficult times in a family, such as when siblings are fighting.

## Including All Participants

Tell the group it is fine to do the movements in a way that feels comfortable for their body. Humming the tune or simply breathing in and out while others chant is a good adaptation.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

### Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

What did you learn about the families of the participants today? Can you identify those that are hurting or feeling different? How can you surround this participant and family in love in the week to come? Notify the religious educator or minister about any issues that may arise.

# FAITH IN ACTION: THE FAMILY PUZZLE MULTIGENERATIONAL EVENT

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Pre-made puzzles - one for every two participant families
- Coloring implements
- Leader Resource 1, [Family Outreach Letter \[375\]](#) and outreach materials for families in the neighborhood near the congregation
- Plain 10x13-inch envelopes
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)

## Preparation for Activity

- Choose the date and time for the puzzle-coloring event and arrange to use a large, open space with work tables.
- Order pre-made puzzles, item PE1246 from [S&S Worldwide \[335\]](#). A smaller, 12-piece cardboard puzzle is item CO43.
- Customize Leader Resource 1, Family Outreach Letter and copy to distribute with puzzles to neighborhood families.
- Gather outreach materials to provide with the letter. You might include pamphlets about Unitarian Universalism, the congregation, worship services, the RE program; flyers about upcoming events; and handouts that include the congregation's address, worship service times, and website.
- Place coloring implements, outreach materials, envelopes, and pre-made puzzles on work tables.
- Print out Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song, sung to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." Familiarize yourself with the teaching method described on the leader resource.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects congregational families to families in the community with whom they may not usually interact. This is an opportunity to engage congregational members in spreading the word about Unitarian Universalism. Talk about the ways our faith affirms all families.

When participants are gathered, ask that each family hold hands to form a line. Begin singing "Love Surrounds Me." Children will know the song and others will catch on quickly. Start with one linked family. Make a snake through the room as you sing. Ask the other families to catch the end person's hand and join the snake until all families are connected. Circle the room again and sing the entire song.

Stop and release hands. Ask participants to sit at tables in groups of two families. Say, in your own words:

Families are the center of our beloved communities. Today we are going to make puzzles of our families. Then we will take the puzzles apart and put them in envelopes. We will give them to families we haven't met yet. We will include information about our faith community and invite them to visit.

Invite each small group to choose a theme for their blank puzzle. It has 12 pieces in the middle that are 4 inches square and other pieces that form a border. Take the middle 12 pieces out and have each person color one piece. If any pieces are left, some people can color several. If there aren't enough pieces, two people can color together.

Tell the group:

When you have completely colored all the middle pieces, put them in the envelope. Now you should have just the border pieces. You might write an invitation to the next multigenerational event at our congregation. You may want to color a decorative border. Work together as families to design a special border and color the puzzle. As a piece is finished, put it in the envelope. When you are finished with all your pieces, take them out and put your puzzle together.

After families have completed and tested their puzzles, invite them to return all the puzzle pieces to the envelope and add the outreach information you have gathered about Unitarian Universalism and your congregation.

Give each family a copy of the outreach letter (Leader Resource 1) and ask them to sign their first names at the bottom. Some families may want to go now and take the envelope to people in the neighborhood. Another possibility is for one family to make all the deliveries.

Process with these questions:

- I wonder how the person will feel when they open the envelope?
- Will they know to put the puzzle together right away?
- Do you think they will want to meet the family who made the puzzle?

Invite participants to sing "Love Surrounds Me."

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: BELOVED COMMUNITY FAMILY PICTURE COLLAGE

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Several large sheets of foam core
- Removable glue or sticky tack
- Photographs of participants' families and other congregational families
- Construction paper or adhesive letters
- Wall mounting materials
- Scissors

## Preparation for Activity

- Several weeks ahead, begin collecting photographs from the children's families and the congregation. Explain that removable glue will be used to attach the photos to a collage.
- Mount the foam core on a hallway wall, at a height the children can reach. Or, lay the foam core on work tables and plan to mount it on a wall after the collage is complete.
- Cut out letters from black construction paper or use adhesive letters to add the title "Beloved Community Families" across the top or bottom of the foam core.
- Optional: Invite extra adult volunteers to help keep all participants engaged.

## Description of Activity

Participants and others from your congregation share their family pictures.

Gather participants. Ask each participant to share their pictures. Process each picture with these questions:

- Who is in the picture?
- Where was the picture taken?
- I wonder why you chose this picture?

When everyone has shared a picture, gather at the board display. Invite participants to put removable glue on the back of their pictures and make a collage. Edges of the pictures may touch but not overlap; this will keep glue from ruining photos. As participants finish, help them add pictures provided by others in the congregation. As you work, use these wonder statements to spark conversation:

- I wonder why this family is laughing.
- I wonder who took this photo.
- I wonder if this family wants to do this again.

When all the pictures are placed in the collage, invite participants to stand back, look at the collage, and say together, "Families are important in our beloved community."

## Including All Participants

Physically challenged participants may need help attaching their photos to the collage.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: POSTER, SECOND PRINCIPLE

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, Poster - Second Principle [376]
- Crayons and/or color markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

## Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite children to think about an example they can draw of the second Principle. Say the second Principle together: "We believe all people should be treated fairly."

Use these "I wonder" statements as participants color. Pause after each statement. Children may or may not interact as they are coloring.

- I wonder where the places are that you are treated most fairly.
- I wonder where you are treated unfairly.
- I wonder if you ever have treated others unfairly.
- I wonder if the world could ever be a place of complete fairness.

# TAKING IT HOME

We all know that families now aren't necessarily like Ozzie and Harriet (it turns out Ozzie and Harriet's family wasn't all Ozzie and Harriet)... family has a traditional context, but today it's not as simple as two parents with 2-3 kids... it's about relationships... it's about people who are bound together by love and a sense of being responsible for one another... it's spouses with no children, like Jeffrey and me... it's a group of women who meet to cook dinner together once a month... it's a one-parent family with adopted children... it's two men who've made a life together... at the end of the day, all we have is love... getting love, but even more, feeling love... — Ina Garten, chef and cookbook author

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the participants talked about love and families in the context of the second Principle, "all people should be treated fairly." They drew who lives in their house and talked about whom they consider family. They heard a story about the diversity of families and how each family is unique and surrounded by love. Participants learned a breathing meditation to help them visualize love.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** love without boundaries within families, using the questions below that apply.

- Does your family live in one place or more than one place?
- Where in your community, do you see other families?
- How do you show other families that they are important?
- What's the very best thing about your family?
- What makes your family laugh together?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...** spending one more hour a week together as a family. You might invite another family to join yours for an activity suggested below.

**Family Adventure.** No-cost family events are the best. Take a family walk around your community. How are the families in your community diverse? Do you find any families that need help? Did a family lose an animal you can help locate? Does someone need help with yard work?

**Family Discovery.** The [Families with Purpose](#) [377] website offers games, recipes, activities, and science for families. Books to read aloud as a family include:

*A Gathering of Days - A New England Girl's Journal 1830-32* by Joan W. Blos (Atheneum, 1990); *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis (Harper-Festival, 2008); *Rules* by Cynthia Lord (Scholastic Paperback, 2008), a Newberry Award book about a family with an autistic child; *Espernaza Rising* by Pam Munzo Ryan (Blue Sky Press, 2002), about an immigrant family; *The Watsons Go To Birmingham — 1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis (Laurel Leaf, 2000), the story of an African American family during a key year in the Civil Rights movement.

**A Family Ritual.** Rituals bring families together. At bedtime, before reading aloud together, fill a clear bowl with water. Bless the water by saying together "Love surrounds us in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and time we spend together." After reading a book aloud, take turns dipping fingers in the water and touching the water to your forehead. Use the words "Blessings on your day."

# LOVE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

"I don't want to go," said six-year-old Ruben, with his hands placed firmly on his hips.

"Don't want to go where?" Ruben's dad, Nic, asked as he rolled back on his heels from where he was kneeling in the rose bed.

"To the family playground picnic," Ruben said.

"I thought you wanted to see all your playground friends. We just baked cookies and made the sandwiches," his father said.

"We're not going because everyone will be there with their families," said Ruben. "Jason who lives down the street has two big brothers, a sister, and a mom. Our family does not have a mom and I do not have sisters and brothers so we can't go. We aren't a *real* family," he continued.

"Hmmm," said Nic, standing up. "Let's sit on the garden bench and talk."

Ruben sat on the wrought iron bench he and his dad had picked out for the garden. Ruben snuggled into his father's arms and felt safe.

"Ruben," said his father, "It sounds like you are worried about what others think. We are a family and so are the others you mentioned. There are all kinds of families. Let's go to the playground and see what we notice about how different and the same families are."

"Do we have to?" Ruben asked.

"Yes, we do," said Nic.

Later that afternoon, Ruben and Nic walked down to the playground on Besta Street. Ruben's dad carried the picnic basket and Ruben carried the red picnic blanket. Ruben peeked through the playground fence. The playground was busy with a lot of people, some he knew and others he didn't.

"Do we have to go?" Ruben tried one more time.

"Yes," Ruben's dad said.

They spread the picnic blanket on the ground by a newly planted tree. Ruben munched on a cheese sandwich while he looked over the crowd.

There was Hannah and her grandma and grandpa. Hannah and her brother, Jake, were living with her grandparents while their parents served in the military overseas. Hannah and Ruben like to swing high on the swing set.

A mom helped a set of triplets get a drink of water at the water fountain. They were in kindergarten and not quite tall enough to reach the spigot. Her name was Nancy and she brought the triplets to the playground each day when she was working at home. Sometimes Nancy flew to Hong Kong and other places for work and then the babysitter, Cassandra, brought the triplets to play.

Ralph, Ruben's best playground friend, came running over and yelled, "Hey, Ruben, I want you to meet my dads!"

"Dads?" asked Ruben. "How did you get two?"

"Just lucky," said Ralph. "That's why I'm so super at baseball. If one of my dads gets tired out, there's another one to take my wild pitches." Ralph acted out his very unique way of pitching a baseball, which involved multiple steps in a circle and a rotating arm. He looked a little like a windmill going crazy.

Ruben's dad smiled at Ralph's antics as he shook hands with both of Ralph's dads named Marcello and Clyde.

"Nice to meet you," Nic said. "I often wish that I had the energy of two for following around Ruben."

Just then the playground director, Ginny, came by and said, "Hey, everyone, games start in ten minutes. I hope you are ready to throw some water balloons."

Ralph started to warm up his pitch and everyone stepped back two steps, hoping not to get hit by a swinging arm.

Later that night Ruben and his dad walked home in silence. As they entered their yard, they sat down on the wrought iron bench. Nic waited as the stars twinkled and the bullfrog in the pond sang to them. Finally he asked the question.

"So, Ruben, what did you learn tonight?"

Ruben took a deep breath and launched into his answer.

"I learned that all families are different. And I learned that all families can have fun and I learned that sometimes you have to do things you are not sure will turn out okay."

"Good job," said Nic, "but there's one other message I'd like you to learn about tonight."

Ruben thought and thought. Finally, Nic said, "Look at that rose bush. It's growing. What does it need to grow?"

"The rose needs water and sun and dirt," said Ruben, not quite sure of the connection between the rose bush and families.

"The rose needs love, too," said Nic, gently. "Even with the basics, the rose still needs weeding and fertilizing and mulching to keep it safe."

"I get it, Dad," exclaimed Ruben. "Love grows all kinds of families!"

"You got it, Ruben. No matter the color, shape, or size of a family, love helps it grow."



## COLORING SHEET

"Love Without Boundaries" (PDF [374])

Illustration: Amy Paschall

# HANDOUT 1: POSTER, SECOND PRINCIPLE

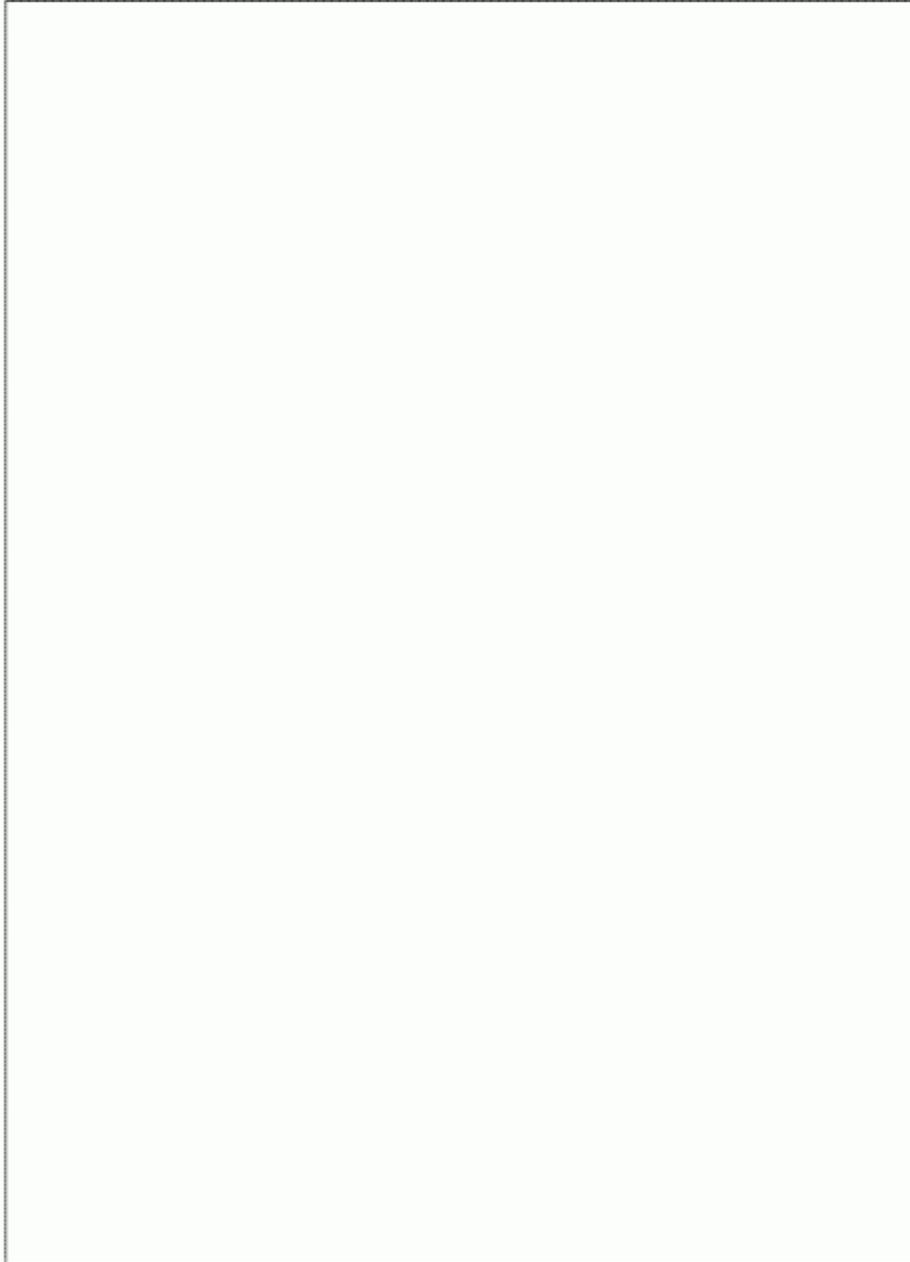
Unitarian Universalist Second Principle

We believe all people should be treated fairly.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[378\]](#) for printing.

## **Unitarian Universalist Second Principle**



**We believe all people should be treated fairly.**

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: FAMILY OUTREACH LETTER

Dear Neighbor,

Your family is important to us at (name of your congregation).

We believe families are an important part of building strong communities.

Several families worked together to make this puzzle for you. We hope that your family will put it together. The message it brings is from our families to your family.

You are welcome at our faith community and if you have a need, please let us know. Our services are (add regular days and times of worship). We invite you to come worship with us.

The enclosed materials are to help you learn more about us. We hope to meet you soon.

Sincerely,

(names of co-leaders or other congregational outreach contact(s))

(your congregation's name, location, phone number, and website)

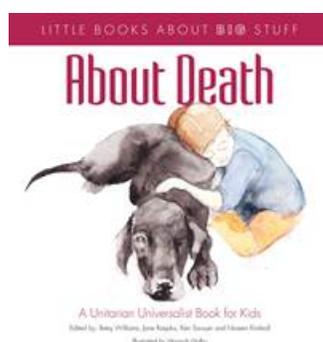
# FIND OUT MORE

## Talking with Children about Death

*About Death: A Unitarian Universalist Book for Kids* [379]. *About Death* presents a gentle, yet unsentimental, story about how a family deals with the death of their beloved dog. The story is followed by a series of questions a child might pose about death and its aftermath, particularly the rituals and cultural customs that accompany the death of a person. The answers to these questions, like the story that proceeds them, are frank and respectful of the child's curiosity. At the same time, both the story and the questions are illustrated by lovely watercolors that say, without words, yes, death makes us sad. A short poem that follows reminds us that death is a part of life. Ages 5 and up.

## Unitarian Universalist Family Resources

The [Unitarian Universalist Association](#) [380] website offers a [resource page](#) [381] dedicated to families and various issues such as Unitarian Universalist faith development, rituals to use at home, adoption, and how to talk with children about death and loss.



### About Death

#### A Unitarian Universalist Book for Kids

Betsy Hill Williams, Jane Ranney Rzepka, Ken Sawyer, Noreen Kimball

From inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop

About Death presents a gentle, yet unsentimental, story about how a family deals with the death of their beloved dog.

**[BUY THIS BOOK](#) [379]**

## SESSION 6: ACCEPTANCE

# INTRODUCTION

I accept the universe! — Margaret Fuller

The session focuses on the third Principle, "Everyone is accepted with love and compassion in our congregation." One of the unique characteristics of Unitarian Universalism is the diversity of beliefs within our congregations. We strive to make everyone feel welcome and accepted regardless of their beliefs. The children will learn and demonstrate acceptance and compassion to everyone through story, art, games, and meditation.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist idea that all people are accepted in our congregations (third Principle)
- Affirm the call to welcome all into in our congregations
- Introduce the Buddhist concept of loving kindness.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn what it means to accept others
- Experience a Buddhist walking meditation
- Think about differences and how our differences make everyone unique.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story — Odd Velvet	15
Activity 2: Celebrating Differences	10
Activity 3: Song — I'm Unique and Unrepeatable	10
Activity 4: Loving Kindness Walking Meditation	10
Faith in Action: Hygiene Project	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Congregation Tour	15
Alternate Activity 2: Welcome to Our Congregation	15
Alternate Activity 3: Heart Ribbon Magnet	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

We are all unique. As adults, it is often an advantage to stand out because of our differences in abilities or skills. As a leader, you will demonstrate to participants that we should all be proud of ourselves and be accepting of others.

Relax into a comfortable position and close your eyes. Think about what makes you unique as an adult. What made you unique as a child? Are you or were you proud of those differences? Why or why not?

Now reflect on the children in this group and how they may see their differences. Consider how they show acceptance of one another. How can you as a leader help make this session a positive experience for the participants? Celebrate the differences in the group and take these positive thoughts into the session.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Drawing paper and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.
- Set drawing paper and crayons on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. It emphasizes the third Principle.

Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite each child to sit at a work table and draw something that makes them special.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair. Offer to help a child make a drawing, if needed.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Yellow cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Tell them yellow represents the third Principle. Have them find the yellow ribbon and say the Principle together: "In our congregations, we accept all people and we learn together."

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (Each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red). Ask if they remember the second Principle (We believe all people should be treated fairly) and its color (orange).

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## **Including All Participants**

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY, ODD VELVET

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Odd Velvet \[382\]](#)"
- Optional: The picture book *Odd Velvet*
- Optional: "[Odd Velvet](#)" coloring sheet [383], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Optional: Obtain the picture book *Odd Velvet* by Mary E. Whitcomb, illustrated by Tara Calahan King (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998). Plan to show children the pictures as you tell the story.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \[383\]](#) for "Odd Velvet." Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

Participants learn what it means to accept others. The story is about a girl who seems to be different and her classmates begin to tease her. By the end of the story, her classmates become her friends as they realize her differences make her all the more interesting.

Gather participants so that they can see and hear you tell the story. If you will not show pictures in a book, you might invite them to close their eyes, if they like.

Read or tell the story. Then, ask everyone to slowly open their eyes.

Process with questions such as:

- Why does Odd Velvet get teased?
- What does "odd" mean?
- Do you think it is nice to call someone "odd?" Why or why not?

- What do the other children like about Velvet in the end?
- Have you ever been a new person somewhere? How did that feel?
- When you were the "new person" did anyone do something to make you feel welcome? What did they do?



"Odd Velvet," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Paul Gray

Download a [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [383] for "Odd Velvet."

# ACTIVITY 2: CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

10 minutes

## Description of Activity

This activity helps participants celebrate their uniqueness. Gather everyone in a seated circle, on chairs or the floor. Tell the group you will play a memory game. Ask participants to close their eyes and think about what makes them special or perhaps different than others. Suggest it could be something they enjoy, like soccer; something they can do, such as speak another language, or something they are, such as the only child in their family. Allow participants a minute or two to think in silence then ask them to slowly open their eyes.

Going around the circle, ask the first child what makes them special. Ask them to say, "I am special because \_\_\_\_\_," and then complete the sentence. Then, invite the next participant in the circle to repeat exactly what the last person said and then add what makes them special (for example, "Katie is special because she can ride a scooter and I am special because..."). Go around the whole circle with each participant repeating what previous participants said and adding their own words to the end of the statement.

The last participant in the circle will have to repeat everyone's statements. Suggest the children help one another remember all the words as the list gets longer and more difficult to remember.

If time allows, choose another question to ask and go around the circle the opposite way. You might ask "What is the oddest animal you have ever seen?" or "What makes your home special?"

Ask the group if they were surprised by anything that was shared? How does it feel to talk about being special? Is it hard? Is it easy? End by acknowledging there are many wonderful things that make the people in the group special.

## Including All Participants

Be sure to assist participants who have trouble remembering what the other participants said before them. Allow participants to pass if they can't think of something at their turn; then, go back to them later. If they are unable to think of something, ask participants questions to prompt them to find something special about themselves.

# ACTIVITY 3: SONG, I'M UNIQUE AND UNREPEATABLE

10 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Practice singing the song so you can teach it to the children; it uses the tune "Ten Little Children"

## Description of Activity

This song reminds us we are all unique.

Ask participants to stand and tell them you are going to teach them a song about being special. It is called "I'm Unique and Unrepeatable." Ask participants if they know the song "Ten Little Children" (one little, two little, three little children... ). Sing a portion of the song to remind them what the tune sounds like. Tell participants that the music is the same in this new song, but they will use new words.

Sing through the song once for them. Then invite participants to join you. Call out the first word of each verse to help them remember the song (e.g. "I'm," "You're," "We're").

### Verse 1

I'm unique and unrepeatable, I'm unique and unrepeatable, I'm unique and unrepeatable, I'm glad to be me!

### Verse 2

You're unique and unrepeatable, You're unique and unrepeatable, You're unique and unrepeatable, I'm glad that you're you!

### Verse 3

We're unique and unrepeatable; we're unique and unrepeatable,

We're unique and unrepeatable, we're glad to be us!

Note: This song was introduced by Jan Evans-Tiller in the curriculum *We Believe*, 2nd ed. (Unitarian Universalist Association, 1998).

## Including All Participants

If any children cannot stand and sing, include them in the circle in a wheelchair or a chair.

# ACTIVITY 4: LOVING KINDNESS WALKING MEDITATION

10 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Choose a path for participants to walk, either indoors or out. If walking any distance poses a problem, have participants walk in a circle in the meeting room. If needed, meditation can be done as a sitting meditation instead.

## Description of Activity

Participants learn a simple loving kindness walking meditation in the Buddhist tradition. Explain that meditation is a way of focusing thoughts to achieve calm and has been a spiritual practice in many religions for thousands of years. Explain, in your own, child-friendly words:

Although most people associate meditation with Buddhism, where it is an integral spiritual practice, people of any religion can practice meditation. Some people sit to meditate and some people walk.

Tell participants they will be walking in this session. They will do a meditation to send loving kindness to the world and to individuals.

Ask participants to line up with an arm's length between them. Have a co-leader take the last place in line. Tell the children to notice their starting spot.

Lead the meditation, with these words or your own:

Don't close your eyes because we will be walking.

Take a deep breath and slowly exhale.

Now breathe normally.

Notice the air coming out of your nose.

Focus the mind on normal breathing.

Feel your feet pressed into the ground.

Try to gently push away other thoughts.

Allow the body to relax. Try not to be stiff.

Breathe slowly for one minute.

Now begin to think about acceptance and kindness.

Is there someone you need to be kinder to? Begin to repeat that person's name in your head.

Begin walking slowly and continue throughout the rest of the meditation.

Continue to focus on that person.

Stop speaking for one minute, but continue walking.

Now begin to think about a group of people that need kindness and acceptance. Perhaps it is your family, maybe it is children you know without parents, or maybe it is people who are homeless. Think about the groups of people who need loving kindness sent to them.

Stop speaking for one minute, but continue to lead the group in walking.

Now begin to think about our world. Think about things in this world that could be better if there was more love and kindness. Think about specific places in the world that need more love. It might be rainforests, animals, warring countries, your school, your home.

Stop speaking for one minute, but continue to lead the group in walking.

Now let us send love out to the world and ourselves with every breath. Repeat the word "love" in your mind as your exhale. Continue to walk in silence, and return to your starting spot.

When the mediation is complete, ask participants how it felt to send love to people they know and people they don't know. Ask participants how they feel in their bodies right now. Do they feel calm and relaxed? Did they like the quiet time?

## Including All Participants

Choose a walking area that can accommodate wheelchairs or other movement assistance devices.

# CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the participants who participated in the session today. What did they learn? Did they understand what it means to be accepting? Were participants able to effectively participate in the meditation? Would you conduct the meditation differently if you did it again? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this session.

# FAITH IN ACTION: HYGIENE PROJECT

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Poster paper
- Crayons or markers
- Tape or sticky tack
- A large cardboard box or other container
- Donated, unused hygiene items such as toothpaste, soap, shampoo, toothbrush, and deodorant

## Preparation for Activity

- Depending on your congregation polity, you may need to clear this activity with congregational staff or leaders.
- Ask participants and their families to collect personal hygiene items for donation. Set a deadline for donations and provide a container to collect donations at your congregation. Advertise in congregational media.
- Identify a homeless shelter or other non-profit agency that will accept hygiene donations.
- Set poster-making materials on work tables.

## Description of Activity

When a person is unable to take care of their basic hygiene needs, it can be very difficult to feel welcome and accepted wherever you go. Imagine going to a new congregation or a job interview if you had no way to bathe for a week. Providing hygiene items restores dignity to recipients and allows them to care for themselves.

Explain to participants that some people receive government assistance to purchase food because they do not have enough money of their own. Explain that these people are not allowed to purchase basic hygiene items with their food stamps. For instance, diapers, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and soap have to be purchased with their own money or need to come from donations. Ask participants to make posters asking for hygiene items and post them in the congregation with your chosen deadline for donations. Posters can show pictures of items needed such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, diapers, and toilet paper.

After the deadline, participants sort and count the donated items and bag them for transportation. Tell participants about the agency they will donate to.

Be sure to print a thank you in an order of service or a monthly newsletter thanking everyone for their donations and indicating how much was collected. A leader or a group of people should deliver the items to the chosen charity.

## Including All Participants

Participants need not go out and purchase items. Remind them that sample sizes from hotels can be donated. Participants may also solicit friends and neighbors to contribute items. Consider brainstorming about places that might donate items, such as a dentist's office, rather than asking families who are themselves unable to purchase items.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CONGREGATION TOUR

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A notebook and a pen or pencil

## Description of Activity

This activity encourages participants to think about how it may feel to be new to the congregation and to brainstorm how to make a new person feel accepted there.

Explain that the group will walk around the inside (and, if applicable, the outside) of the congregation. Ask participants to look around and pretend they are visiting the congregation for the first time. What would make them feel welcome? Ask the participants what would make new children feel welcome-not only visiting adults. Prompt:

- Are there signs giving directions?
- Are there people to greet them?
- Are there signs welcoming them?
- Is there a rainbow flag?
- Are there symbols of many religions?
- Is there special parking for visitors?

Observe if the congregation is accessible to those with mobility limitations. List the ideas participants think of to make people feel more welcome at the congregation. You might share your list with the membership committee; perhaps it has ideas they could use.

## Including All Participants

Choose a walking area that can accommodate wheelchairs or other equipment.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WELCOME TO OUR CONGREGATION

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Newsprint or large sheets of construction paper
- Crayons or markers in assorted colors
- Tape or sticky tack

## Preparation for Activity

- Arrange materials at work tables so participants can choose a piece of paper and reach a variety of crayons or markers.
- Write the word "Welcome" on newsprint or construction paper and post.

## Description of Activity

This activity allows participants an opportunity to personally welcome children to their congregation by making welcoming posters to hang in the meeting area.

Indicate where you have posted the word "Welcome" and invite participants to write "welcome" somewhere on their poster. Tell them they may decorate the rest with pictures that show the kind of fun you have together. They may draw things that represent your activities such as children holding hands, arts and crafts, or musical notes.

When children are done, hang posters in and/or around the rooms, depending on congregation policies. Invite participants to look at one another's posters and think about how they would feel if they were new to the congregation and saw these posters. Process with these questions:

- Why do you think it is important we let people know they are welcome?
- Do you remember to say hello to people in the congregation you haven't seen before?

Remind the group that it is part of our faith to greet people we do not know and welcome them into the congregation.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HEART RIBBON MAGNET

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Felt hearts mounted on felt squares and magnets, assembled in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1
- A roll of 1/8-inch yellow ribbon
- Extra felt and magnets for new participants, plus glue, sharp scissors, and permanent marker

## Preparation for Activity

- Set on work tables the Heart Ribbon Magnets children began making in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1.
- Cut yellow ribbon into 16-inch lengths and set on work tables.
- Review Session 2, Alternate Activity 1 to start Heart Ribbon Magnets for new participants.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects the color yellow and the third Principle as participants work on their Heart Ribbon Magnets—a reminder of the UU Principles they may take home at the close of the program.

Tell them the yellow ribbon represents the third UU Principle, "In our congregations, we accept all people and we learn together." Demonstrate how to fold a length of yellow ribbon in half, push the folded end into the hole on the side of the heart next to the orange ribbon, and insert the two loose ends of yellow ribbon through the loop formed by the folded end. Pull the yellow ribbon through tightly.

Help any new children or visitors begin a Heart Ribbon Magnet, following instructions in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1, and add red, orange, and yellow ribbons.

Set aside the magnets and remaining colors of ribbon for future sessions.

## Including All Participants

Partner very young children with an older child who can help them.

# ODD VELVET

*Odd Velvet by Mary E. Whitcomb, illustrated by Tara Calahan King (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998). Permission pending.*

On the first day of school, Velvet's classmates brought their teacher cinnamon tea, lace handkerchiefs, and heart shaped boxes of potpourri. Velvet handed her teacher an egg carton filled with seven rocks, her favorite red shoelaces. And half a sparrow's egg. Velvet was odd.

At lunchtime, Velvet not only carried a used brown paper bag, but inside of it were things like carrots and a butter sandwich. And she ate them. At recess, a few of the girls noticed that Velvet was not wearing a new dress even though it was the beginning of the school year. "Where did she come from?" they wondered out loud.

All of this strangeness did not stop after the first day of school. In fact, it got worse. Velvet brought a milkweed pod for show and tell. Luckily, three of the other girls brought a talking doll, a wetting doll, and a crying doll, and saved the day.

Velvet's nose was freckled, she had a pack of only eight crayons, and her sweater once belonged to her older sister. Nothing was right about Odd Velvet. Although everyone was polite to her, no one was silly enough to pick Velvet for partner play or to walk home with her after school.

No one wanted to be different the way Velvet was different.

On the day of the school field trip, the children were laughing and calling each other by their nicknames. Someone called out... "What's your nickname Velvet?"

It got quiet as Velvet looked around. "I don't have one," she said. "But my father told me that, on the day I was born, the sun was just rising over the mountains, and outside it looked as though the world had been covered with a blanket of smooth, soft, lavender velvet." A few of the boys let out a giggle, but mostly the bus fell quiet. For a moment everyone was thinking of how beautiful that morning must have been, the day Velvet was born.

The following week a school drawing contest was announced. There was no question who the winner would be. Sarah Garvey had the best markers, the biggest paint set, and more colored pencils than anyone else in the class. When the day arrived to announce the winner, the children let Sarah sit right up front. No one was more surprised than she was when the teacher called out Velvet's name.

Velvet had drawn an apple. "It's just a piece of fruit," Sarah protested. Everyone stared at the picture. "It looks so real I would like to eat it," someone said. "It seems like you could pick it up," another child added. Sure enough, with just her eight crayons, Velvet had drawn the most beautiful apple the children had ever seen.

Little by little, the things that Velvet said, and the things that Velvet did began to make sense. The teacher had Velvet speak for two whole days about her rock collection. She even had ashes from a real volcano.

Still, on the day that she handed out invitations to her birthday party, the whispering began. "I bet her house is old and dark," Sarah said. The thought of going to Velvet's house made everyone feel a little uneasy. Velvet lived in a tiny house at the end of a long road. There was no jungle gym or tether ball. Just a swing hanging from a big, old tree.

At the door, Velvet's mom and dad politely asked the children in. There were no birthday magicians or wizards. Not even a clown. But they got to turn Velvet's room into a castle. The royal subjects painted their faces and put glitter in their hair. They jumped high off the bed into a blue blanket moat.

Velvet's sister made each of them golden crowns with colored jewels. They took turns wearing Velvet's royal cloak (which used to be a bed cover). They played cards and shot marbles. Velvet even showed them how to draw beautiful apples.

On the last day of school, Velvet's classmates brought their teacher handfuls of flowers, cards that they had made, and an impressive collection of nice looking rocks. Velvet was different. But maybe she wasn't so *odd* after all.



"Odd Velvet," Love Surrounds Us, illustration, Paul Gray

## COLORING SHEET

"Odd Velvet" (PDF) [383]

Illustration: Paul Gray

# TAKING IT HOME

I accept the universe! — Margaret Fuller

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the group learned the third Principle concept of acceptance of everyone in our congregations. They heard a story, "Odd Velvet," about a girl who is a bit different than everyone else but eventually is accepted and loved. We talked about our own differences and why they make us special and unique. Participants also learned a loving kindness walking meditation that gave them an opportunity to send thoughts of love to people all over the world and they sang a fun, new song about being unique. This session demonstrated how everyone is accepted in our congregations regardless of who they are or where they come from and modeled how we celebrate the differences each person brings.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** your family. What makes your family unique? What are you especially proud of? Think about every individual in the family (even pets) and have everyone tell one thing that is special about that person or animal.

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...**

**A Family Adventure.** Has your family ever gone to an unfamiliar place? Have you moved, or have the children started attending a new school? Talk about that experience and how it felt? Did you feel accepted? What would have made you feel more accepted in your new surroundings? Consider ways to intentionally welcome new neighbors or new children at school. What can each family member do to make the newcomers feel welcome? Each time someone new moves in nearby or starts school with your children, you might make it your practice to send a card, make a cake, or offer to take new neighbors on a tour of your favorite spots in town.

**Family Discovery.** There are numerous books and websites about meditation and yoga. The [Fit Sugar website](#) [384] shows some simple yoga poses and has great pictures of animals doing the poses.

**A Family Game.** Give everyone a pencil and four pieces of paper no larger than 4x5 inches. Make sure all the paper is the same color. Ask every family member to write four things they like about themselves, one per piece of paper. Don't put your name on it! Fold each piece of paper into quarters and put in the center of the table or in a bowl or basket. (If any family members are unable to write, ask one person in the family to assist them, without telling the others what they write for the person.) One at a time, each family member chooses a piece of paper and reads it aloud or has someone else read it aloud for them. Now the whole family guesses who the note is about. Take turns until every paper has been read.

**A Family Ritual.** Explore loving kindness meditation together. Set aside five to ten minutes, at the same time each week, for your entire family to meditate on sending love to each family member, a group of people, or just out into the world. You can do a walking meditation or simply sit in a group. This could be a nice ritual before bed; meditation calms our minds and relaxes the body, which can help us sleep.

# FIND OUT MORE

## **Meditation**

[Venerable Thubten Chodron's website \[385\]](#) offers a variety of resources for meditation including guided meditations on kindness, gratitude, and love which conclude:

...let's dedicate all the positive energy and potential that we've accumulated through our meditation, and let's imagine sending that out, dedicating it to the welfare of each and every living being, ourselves and all others.

## **On Congregations Becoming More Welcoming**

The Unitarian Universalist Association's Leaders Library offers a variety of resources online, including the *Interconnections* articles "[How You Welcome Visitors Makes A Big Difference](#)" [386] (April 15, 2004) and "[How Welcoming Do Your Visitors Think You Are?](#)" [387] (September 15, 2007).

## **Buddhism and Unitarian Universalism**

Read a *UU World* article about [Buddhism and Unitarian Universalism](#) [388].

# SESSION 7: LOVE SURROUNDS US IN RITUAL

# INTRODUCTION

Ritual is the way we carry the presence of the sacred. Ritual is the spark that must not go out. — Christina Baldwin, in *Life's Companion: Journal Writing as a Spiritual Quest*

Not all Unitarian Universalist congregations use the same elements of worship, yet we often have rituals in common such as chalice lighting, flower ceremony, and water communion. We may use different words and different actions. Still, our rituals bind us together in Unitarian Universalist religious community.

The theme of this session is "Our rituals represent love and acceptance." The story describes the first flower ceremony and how a minister began the tradition. The minister, Norbert Capek, began a ritual with the symbol of flowers to demonstrate his belief that although everyone is different, they are all beautiful and he loved them just as they were. Story, discussion, and activities help participants understand rituals and see how they represent love in our communities.

## Goals

This session will:

- Demonstrate the Unitarian Universalist idea that all people learn together in our congregations (third Principle)
- Convey the concept of rituals and introduce common elements of Unitarian Universalist worship
- Teach a popular worship ritual used in many congregations throughout the world
- Introduce some Unitarian history.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn that ritual serves the purpose of gathering people in shared faith
- Learn the origin of the flower ceremony and its role in contemporary Unitarian Universalist worship
- Experience a ritual that affirms acceptance and love, by participating in a flower ceremony.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: What Is Ritual?	10
Activity 2: Story — The Flower Ceremony, A Plain and Simple Beauty	10
Activity 3: Flower Making	15
Activity 4: Flower Ceremony	10
Faith in Action: Leading a Flower Ceremony	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Flower Poem	10
Alternate Activity 2: Altar Symbols	15
Alternate Activity 3: Ritual Collage	30
Alternate Activity 4: Poster — Third Principle	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Not all Unitarian Universalist congregations use the same rituals, and the use of ritual within a congregation can vary. Your history of participating in religious ritual may be positive or negative. Use this spiritual preparation activity to acknowledge your feelings or memories of ritual in a religious setting:

Find a quiet space in the church. Relax into a comfortable position. Close your eyes and think about the rituals that your congregation uses regularly. How do they make you feel? Think about rituals you experienced in childhood. How do they make you feel? Are your memories pleasant or unpleasant? What makes a ritual positive for you? Is the flower ceremony different from rituals you participated in when you were a child?

Reflect on the children in this group. Today may be their first experience with a specifically Unitarian Universalist ritual. How can you help make this ritual a positive experience for them? Release any negative feelings you may have about rituals. Make yourself ready to conduct this ritual as a representative of our Unitarian Universalist faith.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Drawing paper and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.
- Set drawing paper and crayons on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite each child to sit at a work table and draw and color any kind of flower they can think of.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair. Offer to draw an outline of a flower for a child to color, if needed.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Yellow cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Tell them yellow represents the third Principle. Have them find the yellow ribbon and say the Principle together: "In our congregations, we accept all people and we learn together."

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (Each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red). Ask if they remember the second Principle (We believe all people should be treated fairly) and its color (orange).

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and the children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## **Including All Participants**

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS RITUAL?

10 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Clear a large open space for participants to sit in a circle on the floor.

## Description of Activity

This activity prepares participants to learn about ritual in our congregations by first discussing rituals in their everyday lives.

Ask participants to sit in a circle. Say, in your own words:

We will talk about rituals today. Rituals are certain things we always do, usually at the same time. An example would be saying a prayer before a meal. Another example is our opening ritual here in our group. Now I am going to ask you to think about your morning routine at home, when you wake up and get ready to go to school. Then we will talk about a ritual that many Unitarian Universalist congregations around the world take part in.

Ask participants to sit comfortably, without touching their neighbors. Ask them to close their eyes if they are comfortable doing so and silently, in their heads, think about the answers to these questions:

- How do you wake up in the morning? An alarm clock? Someone in your family? A dog?
- Is it the same every morning or sometimes different?
- What is the first thing you do when you get out of bed? Brush teeth? Wash face and hands? Get dressed?
- What are the steps involved in doing these things? Do you do them in the same order every day?
- Where do you go to eat breakfast? Do you always sit in the same spot? What do you eat?
- Do you pack your backpack? Your lunch? Books?
- Do you walk to school? Ride a bus? Does someone drive you? Think about steps that you always do to get to school.

Pause for approximately 20 seconds and ask them to slowly open their eyes. Ask participants if they thought about any things they do every day. Let them share their thoughts. After a minute or two of sharing, in your own words say:

Those are morning rituals. Just like how you get ready for school with certain rituals, people in Unitarian Universalist congregations participate in rituals, too. They light a chalice as we do here. What else do we do in our opening ritual? What is the difference between the ritual of brushing your teeth every morning and lighting the chalice in church on Sunday morning? Brushing your teeth is a personal ritual, but what the congregation does together in church is a religious ritual. We do it together because we are a religious community. Family rituals such as good night hugs and kisses, bring a family together; rituals in church bring all the people in the congregation together.

Affirm the elements of your opening ritual that children mention.

## Including All Participants

If any children cannot sit on the floor, gather participants in a circle at approximately the same eye level.

# ACTIVITY 2: STORY, THE FLOWER CEREMONY, A PLAIN AND SIMPLE BEAUTY

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Flower Ceremony - A Plain and Simple Beauty](#) [389]"
- Leader Resource 1, [Norbert Capek](#) [390]
- Optional: "[The Flower Ceremony](#)" coloring sheet [391]

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Print out Leader Resource 1 to pass around before you read or tell the story.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [391]. Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

Norbert Capek came to the United States from his native Czechoslovakia in 1914. He served a Baptist church in New York City but resigned and joined the First Unitarian Church of Essex County in Orange, New Jersey. This congregation was much more in keeping with his liberal religious views. Capek and his wife were prompted to join the church by the liberal religious education available to his children. When his country was liberated after World War I, he returned to Prague and built and led the largest Unitarian church in the world, and spread Unitarianism throughout the country. This story explains how Capek held the first Flower Ceremony while he served in Prague.

Gather the group to hear the story. Show and pass around the picture of Capek and explain that he invented the Unitarian Universalist Flower Ceremony. Tell them he died in World War II but he left this ritual for us. Invite participants to close their eyes if they like. Read or tell the story.

Ask everyone to slowly open their eyes. Process the story with these or similar questions:

- What is a ceremony?

- Why did Reverend Capek choose flowers for his ritual?
- Why do you think the people liked it so much?
- Why do we continue to do this ritual so many years after it began?
- What makes this ritual important to Unitarian Universalists today?
- What is the main message in the flower ceremony?

Conclude with this question:

- What kind of flower would you choose for a flower ceremony?

Tell the children you will all experience a flower ceremony today.



"Flower Ceremony" Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Paul Gray

Download a [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [391] for "The Flower Ceremony, A Plain and Simple Beauty."

# ACTIVITY 3: FLOWER MAKING

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Sheets of tissue paper in multiple colors
- Green chenille pipe cleaners

## Preparation for Activity

- Cut the tissue paper into 5x7-inch rectangles, enough for each child to have at least five.
- Arrange tissue paper rectangles and chenille for children to share at work tables.
- If you have not made tissue paper flowers before, make a sample to learn how.

## Description of Activity

Tell the children they will make paper flowers for one another. Say:

We will use the flowers in a flower ceremony. Then, everyone will go home with a flower that was made by one of their friends.

Have each child choose five pieces of pre-cut tissue paper. Demonstrate (and help, as needed):

1. Stack the rectangles in one pile, all going the same direction.
2. Accordion-pleat the tissue paper, working from the long side.
3. Wind one end of the chenille "stem" around the center of the accordion-pleated tissue papers. Allow the end of the "stem" to hang.
4. Gently separate each layer of tissue paper pulling upwards toward the middle of the flower.

If desired, bend another piece of chenille into a leaf shape and wrap it around the stem.

## Including All Participants

Some participants may need help stacking their tissue papers and/or folding them into accordions. Tying the chenille stems and gently pulling the "petal" out may require adult supervision and assistance.

# ACTIVITY 4: FLOWER CEREMONY

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Flower Ceremony Service \[392\]](#)
- Centering table (Opening)
- Vase or container to hold tissue paper flowers
- Tissue paper flowers made in Activity 3, Flower Making

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for anyone who will read a part of the service.
- Read the handout to become familiar with the elements of the service.

## Description of Activity

Participants experience an abbreviated version of the flower ceremony ritual.

Gather the children, making sure they have the tissue paper flowers they made in Activity 3.

Invite participants who can read to volunteer to read parts of the service, and give each volunteer a handout.

## Including All Participants

If any participants are unable to get to the centering table to place or choose a flower, give them a partner who will place and retrieve a flower for them.

Do not put anyone on the spot to read aloud. Give reading volunteers the handout well in advance of this activity, and be ready to read any part should a volunteer suddenly decide to pass.

# CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the participants who participated in the session today. What did they learn? Do they understand the idea of ritual? Are there participants who need more assistance in crafts, or in reading? Are there participants who could help others? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: LEADING A FLOWER CEREMONY

30 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, Flower Ceremony Service [392]
- Tissue paper flowers made in Activity 3, Flower Making
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- A vase for flowers
- Cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- Arrange to conduct a flower ceremony at a local rehabilitation center, hospital, or hospice where congregational members live who cannot get to worship services. You might go to the facility together with participants and their families immediately after worship on a Sunday, for example. Ask to use a room where many people can participate or arrange to go to individuals' rooms. This service will last no longer than 10 minutes.
- Inform parents/caregivers the date and time. Encourage them to bring a flower. Ask participants and families to make tissue paper flowers if using them. If using live flowers, be sure to fill a vase with water for them.
- Make several copies of Handout 1, so everyone who may read a part of the service can have one. Invite participants who can read to volunteer to read parts of the service, or ask for parent volunteers. Give each volunteer a handout before the visit so they can become familiar with the elements of the service.

## Description of Activity

Meet at the chosen place. Introduce participants to one another. Set up a small centering table with a chalice and a vase for flowers on a table, night stand, or hospital tray. Conduct the service, using Handout 1, Flower Ceremony Service.

## Including All Participants

If anyone, including the people you are visiting, has mobility limitations, partner a child with them to bring and then to choose a flower for them.

Do not put anyone on the spot to read aloud. Give reading volunteers the handout well in advance of this activity, and be ready to read any part should a volunteer suddenly decide to pass.

Arrange carpooling that leaves from your congregation so anyone wishing to participate has transportation.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: FLOWER POEM

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Index cards, enough for each participant to have three
- Pencils for all participants

## Preparation for Activity

- Distribute three index cards per child and pencils at work tables.
- Ask readers/writers to help others write and spell their words.

## Description of Activity

Tell the children the group is going to make up a poem together about flowers. Ask participants to write down words after the instructions. Ask the participants not to put their names on any of the cards.

Ask them to write on one of their cards a color, any color they like.

Give them time to write. Offer to spell or write for any child who needs help; they can also ask a neighbor for help. Collect the cards and set aside in one pile.

Next, ask the participants to take another card and write a kind of flower. Offer to help them spell flowers that have long or difficult names. Ask them to try to think of flowers that are out of the ordinary. You may get a lot of "roses" or "tulips," which is fine. Give them time to write. Then, collect these cards and set aside in another pile.

Finally, ask them to write on their last card an action word-something they like to do, such as dancing, kicking, running, walking, or biking. Give them time to write. Then collect the cards and set aside in a third pile.

Without arranging the cards in any way, read one card from each pile in a row and keep doing this until you have read all three piles. For example: If the top card in the color pile is "red," the top card in the flower pile says "rose," and the top card in the action pile says "dancing," you would read, "Red Rose Dancing." You will have a free form poem that you may want to type and distribute to the children at a later session. Keep the piles in order so that the poem remains the same as you read it originally!

## Including All Participants

Have reading/writing peers and adult leaders ready to help participants write the words they think of in this exercise.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ALTAR SYMBOLS

15 minutes

### Materials for Activity

- Clay that air-dries or can be baked, various colors
- Parchment paper

### Preparation for Activity

- Separate clay into small pieces about 1/4-cup size, or 2x3 inches square.
- Set clay on work tables.
- Place parchment paper on a clean, dry surface where completed sculptures will not be disturbed.

### Description of Activity

Explain that in addition to a chalice, people place other things on a centering table or an altar-things that are special to them. Sometimes people have something that tells everyone about what they are interested in.

Ask each participant to sculpt a symbol that represents one of their interests. It might be a book, some type of animal, a computer, or a sun. Let the participants know they will explain to everyone what their sculpture is, so it is not important to make it look exactly like the item it represents. It is only important that the person who made it recognize what it symbolizes. Let them know that the next session they come to, they can take their symbols home.

### Including All Participants

For children lacking fine motor skills, have another participant or an adult leader ask them what they want sculpted and shape the clay according to their directions.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: RITUAL COLLAGE

30 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Large pieces of construction paper in various colors
- Magazines, newspapers, greeting cards, and calendars with pictures to cut up
- Scissors, including left-handed scissors, and glue sticks

## Preparation for Activity

- Gather old magazines and greeting cards and outdated calendars that have pictures children can cut out. Find a variety of subjects.
- Set out materials at work tables so all participants will have access to the magazines, etc., scissors, and glue sticks.

## Description of Activity

Invite participants to make a collage or a series of pictures that represents a ritual in their life—for instance, their morning routine, setting the table, or how they feed their pet.

Ask each child to choose a sheet of construction paper. Then invite them to search the printed media for pictures to cut out that relate to the ritual they want to show and then glue them, in order, on the construction paper to illustrate their ritual. When they are finished, invite participants to share their ritual with the group. Invite them to talk about the art they made, prompting with these questions:

- When does this ritual take place? Where?
- Who takes part?
- Why is this ritual important to you?

## Including All Participants

If participants are unable to cut pictures, ask a co-leader to help them. If any participants finish well before others, invite them to help younger participants complete their pictures.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: POSTER, THIRD PRINCIPLE

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Poster - Third Principle](#) [393]
- Crayons and/or color markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 2 for all participants.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

## Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite children to think about an example they can draw of the third Principle. Say the third Principle together: "In our congregations, we accept all people and we learn together."

# TAKING IT HOME

Ritual is the way we carry the presence of the sacred. Ritual is the spark that must not go out. — Christina Baldwin, in *Life's Companion: Journal Writing As a Spiritual Quest*

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the group learned about the Unitarian Universalist tradition of flower ceremony with a story about the Czech Unitarian minister, Norbert Capek, who began this ritual in 1923. They made flowers and participated in a flower ceremony service of their own. We introduced the concept of rituals in our faith and talked about how they bring us all together as one. The children learned about conducting a service and some of the worship elements common in our tradition. This session demonstrated how we each come to our congregations as individuals yet also become a part of a whole, when we worship together.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Many families say a blessing or light a candle before a meal. Some families have questions at the dinner table that everyone responds to such as, "What was the best part of your day?" Think about your own family and consider:

- Do we have rituals in our family? What are they?
- Are there rituals we would like to begin to do?
- How could rituals be helpful in our everyday life at home?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...**

**A Family Adventure.** Consider having an annual flower ceremony with family and friends, perhaps around Mother's Day or Memorial Day. Invite everyone to your home or a local park. Refer to Activity 4, Flower Ceremony in this session for words to use during a gathering. Ask each participant to bring a flower to the service.

**Family Discovery.** Online, watch a National Geographic [movie about ritual and families \[394\]](#).

**A Family Game.** Have every family member list as many rituals as they can that you have at your home. Use a three-minute egg timer and see who can think of the most. Discuss which are your favorites and why.

**A Family Ritual.** Once each month, your entire family will think of a different family member, neighbor, or friend who needs comfort or a demonstration of love. Decide as a family who will receive the flowers. Gather a small bouquet of fresh flowers (from your own garden, if you have one) or make tissue paper flowers. Put a note with the flowers that says, "Thinking of You" or "Happy Day!" Leave the flowers anonymously or deliver them personally. Make sure everyone in the family has a role; each family member should sign the note.

# THE FLOWER CEREMONY, A PLAIN AND SIMPLE BEAUTY

*Adapted from a story by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer in her book *Lamp in Every Corner: Our UU Storybook* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004). Used with permission.*

In the city of Prague, in the land of Czechoslovakia, in the year nineteen hundred and twenty three, there was a church. But the building did not look much like a church. It had no bells, no spires, no stained glass windows. It had no organ to make beautiful music. It didn't even have a piano. It had no carvings of wood or statues of stone. It had no candles or chalices. It had no flowers.

The church did have some things. It had four walls and a ceiling and a floor. It had a door and a few windows. It had some wooden chairs. But that was all, plain and simple.

Except... the church also had people who came to it every Sunday. It had a minister, and his name was Norbert Capek (pronounced CHAH-peck). He had been the minister at the plain and simple church for two years. Every Sunday, Minister Capek went to church, and he spoke to the people while they listened, sitting quietly and still in those hard wooden chairs. When he was done speaking, the people talked a little bit among themselves, and then they went home. And that was all—no music, no candles, no food. Not even coffee or doughnuts.

Springtime came to the city of Prague and Norbert Capek went out for a stroll. The rains had come, the birds were singing, and flowers were blooming all over the land. The world was beautiful.

Then an idea came to him, simple and clear, plain as day. The next Sunday, he asked all the people in the church to bring a flower or a budding branch, or even a twig. Each person was to bring one.

"What kind?" they asked. "What color? What size?"

"You choose," he said. "Each of you choose what you like."

And so, on the next Sunday, which was the first day of summer, the people came with flowers of all different colors and sizes and kinds. There were yellow daisies and red roses. There were white lilies and blue asters, dark-eyed pansies and light green leaves. Pink and purple, orange and gold—there were all those colors and more. Flowers filled all the vases, and the church wasn't so plain and simple anymore.

Minister Capek spoke to the people while they listened, sitting quiet and still in those hard wooden chairs. "These flowers are like ourselves," he said. "Different colors and different shapes, and different sizes, each needing different kinds of care—but each beautiful, each important and special, in its own way."

When he was done speaking, the people talked a little bit among themselves, and then they each chose a different flower from the vases before they went home. And that was all—and it was beautiful, plain and simple as the day.



"Flower Ceremony," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Paul Gray

## COLORING SHEET

"The Flower Ceremony, A Plain and Simple Beauty" (PDF) [391]

Illustration: Paul Gray

# HANDOUT 1: FLOWER CEREMONY SERVICE

*Adapted from Flower Communion by Reginald Zotolli. This author has given Unitarian Universalist Association member congregations permission to reprint this piece for use in public worship. Any reprints must acknowledge the name of the author.*

Leader:

By exchanging flowers in this service, participants follow the example of Norbert Capek. He believed that each of us is different and unique and when we gather together to worship or learn, we create a bouquet of beautiful people.

*Light the chalice.*

Participant or Leader:

Today, we place our flowers in a common vase, remembering we are all individuals but we are also people of a common faith.

Leader:

Please come forward and your flower in the vase on the altar.

*In silence, tissue paper flowers are brought up to altar and carefully placed in vase.*

Participant or Leader:

Children of the earth and sky, we are given warmth and light from above and below.

Participant or Leader:

Supported by earth's strong, firm ground, we build homes, till fields, and plant gardens.

When we are aware of blossoms, birds, and sky, then earth is truly our home.

We are one with all earth's creatures.\*

Leader:

The ceremony we are about to celebrate has taken place all over the world in Unitarian Universalist churches since 1923. Norbert Capek started this ritual to celebrate the beauty of our faith and the people in it. In each flower, Capek saw hope for humanity, even though he would later die because of his beliefs. Let us remember him and his principles and dreams.

Participant or Leader:

Spirit of Life, bless us. Remind us that we meet in fellowship and love. Even though we are all different, we gather as one in love. Remind us that we gather in friendship where we do and share.

Participant or Leader:

Friendship is the most precious gift. Let us remember that we all do what we can and we are all needed to make this beautiful world.

Participant or Leader:

Let's share in a flower ceremony. Each of you will come up in silence and choose a flower not made by your hands. Hold it with care. It is a gift someone else has made for you with love.

*Have participants silently line up to go up to the altar to find a flower.*

Participant or Leader:

We use flowers to help us symbolize the love that is hidden deep inside us.

Participant or Leader:

Flowers are beautiful and so are the feelings of love among us. We have brought our flowers and our love to brighten our church and make our hearts glad.

*Extinguish the chalice.*

\*adapted from Alice Berry

# HANDOUT 2: POSTER, THIRD PRINCIPLE

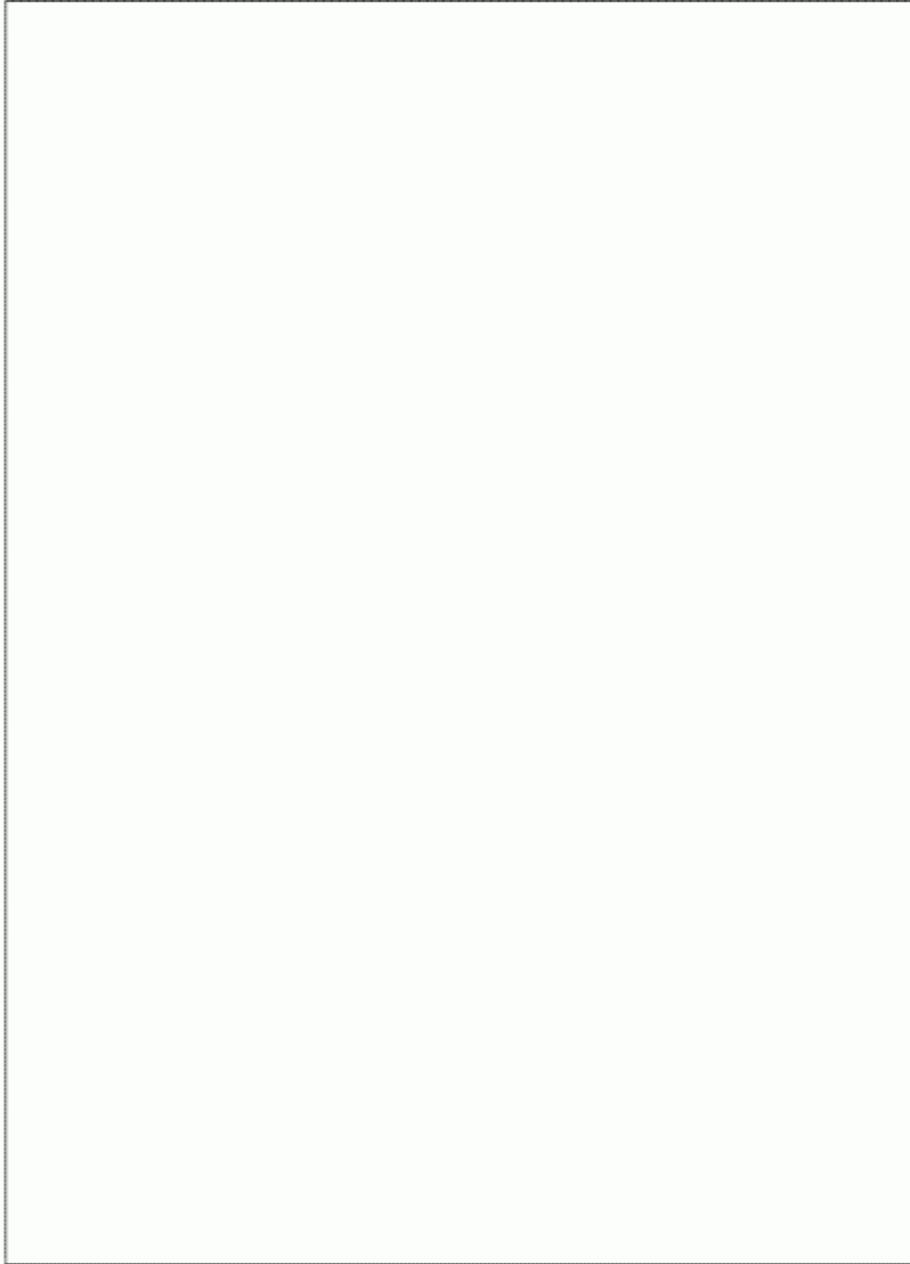
Unitarian Universalist Third Principle

In our congregations, we accept all people and we learn together.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[395\]](#) for printing.

## **Unitarian Universalist Third Principle**



**In our congregations, we accept all people  
and we learn together**

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: NORBERT CAPEK

*From the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society's online Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography.*

Norbert Fabian Capek, June 3, 1870-October 12, 1942

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\)](#) [396] for printing



# FIND OUT MORE

## **Flower Ceremony**

The Unitarian Universalist Association online Leaders Library has readings, prayers, and ceremonial words for use in a [Flower Ceremony](#) [397].

## **Dr. Norbert Capek**

For more about the life of Capek, see the biography, *Norbert Fabian Capek: A Spiritual Journey* by Richard Henry (Skinner House, 1999).

## **History of the Chalice**

The story "Circles of Light: The Flaming Chalice" explains how Unitarian Universalist's came to have a chalice as their symbol. It can be found in the book *Lamp in Every Corner: Our UU Storybook* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004).

# SESSION 8: LOVE SURROUNDS US IN OUR HISTORY

# INTRODUCTION

This argument is solid and weighty, but it is neither reasonable nor convincing. Not all the stones in Boston...shall shut my mouth. — Rev. John Murray, father of American Universalism, on the occasion of a rock thrown at him while he preached

Unitarian Universalism has a long and honorable history. The founders of our faith were often called heretics. However, the Greek word "heretic" actually means "to choose," which is exactly what our forbearers did when they chose to reject the Trinity and eternal damnation and follow their own beliefs. We have no creed, yet Unitarian Universalism has a common history that binds its members together and a faith heritage that exemplifies our fourth Principle: affirmation of each person's free search for truth and meaning.

The theme of this session is "Our religion has a long history surrounded in love." Participants learn about the richness of our liberal religious heritage and discover that the basic beliefs of our religion were established hundreds of years ago. The story and activities in this session discuss historical figures and events that were important to the development of our religion today.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist idea that each person is free to search for what is true and right in life (fourth Principle)
- Celebrate our heritage of Unitarian Universalist thought
- Develop participants' knowledge and appreciation of our liberal religious heritage.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Discover UU history through a visual representation
- Connect names and faces to some Unitarian and Universalist historical figures
- Learn how our religion spread in early American history
- Produce art that celebrates our centuries-old history.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: History Chain	10
Activity 2: Story — Nathaniel Takes a Ride	5
Activity 3: Time Capsule	15
Activity 4: UU Magnets	15
Faith in Action: Partner Church Project	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: What's in a Name?	10
Alternate Activity 2: Finger Play	5
Alternate Activity 3: Heart Ribbon Magnet	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Many members of our congregations are relatively new to Unitarian Universalism. If it was not the religion of your childhood, you may know little of our history. How comfortable are you with our history and your level of knowledge about it? Do you want to learn more about the origins of our religion? As a leader, you will teach some UU history. Think about what you might say if a child asks a question you cannot answer.

Think about the Unitarian Universalist history you do know. What about our past matters most to you? How can you help children connect with Unitarian and Universalist history? Relax, and make yourself ready to share our rich history with the youngest of our faith community.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Drawing paper and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.
- Set drawing paper and crayons on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite each child to sit at a work table and draw and/or color a picture of their church.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair. Offer to draw an outline of the congregational building for a child to color, if needed.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Green cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Tell them green represents the fourth Principle. Have them find the green ribbon and say the Principle together: "Each person is free to search for what is true and right in life."

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (Each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red). Ask if they remember the second Principle (We believe all people should be treated fairly) and its color (orange). Ask if they remember the third Principle (We accept all people and we learn together) and its color (yellow).

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and the children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: HISTORY CHAIN

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Construction paper in two contrasting colors, scissors, and a marker
- Transparent tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Cut construction paper into 3x12-inch strips. Make 21 strips in one color and 6 in the other color.
- Number the 21 strips of paper for the centuries, starting with 0 on the first strip. Write 100 on the second strip, and continue by 100s to 2000. Use large numbers.
- Write these numbers on the 6 strips of paper in the other color: 200, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, and 1900.

## Description of Activity

This activity gives children a visual representation of the extent of our Unitarian Universalist history.

Gather participants in a standing circle. Say, in your own words:

We will talk about Unitarian Universalist history today. Unitarians and Universalists used to belong to two separate religions. Unitarian history goes back to the 1500s and Universalist ideas began in the 3rd century-the 200s. Does anyone know what year we are today? What century is this?

Tell the children they will make a time line that goes way back to the beginning of our Unitarian Universalist history. Explain they will tape paper links together in order. Tell them each link represents 100 years.

Pass the 21 links, in order, to the participants around the circle. Help them use tape to link their strips together into a chain. Keep the group on track in terms of linking the strips in order. The "2000" link and the "0" link should not be linked. When the chain is done, have participants stretch into one long line, being careful not to pull the chain too tight. Move along the chain from "0" to "2000" and attach the 6 alternate-color strips to the matching years on the long chain.

Explain to the participants that the chain is the time line for Unitarian and Universalist history and explain that the rings in the different color mark important times in our history. Say that although there are many significant dates, we are just going to point out a few. While pointing to the appropriate year link, say, in your own words:

(200 - the 3rd century)

In this century, a person first introduced the idea that everyone would go to heaven, no matter what a person did during their life. This person believed no one would be punished forever after death. This was called Universal Salvation and it is where the name Universalist came from. Some people were upset by that idea. I wonder why?

Allow participants time to answer.

(1500 - the 16th century)

In this century, some people said that God was three beings, a father, a son, and a holy spirit; but other people thought God was just one being and they were called anti-Trinitarians. That is where the name Unitarian eventually came from because "uni" means "one."

(1700 - the 18th century)

In this century, the first Universalist church in America was established. It was located in Massachusetts, on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean.

(1800 - the 19th century)

In this century, the American Unitarian Association was founded.

(1900 - the 20th century)

In this century, the Unitarians and Universalists joined together to form what we are called today, Unitarian Universalists.

Allow time for comments and questions.

Now process the exercise with the following:

- Is the chain longer than you would have thought?
- Can you figure out how many centuries old our religion is?
- If someone asked you how long there have been Unitarians or Universalists, what would you say?
- Can you remember one early belief of the Universalists?
- What belief was central to Unitarians a long time ago?

Display the chain in the remaining sessions to remind the children of our history.

# ACTIVITY 2: STORY, NATHANIEL TAKES A RIDE

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Nathaniel Takes a Ride](#) [398]"
- Optional: "[Nathaniel Takes a Ride](#)" coloring sheet [399]

## Preparation for Activity

- Practice reading the story aloud.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [399]. Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

Gather participants to hear the story. Explain that this story takes place when there were no cars, trains, or airplanes. People had to travel by horse, by boat, or on foot. It would take several days to get from one town to another.

Tell the story. Then, process with these questions:

- Would any of you want to do what Nathaniel did?
- Have you ever done something you really didn't want to do, because someone else asked you to?
- Have you ever done something because you felt it was the right thing to do, instead of because you wanted to do it?
- What could have happened if people like Nathaniel did not travel and preach in so many of the states in the 1800s? Do you think as many people would have heard about Universalism?

Conclude by affirming:

Universalism gave people a message of love and hope. Many people welcomed the idea that they are loved by God no matter what.

Download a [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [399] for "Nathaniel Takes a Ride."



"Nathaniel Takes a Ride," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Paul Gray

# ACTIVITY 3: TIME CAPSULE

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A large empty container, shoe box, or other container with a lid
- A sheet of letterhead paper from your congregation, and a writing utensil
- Quart size plastic baggies
- A current, local newspaper and/or a congregational newsletter
- Permanent marker
- Items participants bring

## Preparation for Activity

- Arrange with congregational staff or leaders a place to "bury" the time capsule in the congregational building.
- Ask participants in advance to bring in a small item they feel represents their church. Tell them their items will not be returned, so they should not choose items they treasure. Suggest a picture, an art project, a piece of writing, a poem—anything that tells a story about this moment in time for your congregation. Reinforce this request with an email or phone call to parents during the week preceding this activity.
- Find a container to use as the time capsule. Label or decorate it. Note: You might purchase a hat box or decorative cardboard storage box at a craft store or discount department store.
- Cut out one or more items, including the date, from your local newspaper or a congregational newsletter.
- On letterhead paper, write a note explaining that the time capsule was put together in your congregation's Love Surrounds Us program, and list the children's names. Write the date you will store the time capsule. Optional: Leave room for all the children to sign the note.

## Description of Activity

This activity demonstrates that Unitarian Universalism has a long history and we are part of its continuation into the future.

Gather participants in a circle with the container in the center. Explain, in your own words:

This time capsule will be put away in a safe place in the congregation. A long time from now, maybe when you are grown-ups, other people in the congregation will open the time capsule and see what the congregation was like years before.

Ask participants why they think someone would make a time capsule. What kinds of things might we learn if we opened a time capsule? What could people learn about us if they open our time capsule?

Go around the circle and ask participants to show the items they brought for the time capsule and why they chose it. After they speak, invite them to place their item in a baggie, if it will fit, to protect it. Have them place their item in the container.

Optional: Invite each participant to sign their names to the note you have written on letterhead.

Then put the note in a baggie and seal the container. Ask the group how long they should wait until it can be opened. Suggest at least 10 or 20 years. With permanent marker, write "This Time Capsule is not to be opened until \_\_\_\_."

Place the container in a congregational safe or storage area, as pre-arranged.

Process this activity by talking about why it is important that we leave information about ourselves and our world for people in the future.

## Including All Participants

Invite participants who did not bring in an item for the capsule, to think of one thing they would want people to know about their congregation and have them, or help them, write their idea on a piece of paper. They can then fold the piece of paper and place it in a baggie. Assist anyone who needs help. Leaders may place items in the container.

# ACTIVITY 4: UU MAGNETS

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, Chalice Picture for Magnet [400]
- Magnetic strips or magnetic sheets
- Clean metal or plastic lids, approximately two inches in diameter - one for each participant
- Crayons and/or markers, scissors (including left-handed scissors), craft glue, and (optional) ribbon

## Preparation for Activity

- Obtain metal or plastic lids, one for each participant plus a few extra.
- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Cut magnetic strips to fit lids. Each child will need one lid and a magnetic piece that fits the lid.

## Description of Activity

To help participants remember the long history of Unitarian Universalism and perhaps generate conversation at home, the children make a piece of art.

Distribute Handout 1. Point out that it is a line drawing of a chalice, a Unitarian Universalist symbol. Invite children to color their picture, then use the jar lid to draw a circle around the picture, cut out the circle, and glue their picture inside a lid.

Help children glue a magnetic strip on the back of their lid.

Optional: Glue ribbon to the edge of the lid for decoration. Tie ribbon into a bow at the top.

## Including All Participants

Some children may need help to color the picture, to cut it out themselves, to trace and cut the circle, and/or to glue the magnet.

# CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the participants in the session today. What did they learn? Do they understand how far back our religion goes in history? Are there participants who need more assistance in crafts? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: PARTNER CHURCH PROJECT

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Information about your congregation's Partner Church, including contact information

## Preparation for Activity

- Contact your partner church as a representative of the faith development program. Ask if your group could help them raise funds for a special project. Get details about their project so that you can describe it to participants.
- Obtain permission from congregational leadership to hold a fundraiser such as a bake sale or service sale. Arrange a date and time with parents/guardians, on a Sunday after church for instance. Set a fundraising goal.
- Make signs to post at the congregation and advertise the fundraiser in congregational communications.

## Description of Activity

Have a fundraiser that involves something the children can help make or sell so they can participate in a meaningful way. If you choose a bake sale, for example, you might gather participants to bake at the church. Arrange for the children to be present at the fundraiser and help collect funds.

## Including All Participants

If the project requires a gathering outside of regular church times, arrange carpooling so anyone wishing to participate has transportation.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

10 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Find out about your congregation's use of the names of historical figures. There may be rooms in your congregational building named after local or national figures, or your congregation itself may have been named after someone. Collect information on those historical figures and learn the stories behind the congregation's name and its room names.

## Description of Activity

This activity introduces the history of your congregation along with brief biographies of historical figures important to our heritage.

Gather participants and tell them the history behind each name or room that you researched. Then, lead a discussion with these questions:

- Why do we name rooms after people?
- If you could have named our congregation, what would you have called it?
- Would you like a room or some other place named after you one hundred years from now? What would the place be? (A park, a church, a school, a lake?)

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FINGER PLAY

5 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the list of people in the Description of Activity so you will be comfortable sharing the pronunciations and descriptions with the group.

## Description of Activity

This activity acquaints participants with the names of historic figures in our faith heritage.

Gather participants. Read the list of names aloud, one at a time, asking the group to repeat each name after you so they become familiar with the pronunciation. You may also read the brief description of each person.

- King John Sigismund, first Unitarian ruler of a people
- Michael Servetus, first Unitarian killed for his beliefs
- Francis David, leader of Transylvanian Unitarians
- Joseph Priestley, Unitarian clergyman and scientist, discoverer of oxygen
- John Murray, founder of American Universalism
- Hosea Ballou, Universalist minister and friend of Nathaniel Stacy
- Nathaniel Stacy, Universalist traveling preacher
- Maria Cook, first Universalist woman to preach in a Universalist church
- William Ellery Channing, first Unitarian minister stating principles of Unitarianism
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, Unitarian minister and public lecturer
- Henry David Thoreau, Unitarian writer
- Theodore Parker, Unitarian minister and abolitionist
- Olympia Brown, first woman ordained by a church
- Joseph Jordan, first African American ordained as a Universalist
- Clara Barton, Universalist who established the Red Cross

- James Reeb, Unitarian Universalist minister killed in Civil Rights protest
- Margaret Fuller, Unitarian writer and women's rights advocate
- Dorothea Dix, Unitarian who worked for prisoners' and mentally ill persons' rights

Lead the children to use the hand gestures and tune of "Where is Thumbkin?" In place of "Thumbkin," shout out different names of each historic person. Sing about some or all of the famous Unitarians and Universalists listed above.

## Including All Participants

Do not use the hand gestures if any children are unable to participate in that way; you can just sing the song.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HEART RIBBON MAGNET

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Felt hearts mounted on felt squares and magnets, assembled in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1
- A roll of 1/8-inch green ribbon
- Extra felt, magnets, and ribbon (red, orange, and yellow) for new participants, plus glue, sharp scissors, and permanent marker

## Preparation for Activity

- Set on work tables the Heart Ribbon Magnets children began making in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1.
- Cut green ribbon into 16-inch lengths and set on work tables.
- Review Session 2, Alternate Activity 1 to start Heart Ribbon Magnets for new participants.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects the color green and the fourth Principle as children work on their Heart Ribbon Magnets—a reminder of the UU Principles they may take home at the close of the program.

Tell the children the green ribbon represents the fourth UU Principle, "We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life." Demonstrate how to fold a length of green ribbon in half, push the folded end into the hole on the side of the heart next to the yellow ribbon, and insert the two loose ends of green ribbon through the loop formed by the folded end. Pull the green ribbon through tightly.

Help any new children or visitors begin a Heart Ribbon Magnet, following instructions in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1, and add red, orange, yellow, and green ribbons.

Set aside the magnets and remaining colors of ribbon for future sessions.

## Including All Participants

Partner very young children with an older child who can help them.

# TAKING IT HOME

This argument is solid and weighty, but it is neither reasonable nor convincing. Not all the stones in Boston...shall shut my mouth. — Rev. John Murray, father of American Universalism, on the occasion of a rock thrown at him while he preached

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** participants learned about the fourth Unitarian Universalist Principle, that we believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life. Through the introduction of some Unitarian and Universalist historical figures, participants learned how searching for what is true has been part of our traditions for hundreds of years. Participants made a paper chain timeline, beginning in the year 0, to represent our long history. A story, "Nathaniel Takes a Ride," explained how our religion was spread in the 19th century when travel was by horse or boat. The children made a magnet to take home to help us all remember we belong to a religion that has long, deep roots—all the way back to the 3rd century Common Era.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** how our religion was spread in early America by itinerant preachers. These ministers rode horses, slept outside, and often did not get enough to eat. What is important in your family? Are there any causes for which you would sacrifice your comforts? What would you be willing to sacrifice for your religion? How important is your church to your family? If you had to move where there were not any UU congregations, what would you do for your spiritual growth, nourishment, and community? If you wanted to interest others in our congregation or in Unitarian Universalism, what would you say or do?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...**

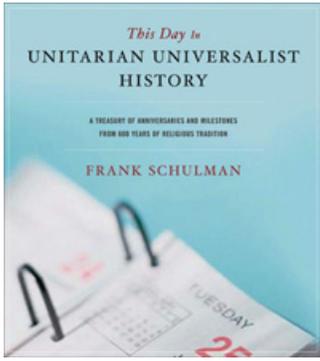
**A Family Adventure.** The next time your family travels to another part of the country, see if you can go see another Unitarian Universalist congregation. Is it different than yours? The same? How old is the church where they meet? In the 1800s, how would people have reached this church? If your family travels often, consider keeping a journal to record the locations of churches you have visited and your thoughts about each one.

**Family Discovery.** Check out [the UUA website \[380\]](#) for information about congregations all across the country. Explore [inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop \[369\]](#) for books about our tradition. Look in your congregational library for books on our history. If your church does not have a lending library, locate your UUA District office and website via the [UUA website \[380\]](#). District offices often lend books and will send them in the mail if you do not live close by.

**A Family Ritual.** [\*This Day in Unitarian Universalist History \[401\]\*](#) by Frank Schulman (Skinner House Books, 2004) provides anniversaries and milestones from our religious tradition. Read the day's entries at a family meal each day.

**This Day in Unitarian Universalist History**

**A Treasury of Anniversaries and Milestones from 600 Years of Religious Tradition**



Frank Schulman

From Skinner House Books

This treasury of anniversaries and milestones marks the significant events in Unitarian and Universalist faith heritage for every day of the year

**BUY THIS BOOK [401]**

# NATHANIEL TAKES A RIDE

Hundreds of years ago, when America was still a very new country, Unitarianism and Universalism were also very new. They were actually two separate religions. By itself, Universalism was a loving and accepting religion. Universalists believed that God loved everyone and did not punish people. In some places, Universalists gathered in church buildings. In some places, people would gather in someone's barn, or house, or yard for a church service.

The Stacy family went to a church building on Sundays. Their church was the first Universalist church established in America. It was in Massachusetts. A few years later, the family moved to a small farming village in New York where there was no Universalist church nearby. They could no longer go to church every Sunday, but sometimes, Universalist preachers would visit them in New York. In those days, Universalist preachers would travel to places where there were no churches and have gatherings for people interested in hearing about Universalism.

One of the Stacy children, Nathaniel, grew up listening to these traveling preachers on his family's farm. Eventually, Nathaniel was old enough to decide what he wanted to do when he grew up. He was interested in Universalism but not really that excited about riding a horse all around and then standing on a tree stump to preach to small crowds. It turned out, though, that Nathaniel was really good at public speaking. A Universalist minister friend of his encouraged him to be a preacher. So in 1803, Nathaniel became a Universalist preacher. He hopped on a horse and travelled around the country, preaching to those who would invite him to their farms.

After each sermon, people would pass around a hat and put money into it to pay the preacher. Sometimes the preacher and his horse were invited to stay in someone's house or barn. Sometimes Nathaniel slept outside with a blanket. Sometimes people fed the horse and the preacher and sometimes Nathaniel would find things to eat out in the wild forests.

Nathaniel travelled through New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. At times, he would have to travel two hundred miles to speak to people. When he was much older, Nathaniel would remember his time travelling with his horse. He told stories about not getting enough money to feed both him and his horse, so what do you think he would do then? Sometimes he would feed the horse, and go hungry.

Nathaniel wrote his stories down and tried to explain why he continued to lead such a hard life as a minister who never got to sleep at home, never got enough to eat, and had to be out in bad weather. He explained that he did it because someone had to. He felt it was so important for the Universalist ideas about love and acceptance to be spread in the new country of America, that he was willing to give up his comfort to make sure there would always be a religion called Universalism. He thought preaching Universalism was like "planting a seed" and the Universalist churches that were built were the "crops."

In those long ago days, many other Universalists and Unitarians lived like Nathaniel did to spread their religion. Aren't we lucky they did—or we might not have our church today!

## COLORING SHEET

"Nathaniel Takes a Ride" (PDF) [399]

Illustration: Paul Gray

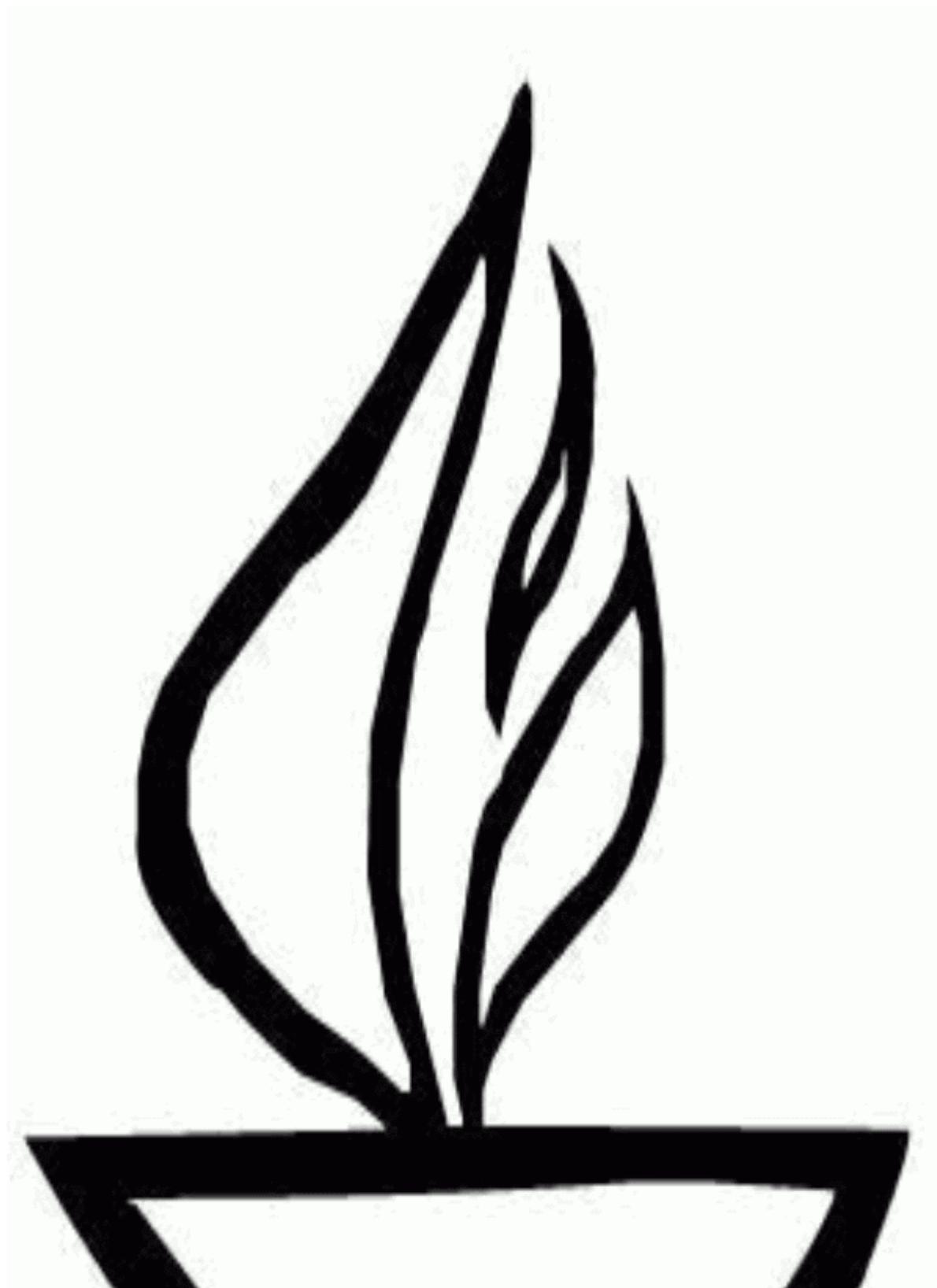


"Nathaniel Takes a Ride," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration: Paul Gray

# HANDOUT 1: CHALICE PICTURE FOR MAGNET

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[402\]](#) for printing.





## Unitarian Universalism: 600 Years of Love

### FIND OUT MORE

#### **Unitarian Universalist History**

Books on Unitarian Universalist history include *Unitarian Universalism, a Narrative History* by David E. Bumbaugh (Meadville Lombard Press, 2000); *This Day in Unitarian Universalist History* by Frank Schulman (Skinner House, 2004); *The Larger Faith: A Short History of American Universalism* by Charles A. Howe (Skinner House Books, 1993); and *A Stream of Light: A Short History of American Unitarianism* by Conrad Wright (Skinner House, 1975).

### SESSION 9: LOVE SURROUNDS US IN OUR SEARCH

# INTRODUCTION

Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, goes everywhere. — Theodore Parker, 19th-century Unitarian minister and abolitionist

The theme of this session is "Our search for beliefs comes from sources of love." Children learn that Unitarian Universalists have the freedom to build our own theology; we affirm our UU Principles, yet we are not required to believe any one thing.

Unitarian Universalism is unique in that it does not have one creed, but invites us to examine many sources of wisdom to find those which ring true for us personally. By encouraging spiritual growth in this way, our congregations attract people from many different religious traditions who hold a variety of religious beliefs.

The story is presented as a short play and the activities in this session invite participants to think about what is sacred to them and others.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist fourth Principle, that each person is free to search for what is true and right in life
- Demonstrate the variety of sources of religious belief and practice in Unitarian Universalism
- Develop appreciation of the diversity of religious belief in our faith.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn that Unitarian Universalist beliefs come from many different sources
- Understand that sacred symbols have meaning and purpose in a variety of religious traditions
- Represent their own important feelings as symbols.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Many Paths to God	10
Activity 2: Personal Symbols	20
Activity 3: Chalice Sand Painting	20
Faith in Action: Photos of Our Sacred Space	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Calling the Directions	5
Alternate Activity 2: Basket Game	10
Alternate Activity 3: Poster — Fourth Principle	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Members of our congregations may be in a continual search for what is right and true for themselves. You may have been on a spiritual journey for many years or are new to developing your own religious values. Think about how you might respond if a child asks you about your own beliefs. Will you be comfortable answering questions? Would you like to be able to articulate your faith in just a few words or sentences?

Think about your current values and beliefs. What faith traditions have the most influence on them? Now reflect on the participants and how this may be the first time they will be asked to think about their personal beliefs. In what ways can you help them find what is symbolic of their own faith? Relax and make yourself ready to help the children begin their lifelong spiritual journey.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Drawing paper and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.
- Set drawing paper and crayons on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite each child to draw and/or color a picture of their bedroom or another place in their home that is personally special to them.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair.

Offer to draw an outline of a room for a child to decorate and color, if needed.

# OPENING

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Green cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Tell them green represents the fourth Principle. Have them find the green ribbon and say the Principle together: "Each person is free to search for what is true and right in life."

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (Each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red). Ask if they remember the second Principle (We believe all people should be treated fairly) and its color (orange). Ask if they remember the third Principle (We accept all people and we learn together) and its color (yellow).

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and the children are in the circle, light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY, MANY PATHS TO GOD

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Many Paths to God \[403\]](#)"
- Optional: Four different hand puppets
- Optional: "[Many Paths to God](#)" [coloring sheet \[404\]](#), and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you are comfortable presenting it as a play. Practice, with a co-leader if possible, using different voices to indicate the Narrator and each of the four characters.
- Optional: Bring four different hand puppets. These can be simple, sock puppets or animal or human characters. Ask a co-leader or another adult volunteer to help operate puppets and give them a copy of the story in advance. Or, you may invite volunteers from the group to operate the puppets.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\) \[404\]](#). Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

This story demonstrates that people of many different religions may talk about God, or "the holy."

Gather participants so they can see and hear the leader telling the story. Read or tell the story. If you are using a different puppet for each character, give each character a different voice. Move puppets slightly as they speak to focus children's attention.

At the end of the story, lead a discussion with these questions:

- Who had the right path to the top of the mountain?
- Did the characters all have the same religion?
- Why didn't they all decide to go up the mountain the same way?
- Did the characters all have a different idea of what God was?

- What were the different Gods like?



Download a [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [404] for the story, "Many Paths to God."

# ACTIVITY 2: PERSONAL SYMBOLS

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Magazines and/or newspapers that can be cut up
- Large sheets of construction paper in various colors
- Glue sticks and scissors, including left-handed scissors

## Preparation for Activity

- Gather participants at work tables.

## Description of Activity

Participants make collages of the symbols they think represent them.

Explain that many different religions have symbols that people recognize. For instance, we have a chalice, Christians have the cross, and Jews have the six-pointed Star of David. Tell the children they may look through the magazines and cut out pictures of things that they care about and value. For instance, you may love animals and believe everyone should take care of them. Find a picture of animals and paste it to the construction paper.

Explain that in a collage, we do not need to leave spaces between the pictures. Each picture can overlap another slightly. Invite the children to find and use enough pictures so the only construction paper left showing is the part around the outside of the collage; show them how the remaining construction paper will then frame their collage.

Distribute materials and invite children to begin.

Once everyone is finished, invite participants to explain briefly what they chose for their personal symbols. Ask the group: Did everyone have the same symbols? Why or why not?

## Including All Participants

Invite children who need help cutting pictures to select pictures for a co-leader to cut out. Be sure all participants can reach the materials they need. If any participants finish earlier than others, invite them to offer their help to others who are still working.

# ACTIVITY 3: CHALICE SAND PAINTING

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Cardboard
- Craft sand (at least three different colors), paper cups, and plastic spoons
- Pencils
- Glue and small paintbrushes

## Preparation for Activity

- Cut cardboard into circles approximately 8 inches in diameter, one circle for each child plus a few extra.
- Cover work tables with newspaper.
- Place small amounts of colored sand in paper cups-a few cups of each color of sand. Place a spoon in each cup.

## Description of Activity

Participants make a chalice symbol wall hanging that they can take home.

Ask each participant to draw a simple chalice on their circle. Encourage them to use simple shapes-for example, triangles for the base and the flame-rather than small details.

Invite them to choose colors for the chalice's base, flame, and background. Show them how to use a paintbrush to paint glue on one section of their painting to fill it with one color, and then use a spoon to sprinkle the colored sand onto the wet section.

Give each sanded section one or two minutes to dry. Then, shake excess sand onto newspaper. Do not shake excess sand back into cups.

Optional: Guide children to color their circles, one section of the chalice picture at a time.

To be sure the sand is securely attached, allow pictures to set until the next time you gather.

Ask participants:

- Why do you think Native Americans might have used sand paintings?

- How are the sand paintings and the talking sticks similar? (Both use items from nature to make something that symbolizes a belief.)
- Why do we make pictures of our religious traditions? Do they remind us to do something that our religion teaches? What might your sand chalice remind you to do, when you see it at home?

## Including All Participants

Children may find it difficult to paint with glue or to sprinkle sand in a small, detailed area. Be prepared to draw chalices in glue for participants who are unable to do so. Engage co-leaders or other children to help fill in detailed sections according to a participant's specifications.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the children in the session today. Did they understand what symbols are? Were participants able to choose their personal symbols? Did they understand that everyone has their own thoughts about religion and all of them can be right? Does anyone need assistance in crafts? Are there participants who could help others? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: PHOTOS OF OUR SACRED SPACE

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A digital still camera and photo printing equipment, or a Polaroid instant camera
- Construction paper, multiple colors
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or rubber cement
- Push pins or stapler

## Preparation for Activity

- Arrange to use a prominent bulletin board in the congregation.
- Prepare the bulletin board with a solid color background paper. Then cut shapes from construction paper to make a large tree with branches or a mountain with many paths to the top.
- Cut out letters for the title "Our Sacred Symbols" and attach to the bulletin board display (or choose another title).

## Description of Activity

Look for religious symbols around the congregation, photograph them, and display the photos.

**Step One.** Take participants on a tour around the congregation outside and inside and invite them to identify symbols they see. Photograph the symbols the children discover.

**Step Two.** Print the pictures in a uniform size to fit on the branches of the tree or on the mountain paths on your bulletin board.

**Step Three.** Cut construction paper frames an inch or so bigger than the photos you have printed.

**Step Four.** Give participants the pictures and the construction paper frames and have them attach photos to frames with rubber cement.

**Step Five.** Attach the pictures to your prepared bulletin board with push pins or staplers. Invite participants to tell you where they would like you to put the photos they have framed.

Look at the finished bulletin board together and process with these questions:

- Does our congregation have a lot of symbols? Do we have too many? Too few?
- If we are all Unitarian Universalists, why do we need so many symbols around us?
- If you were new to our congregation, what would the symbols around the building tell you about this community and the people who come here?
- Which symbols do you like? Why?
- How important are the symbols in this congregation to you? Do you think they are important to others in your family? To others who come to our congregation?

## Including All Participants

Make sure the areas you will tour and the location of the bulletin board you will use are fully accessible for your group.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CALLING THE DIRECTIONS

5 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the Description of Activity so you are comfortable using it to lead this activity.
- Identify an indoor or outdoor space for this activity. Find out which direction is east.

## Description of Activity

This activity demonstrates a way that people who believe the Earth is sacred conduct worship. It recalls our connection to the whole universe.

Explain that you are going to worship the elements of life symbolically by calling the directions. Say:

There are four elements in the world: air, fire, water, and earth. Each one has a direction associated with it. Air is east, fire is south, water is west, and earth is north.

Have everyone stand and face east. Lead a chant of your own or have all participants say "I am air, of the east" several times. Ask participants what things in the world symbolize air to them and invite them to call out those symbols; they may say words such as birds, wind, or leaves.

Next, have everyone make a quarter-turn to the right (south) and repeat the chant using "fire" and "south" several times. Ask participants to call out symbols of fire (sun, flames, candles).

Next, have everyone turn to the west and repeat the chant using "water" and "west" several times. Ask them to call out symbols of water (fish, swimming, oceans).

Next, have everyone turn to the north and repeat the chant using "earth" and "north" several times. Ask them to call out symbols of earth (plants, dirt, mountains).

End by leading the children to repeat, "Air, fire, water, and earth, I am," three times, while walking together in a circle.

Afterward, ask:

- What is our connection to the directions?
- Are they important to us?
- Why might some people worship these elements? What do they symbolize?

## Including All Participants

Participants who have mobility limitations can remain seated in the circle and turn themselves or be turned by a partner or co-leader to each direction.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: BASKET GAME

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Basket or flat bowl about ten inches in diameter, one for every five participants
- Heavy, light-colored cardboard
- Markers, various colors, to share

## Preparation for Activity

- Cut cardboard into two-inch squares, one for each participant plus a few extra. Note: To play the game, each small group will need five squares with drawings on one side. In case the number of participants is not a multiple of five, draw chalices on a few of the squares.
- Set markers on work tables for children to share.
- Practice playing the game.

## Description of Activity

Tell the children, in your own words:

We are going to play a game that comes from the Native American Zuni tribe. The Zuni would use symbols common in their surroundings, such as animals, the sun, and trees. We will use the chalice symbol to remind us of our tradition's symbol.

Distribute the squares and ask everyone to draw a chalice on one side of their square with color markers. Tell them to leave the back of their square totally blank. Remind them that a chalice can look any way they like; it just needs a cup and a flame.

When children are done, place five of their squares in each basket. (Make sure five are in each basket, using chalices you have drawn.)

Assign five participants to a basket and have each group of five go to a different area of the room. Each player throws the squares up from the basket and tries to catch them all in the basket. The object is to gain points by having your throw with the most chalices facing up. Allow each participant to keep track of their own score. Participants take turns throwing until someone reaches ten points. Score as follows:

5 chalices face up = 10 points

4 chalices face up = 4 points

3 chalices face up = 3 points

2 chalices face up = 2 points

1 chalice face up = 1 points

After the game, re-gather participants and ask:

- How is playing a game like giving every person a voice? (Everyone gets a turn, it is orderly, and no one has a better chance than anyone else.)
- Do you think people playing a game like this one helped the Zuni live better with each other? Why or why not?

## Including All Participants

Invite a child who is physically unable to toss the basket of squares to keep track of the score for a group of five players, and/or have a partner toss up the basket for them.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: POSTER, FOURTH PRINCIPLE

10 minutes

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, Poster - Fourth Principle [405]
- Crayons and/or color markers

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

### Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite children to think about an example they can draw of the fourth Principle. Say the fourth Principle together: "Each person is free to search for what is true and right in life."

# TAKING IT HOME

Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, goes everywhere. — Theodore Parker, 19th-century Unitarian minister and abolitionist

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** children learned about the Unitarian Universalist Principle about being free to search for what is true and right. A play, "Many Paths to God," showed that many people have different beliefs that meet the same spiritual needs. We made a collage of our own personal symbols and played a game with our Unitarian Universalist symbol, the chalice. Children experienced that everyone is free to develop their own beliefs and that the differences each brings are celebrated.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Ask your child to retell the story "Many Paths to God." Then invite family members to talk about their beliefs. Does everyone in the family have similar beliefs? Do adults in the family have beliefs that differ from the beliefs of their parents?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Children thought of symbols that represent who they are. Explore your home. What symbols are in your home? What do they represent? Do you have symbols from many different religions? Identify the religions that are represented in your home.

**A Family Adventure.** Visit and worship in a denomination of friends or relatives. What symbols do you see? What do the symbols stand for? How do their beliefs seem to differ from yours? Their values?

**Family Discovery.** As a family, choose another religion to study, perhaps one you are not familiar with at all. At a local library or in your congregational library, find age-appropriate books on the religion.

**A Family Game.** Guess the Symbol: Ask each person to find a small object they think symbolizes them. Have everyone secretly bring their symbol to a central place. Then, re-gather and try to guess which family member has chosen each item as a symbol.

**A Family Ritual.** Find a book of prayers or meditations from many different religions. Read a different one each night at the dinner table or at bedtime. Vary the religious traditions as much as possible.

# MANY PATHS TO GOD

By Mary Ann Moore

*Adapted from "Many Paths to God" in Hide and Seek with God (Skinner House Books, 1994). Used with permission.*

## **Narrator:**

Once upon a time, four travelers from different lands met near a mountain. The travelers had been told that if they climbed the mountain, they would find God at the top. Around the bottom of the mountain were many paths to choose from. The travelers had each been told beforehand which of the paths to take. They also had been told that only that path would bring them to God.

The travelers met each other at the bottom of the mountain and told each other of their search for God.

## **Puppet Number 1:**

I am trying to find God. I have been told that of all these paths, the right path to take is that one, the flowery meadow path. I have been told that if I follow it, at the top I will find God, the Great Mother of All.

## **Puppet Number 2:**

That's interesting. I have been told that the right path to take is that steep, cliff-side path over there, and if I follow it, at the top I will find God, the Great Father in Heaven.

## **Puppet Number 3:**

Strange that we have all been told to follow different paths. I have been told that the right path is that wide river valley path, and if I follow it, at the top I will find God, the Great Spirit in All Things.

## **Puppet Number 4:**

Yes, this is strange. I have been told to follow even a different path. My path is the deep forest path, and I'm told if I follow it, at the top I will find God, the Great Peaceful Silence.

## **Narrator:**

The travelers were surprised to hear about the other paths, because they were sure the path they had been told to follow was the only right one. They even tried to convince the others to follow their chosen path.

## **Puppet Number 1:**

I'm sure my way is the right one.

## **Puppet Number 2:**

Change your minds and come my way.

**Puppet Number 3:**

Don't you think it would be best for you to come this way?

**Puppet Number 4:**

You really ought to take the forest path.

**Narrator:**

But none would change. Each was sure that their way was the right way. So, bidding each other good-bye, they began their journeys to the top. As they started out, each was singing a song of praise to God. They could hear each other's songs in the distance and they all thought the other songs sounded strange. But off they went on their chosen paths. They soon were traveling alone and could no longer hear any of the others. Sometimes following the path was easy and sometimes it was hard.

Finally, each traveler neared the top of the mountain. They began to hear the other travelers' songs once again, but now they realized how beautiful the others' songs were, even though they were very different than their own. All four came to the top within minutes of each other. They stopped and eagerly looked around.

**Puppet Number 1:**

Oh, Great Mother of All, I have found you!

**Puppet Number 2:**

Oh, Great Father in Heaven, I have found you!

**Puppet Number 3:**

Oh, Great Spirit in All Things, I have found you!

**Puppet Number 4:**

Oh, Great Peaceful Silence, I have found you!

**Narrator:**

But all of them were seeing and calling out to the same God. Then they realized that they had all been searching for the same thing, though each had called it by a different name and each had taken a different path. At this, they reached out for each other's hands, formed a circle right there on the top of the mountain, and began to sing again. And now, as each of them sang their songs, there seemed to be only one song, a joyous song of love for God.



## COLORING SHEET

"Many Paths to God" (PDF [404])

Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

"Many Paths to God" Love Surrounds Us, Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

# HANDOUT 1: POSTER, FOURTH PRINCIPLE

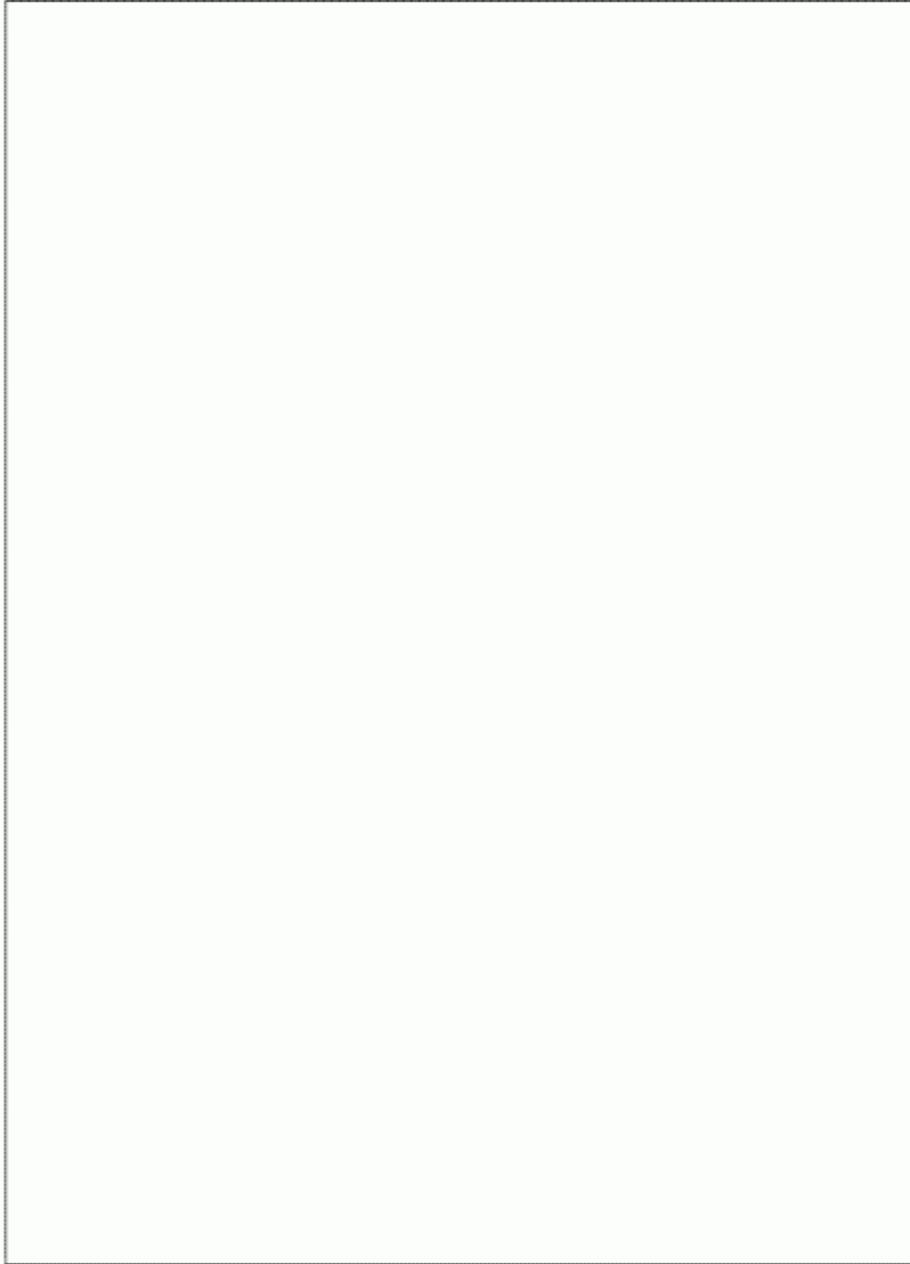
Unitarian Universalist Fourth Principle

Each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[406\]](#) for printing.

## **Unitarian Universalist Fourth Principle**



**Each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.**

## FIND OUT MORE

Books for adults that represent a wide variety of religious beliefs in prose and poetry include *The Enlightened Heart* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989) and *The Enlightened Mind* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), both edited by Stephen Mitchell.

Books with meditations and prayers are *A Grateful Heart*, edited by M.J. Ryan (Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 1994) and *Earth Prayers From Around the World*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

A children's book on world religions is *The Kids Book of World Religions* by Jennifer Glossop (Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 2003).

## SESSION 10: OUR WORDS MATTER

# INTRODUCTION

You must leave righteous ways behind, not to speak of unrighteous ways. — Buddha

Unitarian Universalism is known for its commitment to social justice. Introducing social justice to children is an important way to explain what our faith values. This session introduces the fifth Principle, our belief that everyone deserves a vote in matters that concern them. By teaching participants to speak out and to make sure others are heard, we are preparing Unitarian Universalists for a lifetime of social service and justice-seeking.

The theme of this session is "This is a place where you are loved and your opinions matter." The children learn that UU congregations intentionally make space for everyone's point of view on matters concerning the congregation as well as on issues that affect the community and the whole world. The story, based on a Sioux legend, presents a way to assure everyone is heard in a group conversation. Participants make individual talking sticks to use in this group and at home. They think about loving and respecting all people that they encounter.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist fifth Principle idea that everyone deserves a vote (a voice) about the things that concern them
- Engage children to value and practice allowing everyone to express their thoughts and feelings
- Affirm that in our congregations, everyone is loved and their voices welcomed, regardless of their opinions.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn and practice our Unitarian Universalist belief that everyone's opinion matters
- Experience ways to make sure everyone has a voice during discussions, through a story based on a Sioux legend and a talking stick activity.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Feather Toss	10
Activity 2: Story — The Talking Stick	10
Activity 3: Talking Sticks	30
Faith in Action: A Voice for Children	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Animal Skin Picture Story	15
Alternate Activity 2: Talking Stick Practice	10
Alternate Activity 3: Heart Ribbon Magnet	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In a Unitarian Universalist congregation, voting on issues and sharing opinions are integral to membership. You may have been involved in serious discussions at your congregation about important issues of finances or ministerial leadership. Think about how discussions and voting take place in your congregation. Have you felt heard and respected, even when you do not agree with a majority? How can you teach the children to make room for every voice? If you have felt unheard in your congregation, how can you keep negative feelings from interfering with your leadership of this session? Would you like to be better able to hear others' opinions when you disagree? How can you do that?

Now reflect on the children and how they might respond to the story and the activities. How can you help them understand the importance of having a say about the things that concern them? Relax and make yourself ready to help the children love others and feel loved.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Drawing paper and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.
- Set drawing paper and crayons on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite each child to draw what it is like when someone is listening to them.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair.

# OPENING

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Blue cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Tell them blue represents the fifth Principle. Have them find the blue ribbon and say the Principle together: "Everyone deserves a say about things that concern them."

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (Each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red). Ask if they remember the second Principle (We believe all people should be treated fairly) and its color (orange). Ask if they remember the third Principle (We accept all people and we learn together) and its color (yellow) and the fourth Principle (Each person is free to search for what is true and right in life) and its color (green).

Lead the opening chant:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together and come back to the circle.

When all the children have returned to the circle, say "Now we will light the chalice, the symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith." Light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## **Including All Participants**

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: FEATHER TOSS

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Feathers, real or synthetic, about ten inches in length
- Modeling clay
- Color markers
- If outdoors: Chalk, or a hula hoop
- If indoors: Newsprint, scissors, marker, and masking tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Find an open location for this game.
  - If possible, identify a parking lot or sidewalk location where you can play, and draw a chalk circle about three feet in diameter, and a smaller circle inside it.
  - If you will be indoors, cut a large paper circle (about three feet in diameter) from newsprint and tape it to the ground. Draw a smaller circle inside it.

## Description of Activity

This game, believed to have originated with the Hopi and Zuni American Indian tribes, invites participants to move and play before the quiet activities of hearing a story and making an art project.

Gather the children at work tables. Tell them they will see one way Hopi and Zuni Indians worked and played together. Tell them the feather toss game was fun to play and trained the Hopi and the Zuni to be accurate throwers, a skill which helped them in hunting and in battle.

Give each child a feather and a bit of clay about the size of a large marble. Have them roll the clay into a ball and push the sharp tip of their feather into the ball so it stays put. Have them mark their feathers with a marker to distinguish theirs from the rest.

If you can be outdoors, this activity is best on a sidewalk or parking lot surface: With chalk, draw a large circle about three feet in diameter and a smaller circle in the center. On grass, use a hula hoop. If unable to go outdoors, use paper taped to the floor with a circle drawn on it.

Invite each participant to toss their feather into the circle. The one closest to the center wins. Depending on time, you might play several rounds. Save a few minutes to process with these questions:

- What skills might people get better at, if they played this game?
- Does this game teach patience? How so?

Note how participants responded to their own tosses and to others. Take this opportunity to reflect with the group how they behaved. Affirm positive behavior and gently remind the group of the importance of respectful interaction.

## Including All Participants

Choose a location to play the game that is accessible to all participants. As needed, help children roll the clay and set the feather in it. Ask volunteers to help toss the feather, if other children want assistance.

# ACTIVITY 2: STORY, THE TALKING STICK

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Talking Stick \[407\]](#)"
- Optional: "[The Talking Stick](#)" coloring sheet [408], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story.
- Optional: Using instructions in Activity 3, Talking Sticks, make a sample talking stick. Set it aside to show the children at the end of the story.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\) \[408\]](#). Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

The story retells a Lakota Sioux legend. When the U.S. government began settling on the native peoples' homelands, the Sioux, including the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota tribes, occupied the Great Plains, a part of North America that includes grasslands, hills, and streams but not a lot of forests. Summers for them were hot and the winter was long and cold. The Sioux culture centered on using horses to hunt buffalo for food.

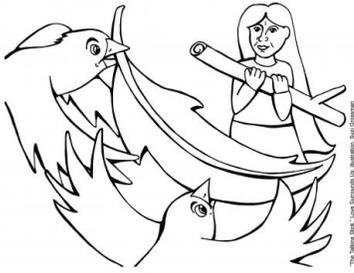
Gather participants so that they can see and hear the leader telling the story.

Tell the children you will tell them a very old legend from the Sioux tribe of American Indians—a story that explains how the Sioux began using talking sticks in their tribal meetings. If you have a talking stick to use as an example, conceal it until the end of the story when the grandmother makes the first talking stick.

Read or tell the story. Once you have finished, lead a discussion with these questions:

- Whose idea was the talking stick?
- Who was the first human to make a talking stick?
- What was the eagle trying to do by suggesting talking sticks?

- What gave the eagle the idea for making talking sticks?
- Can you think of any other object the grandmother could have made to use the same way?



Download a [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [408] for "The Talking Stick."

# ACTIVITY 3: TALKING STICKS

30 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Small diameter sticks or dead branches from trees or bushes, or dowels cut to 12-inch lengths - one for each participant plus a few extra
- Small feathers, real or synthetic
- String, yarn, or cord in assorted colors and textures
- Buttons
- Markers, glue, and scissors (including left-handed scissors)
- Optional: Small bells and seashells

## Preparation for Activity

- Break or cut branches into approximately 12-inch sections.
- Make one talking stick to show as an example.
- Set materials on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Participants make personal talking sticks like those made in the story.

Invite participants to each take a stick and choose materials to decorate it with. Let participants know that their talking stick can look any way they like: They can tie feathers, bells, and buttons to the stick and place them so that when the stick moves they create a sound. They can wrap their sticks with string. They can color the sticks with markers.

Remind participants that talking sticks are not waved around or used in any other way than being passed around a circle. They are used in sacred circles and are not used as weapons.

Talking sticks should be left to dry overnight if needed. If applicable, tell participants the group will use the sample talking stick in a future session.

## Including All Participants

Help tie knots or bows on the sticks, as needed. Ask co-leaders or volunteer participants to help younger participants or participants with physical limitations make a talking stick.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

### Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

### Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the participants who participated in the session today. Did they understand how talking sticks can be useful? Did participants understand that everyone should have a chance to voice their opinions? Are there ways that you can encourage participants to use talking sticks in future sessions? Does anyone need more assistance in crafts? Are there participants who could help others? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: A VOICE FOR CHILDREN

0 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Choose a shelter for homeless families or another agency that serves children.
- Contact the agency and ascertain what their needs are for the children.
- Choose a project to start with participants and their families. If you wish participants to have direct contact with the agency's clients, check with the agency about any age restrictions they have for volunteers.

## Description of Activity

This activity invites participants to think about children who do not have a say about where they live or what personal belongings they can have. Explain that they will help other children who do not have homes by providing a special party (or making sure the children get a special toy or game). Consider a pizza party, a game night, or a craft night that can be organized and attended by session participants and their families. Consider a gently used toy collection at your congregation and ask participants and their families to deliver the toys to the agency.

## Including All Participants

Choose an activity that is accessible for all participants, their families, and (if applicable) agency clients. If the project requires a gathering outside of regular group meeting times, arrange carpooling so anyone wishing to participate has transportation.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ANIMAL SKIN PICTURE STORY

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Plain, brown paper grocery bags
- Markers in a variety of colors

## Preparation for Activity

- Tear brown bags into pieces at least 8 1/2x11 inches. Make enough for all participants. Tear the edges roughly to make each page look like an animal skin.
- Set out markers for children to share.

## Description of Activity

This activity uses an American Indian technique for sharing a story.

Give each child a torn sheet of brown paper. Invite them to think of a story about a time when they felt their opinion mattered. Tell the children some Native American peoples used the skins of animals the way we use paper, to draw pictures that tell a story. Ask children to use the markers to draw their story, using only pictures. After everyone is done, ask volunteers to share their stories.

Process by asking:

- How did it feel to have people listen to your story?
- Do you listen to other's stories and opinions?
- Why is it important that we listen to each other's stories?

Affirm that it is important that we respect people's stories and opinions.

## Including All Participants

Be prepared to tear paper for participants who are unable to do so. Encourage participants to draw very simple pictures. Help participants who may need it think of a story to tell and perhaps suggest picture symbols that will tell their story.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: TALKING STICK PRACTICE

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A talking stick made in Activity 3, or another decorated or plain stick

## Preparation for Activity

- Choose an issue related to the group or the congregation that is not too complicated for this age group to discuss—for example, what kind of snack would be good at coffee hour or their favorite song to sing in worship.

## Description of Activity

Participants practice using a talking stick to help them take turns in a discussion.

Gather the group in a circle around a table or on the floor. Briefly tell the participants what the subject is and let them know that everyone may give their opinion. Remind them that they are only allowed to speak when they are holding the talking stick.

Ask for a volunteer to be the first speaker. Hand them the stick and invite them to express their thoughts on the subject briefly. Then ask them to pass the stick to the person next to them so they can take their turn. Remind the group, as needed, that no one else may talk while another participant is holding the stick. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, take back the talking stick and set it aside. Ask the group:

- How did it feel to have to be quiet and listen?
- What did it feel like to hold the stick?
- Did it feel like everyone listened?
- Are there other times they wish they could use a talking stick when they have something to say? At home, at school, or with their friends? Or where else?

## Including All Participants

Allow participants to pass, but encourage them to say something about the subject if they can, even if it is not an opinion but simply a question or statement so they can hold the stick and be listened to by other participants.

If a participant cannot hold the stick, ask the child who is passing it to them to set it on their lap or in their hand.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HEART RIBBON MAGNET

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Felt hearts mounted on felt squares and magnets, assembled in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1
- A roll of 1/8-inch blue ribbon
- Extra felt, magnets, and ribbon (red, orange, yellow, and green) for new participants, plus glue, sharp scissors, and permanent marker

## Preparation for Activity

- Set on work tables the Heart Ribbon Magnets children began making in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1.
- Cut blue ribbon into 16-inch lengths and set on work tables.
- Review Session 2, Alternate Activity 1 to start Heart Ribbon Magnets for new participants.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects the color blue and the fifth Principle as children work on their Heart Ribbon Magnets—a reminder of the UU Principles they may take home at the close of the program.

Tell the children the blue ribbon represents the fifth UU Principle, "We believe everyone deserves a vote about the things that concern them." Demonstrate how to fold a length of blue ribbon in half, push the folded end into the hole on the side of the heart next to the green ribbon, and insert the two loose ends of blue ribbon through the loop formed by the folded end. Pull the blue ribbon through tightly.

Help any new children or visitors begin a Heart Ribbon Magnet, following instructions in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1, and add red, orange, yellow, green, and blue ribbons.

Set aside the magnets and remaining colors of ribbon for future sessions.

## Including All Participants

Partner very young children with an older child who can help them.

# TAKING IT HOME

You must leave righteous ways behind, not to speak of unrighteous ways. — Buddha

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** participants learned about the Unitarian Universalist fifth Principle, which says we are free to search for what is true and right. The group heard a Sioux legend about the tradition of passing a talking stick from person to person so everyone has a chance to speak. Children made their own talking sticks and played a game that is believed to have originated with the Zuni or Hopi Native Americans. This session demonstrated how everyone should have an opportunity to speak up for themselves or have others that can advocate for them.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** how you make decisions as a family. Does everyone get to vote? Do some people's votes count more than others? What are the reasons for this? How can we make sure everyone is heard in the family?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...** using the talking stick your child made today to reach a group decision in your home. It might be a simple decision such as what to have for dinner or what to do over the weekend. Make sure only the person holding the stick talks. Be sure everyone gets a turn holding the stick. Remind family members that only one person holds the stick to ensure only one person can speak at a time.

**A Family Adventure.** Spend time going through gently used toys. Ask each child in the family to choose at least five items to donate to a local non-profit that shelters children. If possible, have the children go to the agency when the toys are dropped off to help them understand what they are contributing to and how important it is. If the agency allows, tour where the children play and sleep. Afterward, discuss what the shelter was like. Would children want to live there? Why or why not? What would they miss most if they could not stay in their own home?

**Family Discovery.** Some schools have anonymous donation programs to help students who need school supplies or school clothes. Check with your child's school social worker or counselor and, once you discover the needs, ask the whole family to come up with a plan to help fill some needs. You may decide to contribute \$1 a week anonymously—perhaps from children's allowance—to a fund to help.

**A Family Game.** Ask everyone in the family to choose a possession that they cannot live without such as a cell phone, a special toy, or the television. This is to simulate what it means not to have a home or the money to have such possessions. Make sure everyone chooses something that they use or play with every day so that they feel the absence. Choose a day that everyone will not use that possession. You may try 24, 12, or 8 hours without the items. Make sure it is a day that will allow the strict non-use of the item. For instance, if you choose the computer, make sure that it is not the day before a big research project is due at school. When the time is over, talk about what it was like not to have that thing. Did you discover you could live without it very easily? Or not? Did you find alternatives for the item? How did it feel not to have something special of your very own?

**A Family Ritual.** Start a nighttime ritual of naming the things you are thankful for before going to bed. Each person should list things individually, aloud or just to themselves. As an alternative, each family member can have a "Thankful Book" to keep by their bed with a pen or pencil and write what they are thankful for about that day before going to sleep. Older family members can help younger family members write. Try to list at least five things each day and find at least one thing that is different each day. You can always write "family," but maybe one particular day you may be thankful for the particular way a person helped you—a family member, or someone else such as a worker at a store or the library.

# THE TALKING STICK

*A retelling of a Sioux legend.*

This story was given to the native people many winters ago. When it was time for all of the young mothers in the village to go out to gather fruit and berries, the old grandmothers, whose legs could no longer walk quickly, were left to care for the young children of the village. The young mothers honored the grandmothers by giving them this great responsibility.

It is believed that young children have many dreams and visions to collect before they are grown. With the grandmothers close by, all the children took naps in the warmth of a darkened lodge before Sun had traveled his full path each day. On one of these days while the young children slept, Crow and Magpie, two noisy winged ones, were having a terrible argument outside the lodge of the sleeping children.

"Caaaw-caaaw," screamed Crow. "Kaaack-Kack," yelled Magpie.

They were both speaking at once and they could not hear each other's point of view on the subject of which tree belonged to which bird.

One of the grandmothers went to quiet the voices outside so they would not wake the children. She tried to scare the birds away. When she could not get the attention of the screaming Crow or yelling Magpie, she called on Eagle for help. Eagle, the great winged one, was a sacred bird for both the native people and all the other animals of the earth. He was also full of much wisdom and everyone looked to him to help them with their problems.

"Oh, brother Eagle, can you chase off these two noisy ones so our children can dream?" asked the grandmother.

With a mighty flap of his wings, Eagle sailed towards the noisy pair. He gave a call of warning to the Crow and Magpie as he came close, but they were so busy fighting they did not even hear him. When Eagle saw this he yelled louder and came closer, and that is when it happened.

"Caaaw-caaaw, Caaaw-caaaw," Crow screamed as he flapped his wings in the air so hard he nearly fell off his perch. "Kaaack-Kack," yelled Magpie as his wings too flapped up a storm.

Suddenly they both realized that they had flapped their wings so hard without looking at what they were doing, they hit one of Eagle's wings. What is worse, one of the sacred feathers from Eagle fell out and landed on a small branch, suspended above Mother Earth. It was a great offense to touch Eagle, much less cause one of his feathers to come off. Magpie spoke to Eagle.

"Oh, brother Eagle, we did not hear you so near. I am truly sorry for the injury I have caused you."

Now, Crow was surprised to hear such an honorable thing come from the mouth of this rude neighbor. He spoke to Eagle with dignity.

"I have many times been a naughty bird but, brother Eagle, I think this may be the worst I have done in many moons. I am very sorry you have lost a sacred feather."

Crow and Magpie both went to retrieve Eagle's feather and their eyes met and with no words at all they both knew that this mistake would not have happened if they had not been fighting. Magpie took the feather in his beak and spoke.

"I am ashamed, brother Eagle, that my loud talk and harsh words were more important to me than solving our problem."

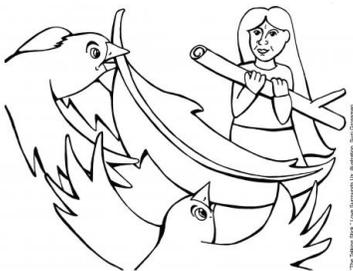
Crow took the feather from Magpie and said, "We have disturbed the two-legged children and torn from your wing a sacred feather and now we return it to you with a request for your forgiveness."

Eagle had watched all this with wise eyes and an open heart. He knew the lesson of listening had been learned by his little brothers and he saw that the grandmother looked on with learning eyes also.

So he said to Crow and Magpie, "Give my feather and the branch it rest on to the grandmother. Grandmother, connect to my sacred feather to the branch. Dress the branch with beads and leather and fur to make it even more beautiful. Keep it in your lodge and teach others to create this fine looking stick."

Eagle said, "We will call this sacred item a Talking Stick. Tell all the people that when they come together at any gathering where ears might be shut, to bring out the Talking Stick and let only the holder speak. This will be done in an honorable manner letting everyone have his say. Pass the stick until all have spoken. Then a vote can be taken and the side who gathers the most votes will make the final decision," said Eagle.

Grandmother gathered up the branch and the feather. She was very honored to have learned this lesson and every grandmother from that day on has told this story and helped the young ones to make Talking Sticks.



## COLORING SHEET

"The Talking Stick" (PDF) [408]

Illustration: Suzi Grossman

# FIND OUT MORE

## **Native American Traditions and Earth Prayers**

Books with meditations and prayers from American Indian traditions are *A Grateful Heart* edited by M.J. Ryan (Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 1994) and *Earth Prayers From Around the World* edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

# SESSION 11: HEAR OUR VOICES

# INTRODUCTION

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. — Anne Frank, in her diary, published in 1952

The theme of this session is "Making our voices heard can show love." Whether it is letter-writing campaigns, marches, or calls to our congressional representatives, every time we speak to support those with too little power, we are living our Unitarian Universalist Principles. The story in this session is a true story about Ruby Bridges who, at six years old, became a hero of the Civil Rights movement. Ruby was the first African American child to integrate an all-white school in Louisiana. The session focuses on helping participants discover what gifts or talents they have to offer to others to build a loving community.

Unitarian Universalists strongly believe in speaking up for and with those who are not being heard. In many congregations, it is just not adults who speak up but children, too. By encouraging our children to speak for those whose voices are not being heard, we help them understand that just one voice can make a difference and we should never feel that what little we can do is not valuable.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist fifth Principle, that everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them
- Teach that participants can make a difference in others' lives even with what we think are small actions
- Foster empathy.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Hear a story about a young girl who took the initiative to help when she saw a basic unmet need
- Affirm the gifts they have to offer the world around them.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Ruby Bridges, Surrounded by Love	10
Activity 2: What's in Your Bucket?	15
Activity 3: Song — I'm Unique and Unrepeatable	5
Activity 4: Giving Machine	20
Faith in Action: Service Fair	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Greeting Cards	15
Alternate Activity 2: Charm Bracelet	20
Alternate Activity 3: Poster — Fifth Principle	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In our very busy lives, it can be difficult to believe that even a small gesture can make a difference in someone's life. We may even believe that we don't have any talents to offer. Think about small gestures you have made in the past that really did have an impact. How did you feel? Have you ever felt that you simply don't have any time or money to help another person? What volunteer activities do you hope to participate in, in the future? How can you make it happen? How can you teach children that they have their own gifts that can be used to help others?

Have you ever been on the receiving end of a kind gesture? Reflect on how you felt. You may choose to share this story with the group to demonstrate how simple a gesture can be and still make a difference. In what ways can you help participants understand that even young children can really make an impact in the world? Relax and make yourself ready to help participants discover their own gifts to share.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite them to find the blue ribbon on their ribbon stick.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair.

# OPENING

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Blue cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Remind them that they will learn all the UU Principles and that each Principle will have a different color. Tell them blue represents the fifth Principle. Have them find the blue ribbon and say the Principle together: "Everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them."

Ask participants if anyone can remember the first Principle (Each and every person is important). Ask if they remember what color we assigned to the first Principle (red). Ask if they remember the second Principle (We believe all people should be treated fairly) and its color (orange). Ask if they remember the third Principle (We accept all people and we learn together) and its color (yellow) and the fourth Principle (Each person is free to search for what is true and right in life) and its color (green).

Lead the opening chant:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together and come back to the circle.

When all the children have returned to the circle, say "Now we will light the chalice, the symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith." Light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## **Including All Participants**

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY, RUBY BRIDGES, SURROUNDED BY LOVE

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Ruby Bridges, Surrounded by Love \[409\]](#)"
- Optional: "[Ruby Bridges](#)" [coloring sheet \[410\]](#), and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\) \[410\]](#) for "Ruby Bridges, Surrounded by Love." Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

Gather the children. Ask them how they felt when they first went to a new school or a new place. Affirm that even when they are new, they can make a difference. Tell them you will share a true story about a brave little girl who went someplace new, even when she was not sure others wanted her there.

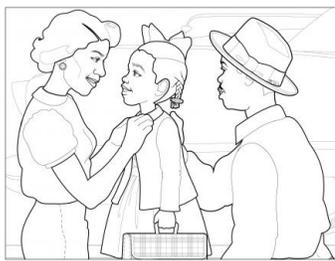
Read or tell the story of Ruby Bridges.

When you are done, process the story with these questions:

- What do you think about Ruby Bridges? Do you think she was brave?
- What about her white teacher, Barbara? She was the only person willing to teach an African American child in the all-white school.
- What did you think about Ruby praying for the angry people who yelled at her and threatened her? Do you think that would be hard to do?

- The story is called "Ruby Bridges, Surrounded by Love." Why do you think it is called that? Do you think Ruby was surrounded by love? When was she and when was she not? (If you are using the [coloring sheet \[411\]](#) for this story, guide children to notice how it depicts the surrounding love of Ruby's parents. Also, you might note that Ruby surrounded others with love when she prayed for them even though those people did not show love to Ruby.)
- As a Unitarian Universalist, what would you do to this situation? If you were a white child in that school, would you have gone to class, even if others didn't? Would you have gone to support Ruby?

Affirm that Unitarian Universalists work for things to be more fair. When others are not treated fairly we support them. Ruby acted bravely to get justice for herself and to give others a voice and a choice about which schools they would attend. Ruby acted with courage and love. Her teacher, Barbara, also showed courage and love in supporting Ruby.



Download a coloring sheet ([PDF](#)) [410] by illustrator Nancy Devard for the story, "Ruby Bridges, Surrounded by Love."

# ACTIVITY 2: WHAT'S IN YOUR BUCKET?

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A small plastic bucket, such as a sand pail

## Preparation for Activity

- Gather participants in a seated circle.
- Keep the bucket within your reach.

## Description of Activity

This activity gives participants an opportunity to think about what they have to offer to the world. Show participants the bucket you have brought and ask them what they think might be inside. Allow some guesses. Then, tell them it is a bucket of gifts but not the kind you open. Tell them a few of your gifts as examples: loving children, playing the piano, making people smile. You might mime putting your gifts in the bucket.

Ask the following discussion questions:

- What are some of the gifts or talents that people in the room have?
- What kinds of gifts or talents might we bring to church in a bucket?
- What kinds of things might we take home with us?
- Do you feel you have a full bucket when you come to our congregation?
- When you go home?
- What kinds of things fill our bucket when we gather?

Affirm for participants the gifts they have to offer. Tell them they fill their buckets and each others', when we come together as Unitarian Universalists.

## Including All Participants

Suggest examples of gifts to participants if they have trouble thinking of their own.

# ACTIVITY 3: SONG, I'M UNIQUE AND UNREPEATABLE

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Large roll of paper and markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Practice singing the song so you can teach it to the children; it uses the tune "Ten Little Children".
- Write the words to the song on paper in large letters and post.

## Description of Activity

This song reminds us we are all unique.

Ask participants to stand and tell them you are going to teach them a song about being special. It is called "I'm Unique and Unrepeatable." Ask participants if they know the song "Ten Little Children" (one little, two little, three little children... ). Sing a portion of the song to remind them what the tune sounds like. Tell participants that the music is the same in this new song, but they will use new words.

Sing through the song once for them. Then invite participants to join you. Call out the first word of each verse to help them remember the song (e.g. "I'm," "You're," "We're").

### Verse 1

I'm unique and unrepeatable, I'm unique and unrepeatable, I'm unique and unrepeatable, I'm glad to be me!

### Verse 2

You're unique and unrepeatable, You're unique and unrepeatable, You're unique and unrepeatable, I'm glad that you're you!

### Verse 3

We're unique and unrepeatable; we're unique and unrepeatable,

We're unique and unrepeatable, we're glad to be us!

Note: This song was introduced by Jan Evans-Tiller in the curriculum *We Believe*, 2nd ed. (Unitarian Universalist Association, 1998).

# Including All Participants

If any children cannot stand and sing, include them in a seated circle.

# ACTIVITY 4: GIVING MACHINE

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers
- Construction paper in a variety of colors, scissors (including left-handed scissors), and glue
- Newspapers or magazines with pictures to cut out

## Preparation for Activity

- Plan how you will form small groups of three to five and give each group a work area.

## Description of Activity

Participants work as a team to make a picture about their gifts.

Form small groups at work tables or on the floor. Give each group a sheet of newsprint, a set of markers, and collage materials. Explain that each group will make a gift machine. Ask them, as a group to draw a machine in the middle of the newsprint. On one side, ask the participants to show themselves going into the machine. On the other side of the machine, tell participants to show what gifts they would like to have. For instance, one participant may wish they could play the guitar for people; they might draw a guitar or find a picture of one to paste coming out of the machine. When every group is finished, gather the entire group together and have each small group explain their machines.

Process the activity with these questions:

- Are your gifts something you could really have someday, or are they imaginary?
- If the gifts you wished for are real, how they might you go about acquiring that talent or gift?
- Are any of you working toward their gift goal? How? (For example, perhaps someone is taking guitar lessons.)
- If your gift was imaginary, why did you want that gift? Could you accomplish the same goal with a real gift? (For example, if someone wanted to be able to fly to save people in trouble, is there another, real way they could have the gift of helping people in trouble?)

## Including All Participants

Leaders may need to help tie knots or bows on the sticks. For younger participants or participants with physical limitations, ask other participants or leaders help make a talking stick.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

### Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

### Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about participants who participated in the session today. Did they understand what a gift is? Were participants able to identify gifts they have? Was this a positive experience for all of the participants? Are there ways you can encourage participants to remember that we all have gifts which can make a difference in the world, no matter how small our gifts may seem? Does anyone need more assistance in crafts? Are there participants who could help others? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: SERVICE FAIR

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Names and contact numbers for local organizations, including other faith communities, that might need volunteers

## Preparation for Activity

- Contact your congregational leadership for permission to hold a service fair. Set a date and time, preferably just after a Sunday worship service to attract maximum attendance.
- Contact the service organizations and invite them to set up a table at your fair or to provide materials such as posters and newsletters to display at the fair. Ask organizational representatives to staff their tables for an hour or so while members of the congregation peruse all the volunteer opportunities. Ask participants and their family members to staff tables for organizations that cannot send someone to your fair.
- Advertise the service fair in congregational communications. Have the children create posters announcing the event.
- For the fair, set up tables in a large room. Be sure to arrange for adults to help set up.

## Description of Activity

Participants volunteer themselves, and have the opportunity to encourage others in your congregation to become volunteers.

Explain that the fair can help match people with particular gifts with an organization or group that needs help. Consider offering refreshments and having participants set up and serve. Business cards, flyers, brochures, and/or sign-up sheets should all be part of the display. Remember, that this may be an ideal opportunity for getting volunteers for various needs in your congregation, such as helping with mailings or child care.

At the close of your fair, facilitate organizations to follow up with interested volunteers. Publicly thank the organizations that were present; you might report in your congregational newsletter or on your website how many organizations attended the service fair and how many people signed up to volunteer with a service organization.

## Including All Participants

If participants have limited mobility or abilities, pair them with an adult at a table. If some participants are unavailable for the fair day, consider asking them to sign "thank you" notes after the fair to send to organizations and groups that were present.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: GREETING CARDS

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Pre-cut, blank greeting cards or plain paper
- Envelopes
- Markers
- Names and addresses of selected card recipients

## Preparation for Activity

- Ask a minister or your pastoral care committee for the names and addresses of people who could use a card to cheer them up.
- Set materials on work tables to share.

## Description of Activity

Sometimes a simple hello in a card can make a huge difference to someone who is lonely or hurting.

Ask each participant to make a card that would make someone smile. The cards should be very general so any card can be sent to any of the people on your list. Make sure that if children write any words, their messages are "thinking of you," or "hello," or something else general. Flowers, colorful balloons, or the sun are all easy objects to draw and make colorful. Some children may have time to make more than one card.

Have each participant sign their cards. Below the child's name, write "Made by the K-1 Love Surrounds Us religious education group."

As children finish, address and stamp the envelopes and explain to the participants that their cards will be sent to people in the congregation who need a smile. Process this activity by talking about why it is important that we reach out to those who may be hurting, even if we don't know them.

## Including All Participants

Be prepared to help participants draw or write on their cards. Encourage participants to draw very simple pictures. Help participants who may need it think of a design for their card.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CHARM BRACELET

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Index cards, scissors, and one-hole punch
- Colored paper clips, small size
- Newspapers or magazines with a variety of pictures and words to cut up, scissors (including left-handed scissors), and glue sticks

## Preparation for Activity

- Cut index cards into shapes such as circles, squares, triangles, and diamonds. Make shapes no more than one and a half inches in diameter. Punch one hole at the top of each shape. Make enough shapes for each participant to have at least five "charms."
- Set materials for all participants to reach.

## Description of Activity

Participants make charm bracelets to wear that represent their gifts and talents.

Invite participants to link clips together to make a bracelet around their wrist that is not tight, but will not fall off their hand. They can use one color or a combination of colors. Then, ask them to find and cut out pictures and words in magazines that describe their gifts and talents. The pictures need to be small enough to fit on the index card "charms." Help the children glue their pictures and words to the shapes, with a different picture or word on each side. They may choose to put a picture on one side and a word on the other side. Show them how to attach a paper clip to a finished charm and then attach the charm to the bracelet.

If you have time, gather the group and invite volunteers to share what is on their charm bracelets and how it describes them.

## Including All Participants

Be ready to help participants with the paper clips and/or cutting and gluing the pictures.

When you share, allow participants to pass.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: POSTER, FIFTH PRINCIPLE

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Poster - Fifth Principle](#) [412]
- Crayons and/or color markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

## Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite children to think about an example they can draw of the fifth Principle. Say the fifth Principle together: "We believe everyone deserves a vote about the things that concern them."

# TAKING IT HOME

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. — Anne Frank, in her diary, published in 1952

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the participants learned about the Unitarian Universalist Principle about being able to vote about things (have a say in) that concern them, in the context of making our voices heard in support of people who are not being heard. We shared a true story about Ruby Bridges, the six-year-old African American girl who became the first to integrate a previously all-white school in Louisiana during the Civil Rights era.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** the gifts members of your family have to offer one another. Make sure everyone in the family has at least one gift identified by the family. How can your family work together to share your gifts with one another?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Participants were asked to think about what they have to offer to their congregational community. Think about how the gifts they identified could be put to work in the congregation. Help family members to find a way they can contribute as a congregational volunteer.

**Family Adventure.** Find a local agency that accepts families volunteering together and arrange a time to volunteer. If members of the family have special talents, such as playing an instrument, artistic abilities, or flower arranging, find an agency where you can share these gifts, for example, by performing a concert for clients. Afterward, discuss what the experience was like. Did everyone feel they made a difference during their volunteer time? Did anyone learn they could do something they had not known they could do? Did they learn something new? Were they proud of what they had to offer? Are there other gifts they would like to share in the community?

**A Family Game.** Name It! All participants get a paper and writing utensil. Ask everyone in the family to think of all the things they do well and list them on their paper. Have older children or parents help younger children as needed. Allow about five minutes for everyone to think of as many things as possible. Then, every person reads their list. If other family members think of other things to add to someone else's list, make sure they get added to the list. This game will help everyone remember they have a lot of things to offer and remind them of things that they perhaps don't realize they can do. Encourage everyone to keep their list and read it when they are feeling particularly low or discouraged.

**A Family Ritual.** Start a mealtime ritual in which each family member acknowledges something nice the person to their left did that day. For instance, "John said 'Good morning' to the bus driver." If possible, switch seats or go in different directions periodically so each family member isn't always speaking about the same person.

# RUBY BRIDGES, SURROUNDED BY LOVE

By Janeen K Grohsmeyer

When Ruby Bridges was six years old and in the first grade, just like many other children, she went to a new school. Ruby's school was called William Frantz Elementary School. It was in the City of New Orleans in the state of Louisiana.

And, just like other children, Ruby was nervous about the first day of school. She knew everything was going to be different: a new building, new teachers, new rules, new things to learn, new children to play with, and (she hoped) new friends.

But, unlike other children, Ruby didn't go to school by walking or riding in her parents' car or in a school bus. Ruby went to school in a police car, followed by people from her neighborhood to help keep her safe. Ruby walked to the front door of her school surrounded by four tall men who had guns and wore armbands with the words "U.S. Marshal" on their sleeves.

Because Ruby wasn't just like the other children at William Frantz Elementary School. She was the only African American child in the entire school, and some people didn't think she should be there.

You see, Ruby started first grade in 1960, about fifty years ago. Back then, in some parts of the United States, children with different skin colors went to different schools. There were schools for children with dark skin, and there with schools for children with light skin. That was called segregation.

Some people liked segregation, but other people knew it wasn't fair. Our government had made a law that said all children—no matter what their skin color—should be able to go to the same school. That is called integration.

The parents at William Frantz Elementary School who liked segregation did not like integration. Because Ruby had dark skin, they thought she didn't belong at the school. They kept their children home from school, away from her. Ruby was the only student in her class. She didn't have anyone to play with or to talk to, except for her teacher, all day long.

And every day, those people who didn't like integration would go to Ruby's school, and they would yell horrible, mean things at her. Some called her names. One woman threatened to poison her. Sometimes they would even throw rocks or eggs or tomatoes, trying to keep her away from the school.

Yet every day, Ruby Bridges would go to that school. She would get dressed and eat breakfast and get ready for school, and then her mother would say, "I'm proud of you," and her father would say, "You're my brave little girl," and they would all say, "I love you" to each other.

Every day, her neighbors would surround the police car that Ruby was riding in, and the four U.S. Marshals would surround her as she walked through that crowd of angry people, to help keep her safe.

And every day, Ruby would say a prayer—but not for herself. Ruby prayed for the angry people who yelled at her, asking God to forgive them and to change their minds. When Ruby Bridges was surrounded by hate, she surrounded everyone with love.

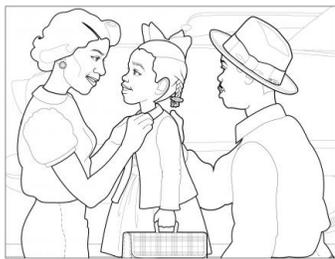
After a while, it worked.

The next year, when Ruby Bridges was seven years old and starting the second grade, the angry crowd of people wasn't there anymore. She didn't have to ride in a police car. There were no U.S. Marshals surrounding her. People let their children go to William Frantz Elementary School, even though Ruby was there.

When Ruby went to her classroom on that first day of second grade, there were twenty other children. Some of them had dark skin, like her. Some of them would be her friends. Integration had happened, and William Frantz Elementary School was a school for all children, no matter what color skin they had.

Fifty years ago, Ruby Bridges helped to integrate a school, and integration helped make our country more fair for everyone. Today, Ruby Bridges is all grown-up, and she travels to schools all over the country, telling her story and teaching people to respect and appreciate each other.

Each of us can be like Ruby. We can all surround each other with love.



### COLORING SHEET

"Ruby Bridges" (PDF) [410]

Illustration: Nancy Devard

# HANDOUT 1: POSTER, FIFTH PRINCIPLE

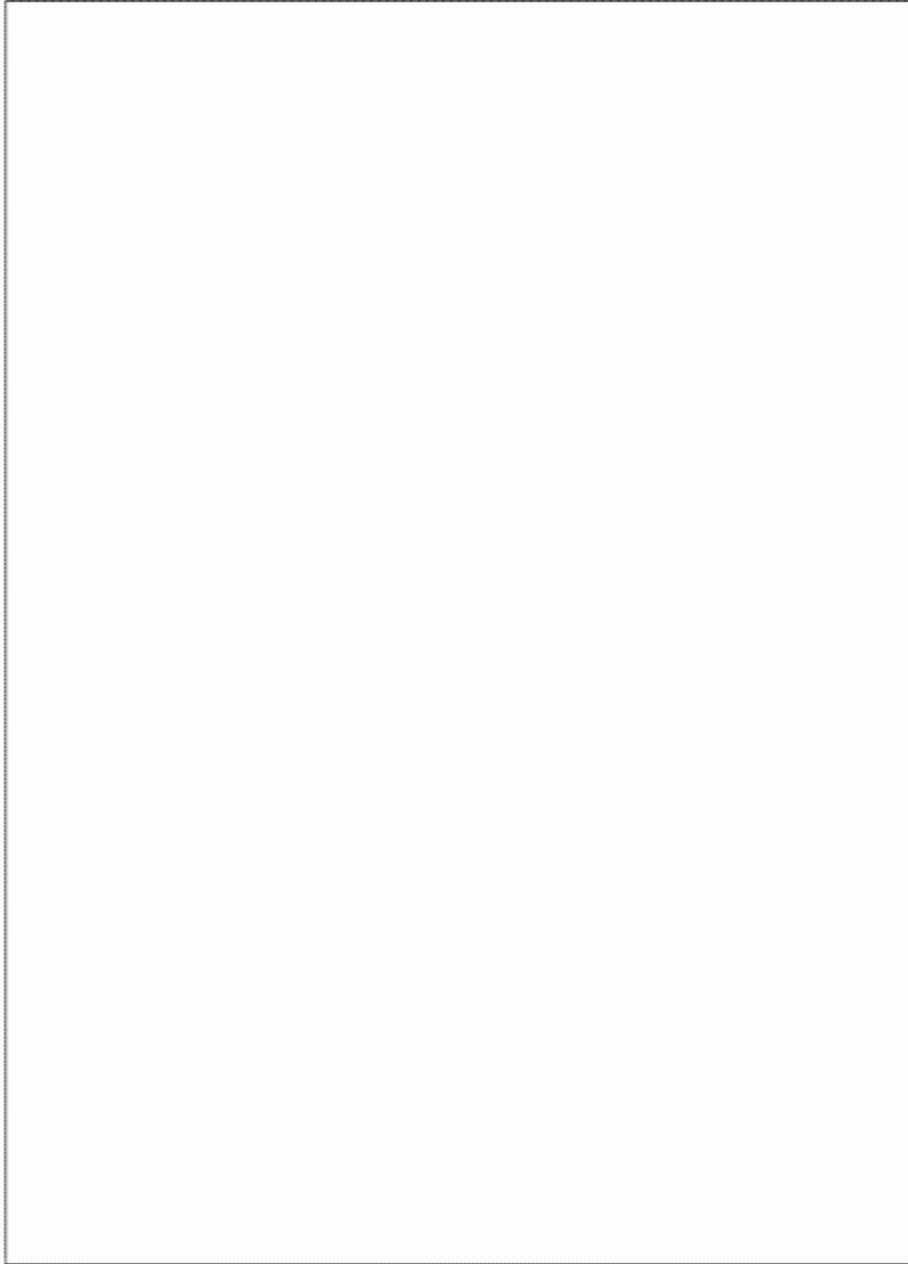
Unitarian Universalist Fifth Principle

We believe everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[413\]](#) for printing.

## **Unitarian Universalist Fifth Principle**



**We believe everyone deserves a vote  
about things that concern them**

# FIND OUT MORE

## Ruby Bridges

Ruby Bridges finished at William Frantz and went to an integrated high school. For fifteen years she worked as a travel agent in New Orleans. She married Malcolm Hall, and they have four sons. In the early 1990s she became a volunteer at the William Frantz Elementary School, helping the students there. The picture book *The Story of Ruby Bridges* was published in 1995, and Ruby began giving speeches around the country. Contact the [Ruby Bridges Foundation](#) [414] for more information, or explore these books:

Bridges, Ruby. *Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story* (Scholastic, 2003). Illustrations include black and white photographs and the Norman Rockwell painting "The Problem We All Live With."

Bridges, Ruby. *Through My Eyes* (Scholastic Press, 1999). Contains contemporary newspaper articles, many photographs, and comments from Ruby, Mrs. Henry, Ruby's mother, and others. Good for older children and adults who want to learn more.

Coles, Robert. *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Scholastic Inc. 1995). Large enough to share in a story-telling circle.

["Interview with Ruby Bridges"](#) [415] on *Newshour* (PBS, 1997); get the transcript online.

"Ruby's Shoes," a song by Lori McKenna, can be [heard online](#) [416].

*Ruby Bridges*, 1998 Disney movie. Contains depictions of harassment and name-calling as Ruby goes to school.

## Picture Books on Social Action

*Somewhere Today: A Book of Peace* by Shelley Moore Thomas (Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman, 1998)

*The Other Side*, by Jacqueline Woodson (New York, Putnam, 2001).

# SESSION 12: A PEACEFUL AND FAIR WORLD

# INTRODUCTION

It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it. — Eleanor Roosevelt, 20th-century First Lady of the United States, in a 1951 radio broadcast

Kindergartners and first graders may not understand the abstract meaning of peace but they recognize their different feelings when there is fairness or unfairness. This session reinforces our sixth Principle, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world." Children explore ways to ensure everyone has the basic human needs of clothing, food, shelter, and love. Beginning with the beloved communities in their lives, participants explore what it means to work toward a peaceful, fair, and free world. They gain confidence in their ability to make a difference in the world as Unitarian Universalists acting on our sixth Principle.

## Goals

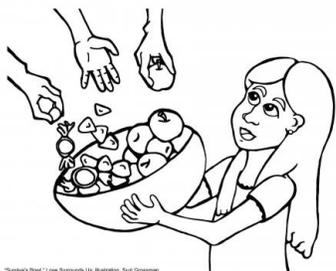
This session will:

- Introduce the sixth Principle, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world"
- Connect the sixth Principle to caring for beloved community
- Teach the four basic human needs.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Engage with a story of a community caring for one another
- Connect receiving and giving as they learn that a bowl is used for both
- Identify four basic human needs in relationship to the sixth Principle, "working for a peaceful, fair, and free world"
- Become confident, empowered peacemakers who act in accord with our sixth Principle.



## COLORING SHEET

In this session, children make music to help tell the story, "Supriya's Bowl." Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [417] for children to use before or after participating in the story or to take home with their Taking It Home handout.

## SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Peace Bowls	10
Activity 2: Story — Supriya's Bowl	15
Activity 3: Basic Needs for All	20
Faith in Action: Kid's Care for Basic Needs	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Pipe-cleaner Peace Symbols	10
Alternate Activity 2: Song — Peace Surrounds Us	10
Alternate Activity 3: Heart Ribbon Magnet	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

President Barack Obama, accepting a Nobel Prize for Peace in 2009 said "true peace is not just freedom from war, but freedom from want." Think about what this means in helping create true peace in the world. Sit and breathe deeply as you hold an empty bowl. Close your eyes and visualize what you truly need to fill the bowl. Open your eyes. How did you imagine what you really need? Was it easy or hard to think of your needs? Close your eyes again and visualize what you need to give. Imagine passing the bowl to others. What is in the bowl that you have to give?

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite them to find the indigo ribbon on their ribbon stick. Explain that indigo is a deep, bluish purple. As others arrive, engage participants to see who can remember the first five Principles and the colors represented on the ribbon stick.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair.

# OPENING

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Indigo cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Reinforce the first through fifth UU Principles and add the sixth Principle by repeating and matching the colors.

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Then, take a ribbon stick in your hand and invite the children to echo the Principles after you read each one:

We believe each and every person is important. (Hold up the red ribbon)

We believe all people should be treated fairly. (Hold up the orange ribbon.)

In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together. (Hold up the yellow ribbon.)

We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life. (Hold up the green ribbon.)

Everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them. (Hold up the blue ribbon.)

Now say:

Today we will learn a new Principle. The sixth Principle is, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world."

Lead the group to say the words again, with you.

Hold up the indigo ribbon and ask the children to find the indigo ribbons on their ribbon sticks. Tell them indigo represents the sixth Unitarian Universalist Principle.

Lead the opening chant:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together and come back to the circle.

When all the children have returned to the circle, say "Now we will light the chalice, the symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith." Light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: PEACE BOWLS

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Air-drying clay
- Smooth plastic placemats, one for each child
- Dishpan, dish washing soap, water, and towel
- Optional: Vinyl tablecloths, scissors, and masking tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Purchase air-drying clay at a craft store or order Crayola Air-Dry Clay (item #CL304) or Self-Hardening Clay (item # CL182S) from [S&S online](#) [335]. Note: Clay comes in many types; some will be easier for small hands to manipulate.
- Set plastic placemats at work tables. Or, cut a sheet of the vinyl tablecloth for each child and tape to each place with masking tape.
- Fill the dishpan with soapy water.
- Just before this activity, divide clay into pieces, one for each participant.

## Description of Activity

Participants make bowls and talk about how bowls can be used for receiving or giving.

Gather participants at the tables. Explain that today they will make a bowl.

Allow them to explore with the clay. Show them how to make a ball of clay and press their thumbs in the middle to make the bowl. As they work, ask:

- What are some uses for a bowl?
- How does a bowl help us receive?
- How does a bowl help us give?
- I wonder how we will use our bowls.

When everyone has made a small bowl, help participants carve their initials into their bowls and set the bowls aside to dry. Have the children wash their hands in the dishpan and dry with towel.

## Including All Participants

If a participant is unable to use their hands, find a way to help the participant shape a bowl with a co-leader or partner, or choose a different activity for the group.

# ACTIVITY 2: STORY, SUPRIYA'S BOWL

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story, "[Supriya's Bowl](#)" [240]
- Rhythm instruments including a triangle, a tambourine, hand drums, rhythm sticks, finger cymbals, and one or more additional percussion instruments
- Masking tape and marker
- Optional: "[Supriya's Bowl](#)" coloring sheet [417], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story. Assess the instruments you will need so that everyone will have an instrument, and obtain the instruments. Makeshift percussion instruments are fine.
- Write the capitalized words on masking tape. Attach pieces of tape to the corresponding rhythm instrument:
  - PAIN or HUNGER - Rhythm sticks
  - CHILDREN - Triangle
  - ADULTS (Merchants, woman, etc.) - Tambourine
  - BUDDHA - Hand drum
  - SUPRIYA - Finger cymbals
  - EVERYONE or ALL PEOPLE or WHOLE COMMUNITY - All the other instruments, plus the triangles and tambourines
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [417]. Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

This story engages participants in a Buddhist story about sharing in our communities.

Gather participants in the large group area. Distribute rhythm instruments and explain that each instrument represents a phrase or word in the story. Help participants identify the instrument they are holding, read the label you have written, and anticipate when to use it during the story.

Read the story, pausing to invite participants to sound instruments as directed. After the story, process using these questions:

- Why did no rain mean no food?
- Why were the people fighting over food?
- Why did someone say the poor should go to another village?
- How did Supriya plan to get food for the poor?
- How did this community take care of each other?
- How did this community show peace and equality?

## Including All Participants

Assign instruments according to abilities so children at all developmental stages are given an opportunity to succeed.



### COLORING SHEET

"Supriya's Bowl" (PDF) [417]

Illustration: Suzi Grossman

# ACTIVITY 3: BASIC NEEDS FOR ALL

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A globe
- Clay
- Leader Resource 1, [Basic Needs](#) [418]
- Drawing paper and coloring tools
- Pictures of children from many countries

## Preparation for Activity

- Obtain international pictures of a variety of people. Be sure to include children; be sure to include North Americans. You can download some from the [Kids National Geographic website](#) [419].
- Put a small lump of clay on the globe where the congregation is located.
- Print out Leader Resource 1. With a fine-tipped marker, make an X to show the approximate location of your faith community. Draw four shapes near the X: three circles and one heart. Then, draw a circle in each area of the map to include continents and other land areas. South America, Canada, Asia, Australia, SE Asia, Soviet Union, Europe, Africa, India. Then, copy the resource for all participants.
- Set coloring tools at work tables.

## Description of Activity

This activity introduces the world and helps children understand how sharing across borders can help people around the world meet their basic needs.

Gather the participants around the globe. Indicate where they are right now-the spot where you have placed a lump of clay. Then ask:

- I wonder how many places there are in the world?

- Who can tell me some places they know about? (Work through several of these with participants. Once a child shares an area, help find it on the globe. Place a small lump of clay. Talk about how far it is from where you are. Talk about whether it the place is in the Northern Hemisphere or the Southern Hemisphere. Talk about whether the temperature is hot or cold.)

Show pictures of people from other places. Talk about what is the same and different about the pictures. Then ask:

I wonder what are the basic needs are of all the people in all these places? I will tell you there are four things all the people in our pictures have or need.

Help participants to identify food, a place to live, clothing, and love as the four basic needs.

Settle the children at work tables and distribute the maps. Invite them to notice how the globe and their map are the same, and how they are different. Distribute coloring tools. Then, say, in your own words:

Our sixth Principle is, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world." For the world to be peaceful, fair, and free all people need to share food and clothing, have a place to live and know love. This can happen in our local beloved community as well as our global community.

Ask them to look at their map. Tell them they will use it as you all work together to see how people are all connected. Say:

We will work together to see how we are all connected. Who can find the X on your map? Put your pencils on the X. That's about where we are right now. Let's think about a basic need, food, clothing, housing, or love, we have to share with others. Who has an idea? (Accept all answers.)

Invite the children to think about who needs food:

Let's start with food. What kind of food can we share with others?

Distribute drawing paper, and say:

Draw a picture of a food you would like to share in one of the circles by the X. Now draw a line to another circle where you would like to share food. Draw a picture of the same kind of food in that other circle. Draw a picture of the same kind of food in that circle.

Allow children to finish their drawings. Then say:

How about clothing? What kind of clothing does it seem like others need in the world? Draw a picture of a kind of clothing in one circle by the X. Draw the same picture of clothing in another circle on your map. Now connect those two circles with a line.

Again, allow children to finish their drawings. Then say:

Let's talk about shelter. Are all kinds of shelter or homes the same? Some people might live in a tent. Some people might live in an apartment. How can we share shelter? It's hard to send a house to someone. There is an organization called Habitat for Humanity that sends volunteers to help build houses where people need them. Or, we could send building tools or building materials. What could we send? Let's draw a picture of nails or wood or tin in the other circle by the X. Now pick a place to send the building materials and draw the same picture in that circle. Draw a connecting line.

After most children are done drawing "shelter," say:

Now we're going to send love to others. How do we do that? (Affirm all answers) We can send love through our thoughts and prayers and loving actions by being sure we have done all we can to make the world peaceful, free, and fair. Draw a picture in the heart shape and choose another place to send the love.

Invite volunteers to hold up their pictures. Ask: Are all our pictures the same? Point out all the different ways children thought of to provide basic needs for others.

Invite the group to stand and hold hands to send a blessing of love around the world. Use these words:

We live in a world where not everyone has the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, and love taken care of. Help us remember to share some of what we have with others.

# CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

This session is about social justice. It is sometimes hard for children to believe that they can make a difference. How can you help participants understand that each of us has the ability to aid others? How can you uplift ways small ways that communities care for each other?

# FAITH IN ACTION: KID'S CARE FOR BASIC NEEDS

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- 4 sheets of construction paper

## Preparation for Activity

- Explore the website of [Kids Care \[420\]](#).
- Set up a computer with Internet access. Access the Kids Care website and be ready to show it to the group.

## Description of Activity

Show participants what other kids are doing and encourage them to create their own Kid's Care Club. This can be a single event or become a group that meets more often.

Gather participants and say in your own words:

Who can remember what the four basic needs for people throughout the world? (food, shelter, clothing, love)

Let's write those four words on construction paper and place them around our room.

Write the words on the individual sheets of construction paper or ask volunteers who can write to do it. Have other volunteers place each sign in a different part of the room.

We're going to hear about some kids who really care. They care so much that they put together Kid's Care Clubs all over the United States and the world. These clubs find ways to help others. Let's hear some of their stories.

Show pictures and read the stories in the website section, Club Highlights. You might say:

Wow! Aren't there millions of ways to help others? Let's see how we want to help others. Remember the four basic needs; food, shelter, clothing, and love. We put signs around our room with those four words.

Re-gather the children. Invite them to sit, close their eyes for a moment if they are comfortable doing so, and choose which of these four basics they would like to work on in a Kid's Care Club. Pause a moment, then say:

Okay, now, open your eyes and walk to the sign of the basic need where you would like to help.

Have them walk to the sign with the "need" they prefer to help with. Then say:

Let's look at this together by answering these questions:

How many people are standing by the food sign?

How many people are standing by the clothing sign?

How many people are standing by the shelter sign?

And how many people are standing by the love sign?

Which sign has the most people standing by it?

This is the need we will work on in our Kid's Care Club.

Lead the group to plan a project:

Do we want to design a project to do? Let's use the newsprint and marker to make some decision about what our Kid's Club will do.

Post blank newsprint. Take notes as you lead the group to process using these questions:

- The basic need we chose to help with is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Do we want to collect something to help in our community?
- How much time do we have to give to this project?
- Do we want to do it alone or with other people?
- Are there ways to connect to other groups in our congregation, fellowship or society?
- What should we do next?

At this point, a decision has to be made as to whether the group will complete a project now or plan another event after choosing a project. The compromise and choosing is important to emphasize fair, peace-filled deliberation.

## Including All Participants

All ages and abilities can do the processing and process-choosing. Fit the scope of the project to the abilities of the participants.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: PIPE-CLEANER PEACE SYMBOLS

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Peace Symbol](#) [421]
- Pipe cleaners

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy the handout for all participants.
- Place handouts and pipe cleaners at work tables.

## Description of Activity

This activity engages participants a universally recognized symbol promoting a peaceful world.

Gather the children at the tables and invite them to look at their handouts. Ask if any recognize the symbols. You might say:

This is a symbol that many people would recognize to mean peace.

Invite the children to use one or more pipe cleaners to make the symbol. When they are finished, ask these questions.

- Why is it good to know that these symbols represent peace?
- How can knowing that others are working toward a peaceful world help us to work together towards fairness and freedom?
- I wonder if you can design your own symbol for the sixth Principle.

## Including All Participants

This activity does not have a right or wrong result. Participants of all abilities should be able to complete this activity.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: SONG, PEACE SURROUNDS US

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Session 1, [Leader Resource 1, Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)

## Preparation for Activity

- Print out the leader resource and learn the song, sung to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." If the group has not learned "Love Surrounds Me," familiarize yourself with the teaching method described on the leader resource.

## Description of Activity

This activity will reinforce that both peace and love surround us.

Gather the participants and ask if they remember the "Love Surrounds Me" song (Session 1). Sing "Love Surrounds Me" one time.

Explain that as we talk about the sixth Principle we have learned that all people need peace, fairness, and freedom need to be available to all people. Remind them that as Unitarian Universalists, we work toward a world that has peace, fairness, and freedom for everyone.

Now lead the children to sing the song again, substituting the word peace:

Peace surrounds us this I know

For my spirit tells me so

All of us to peace belong

Fill our hearts and make us strong.

Yes, peace surrounds us

Yes, peace surrounds us.

Yes, peace surrounds us,

My spirit tells me so.

After singing, ask the children:

- How does your spirit tell you that peace surrounds you?
- Why it is important as a Unitarian Universalist to surround others in peace, fairness, and freedom?

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HEART RIBBON MAGNET

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Felt hearts mounted on felt squares and magnets, assembled in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1
- A roll of 1/8-inch indigo ribbon
- Extra felt and magnets for new participants, plus glue, sharp scissors, and permanent marker

## Preparation for Activity

- Set on work tables the Heart Ribbon Magnets children began making in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1.
- Cut indigo ribbon into 16-inch lengths and set on work tables.
- Review Session 2, Alternate Activity 1 to start Heart Ribbon Magnets for new participants.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects the color indigo and the sixth Principle as children work on their Heart Ribbon Magnets, a reminder of the UU Principles to take home at the close of the program.

Tell the children the indigo ribbon represents the sixth UU Principle, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world." Demonstrate how to fold a length of indigo ribbon in half, push the folded end into the hole on the side of the heart next to the blue ribbon, and insert the two loose ends of indigo ribbon through the loop formed by the folded end. Pull the indigo ribbon through tightly.

Help any new children or visitors make a Heart Ribbon Magnet, following instructions in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1, and add red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and indigo ribbons.

Set aside the magnets and remaining colors of ribbon for future sessions.

## Including All Participants

Partner very young children with an older child who can help them.

# TAKING IT HOME

It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it. — Eleanor Roosevelt, 20th-century First Lady of the United States, in a 1951 radio broadcast

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the group heard a Buddhist story, "Supriya's Bowl," about a young girl who helped provide one of the basic needs, food, in her community. Making clay bowls helped the children talk about receiving, giving, and how bowls do both. The group discussed the four basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and love. We used maps to think of ways we could connect the four basic needs with the global world while living the sixth Principle, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world."

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** the basic needs of human beings. Discuss ways that you are provided with food, clothing, shelter, and love. Discuss how you help ensure those needs are met for others.

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...**

**A Family Adventure.** Visit a museum or display that shows people who live in different parts of the world. Discover the different ways people are clothed, fed, sheltered and loved—ways that are different, yet all help people meet the same needs we all share.

**Family Discovery.** Explore websites that deal with the four basic needs of humans. Food: the website of [Feeding America](#) [422] (formerly known as Second Harvest Food Bank), the [Free Rice](#) [423] site sponsored by the United Nations, and a site promoting [international meals for children](#) [424]. Shelter: the [Habitat for Humanity youth programs](#) [425] with games and volunteering ideas for children ages five through eight. Clothing: Visit the website of [Goodwill, Inc.](#) [426]

Love is a difficult basic need to try to meet long distance. Help children understand that when we help to take care of people's needs for food, shelter, and clothing, we also show love.

**A Family Ritual.** Write a word describing each basic need: food, clothing, shelter, and love. First thing in the morning or last at night, place one card in a central location (for example, the table where everyone eats, or a bathroom sink everyone uses). Use that card to focus your attention all day. At night, pray together for that basic need to be met worldwide, with words such as these:

Spirit of Life, keep all the people in the world free of the pain of hunger.

# SUPRIYA'S BOWL

*From The Broken Tusk by Uma Krishnaswami (Atlanta, GA: August House Publishers Inc.). Used by permission of the publishers.*

Hard times starve people's spirits, as well as their bodies.

*(Play all instruments.)*

So it was once, when the Buddha lived and famine struck the land. The rains failed, and the heat of the sun withered the harvest in the field. All around, the cries of pain and hunger could be heard. *(sticks)*

In the midst of this misery, some people *(all instruments)* grew greedy and selfish. The Buddha's followers came to him, bringing stories of sadness and shame.

"One merchant *(tambourine)* in town stabbed another," said one, "and all for a bag of grain."

"I heard of someone *(tambourine)* who sold their last goat to buy some flour. On they way home they were attacked by robbers, and the flour was stolen," said another.

"Saddest of all, Lord Buddha," said a third, "are the stories of children *(triangle)* dying of hunger on the poor side of town, because the wealthy have hoarded all the grain and milk and sugar."

"Call all the people together," said the Buddha *(drum)*. "Let us see what we can do to help." *(all instruments)*

So the Buddha's followers called a big meeting.

Hundreds of people came. *(all instruments)* Rich and poor, well fed and starving—out of respect for the Buddha, they came to hear his words.

The Buddha *(drum)* said, "Citizens of this fair land, surely there is enough food in the storehouses of the wealthy to feed everyone. If the rich share what they have in the lean season, then you will all survive to enjoy the benefits of the next good harvest."

The poor and the hungry looked hopeful at the Buddha's words, but the rich people grumbled.

"My granary is empty," lied one. *(tambourine)*

"The poor are lazy. Let them work for me; then they can use the money to buy the food I have stored," said another. *(tambourine)*

"There are too many poor people," said a third. "Let them go somewhere else." *(tambourine)*

The Buddha sighed *(drum)* when his eye fell upon the people with hearts of stone. "Is there no one here," he asked finally, "who will take on the job of helping to feed the poor and homeless in these hard times?"

There was silence. Then a small voice piped up, "I will, Lord Buddha." (*finger cymbals*)

Out of the crowd stepped a child, no more than 6 or 7 years old--a merchant's child, dressed in fine silk.

"My name is Supriya," said the child, "and I have a bowl to fill with food for the hungry. When can I begin?" (*finger cymbals*)

The Buddha smiled. (*drum*) "Small child," he said, "your heart is filled with love, but how will you do this alone?"

Supriya replied, "Not alone, Lord Buddha, but with your help. I'll take this bowl from house to house and ask for food for the poor. I will not be refused. I know it." (*drum and finger cymbals*)

Looking at the child, with earnest face and shining eyes, even the most selfish among those present grew ashamed.

"I have a little grain in my storehouse," mumbled one. (*tambourine*)

"I have some pickled mango from summer's harvest," said another. (*tambourine*)

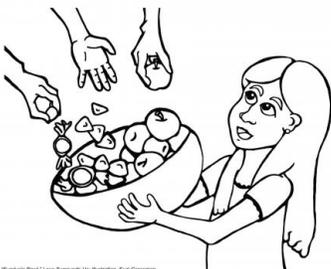
"My father was poor once. I'm ashamed to have forgotten," muttered a third. (*tambourine*)

Then Supriya took the bowl, and went every day from house to house in the rich part of town. Wherever Supriya went, little by little, the bowl got filled. (*finger cymbals*)

Sometimes an old grandmother would fill it with rice. (*tambourine*) Sometimes children would give up their sweets for the day. (*triangle*) Often, others would join Supriya with their bowls and help take the food to the people who needed it. (*finger cymbals and tambourine*)

And sometimes, it is said, when Supriya was tired of walking, the young child would rest in the shade of the banyan tree. Supriya would awake to find the bowl had magically filled itself.

"Now," said Supriya, "the hungry will eat, and the people of this town will take care of each other." And so they did.



Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet for "Supriya's Bowl"](#) (PDF) [417] to share with children before or after the story or to take home with their Taking It Home handout.

# HANDOUT 1: PEACE SYMBOL

## Printing This Handout

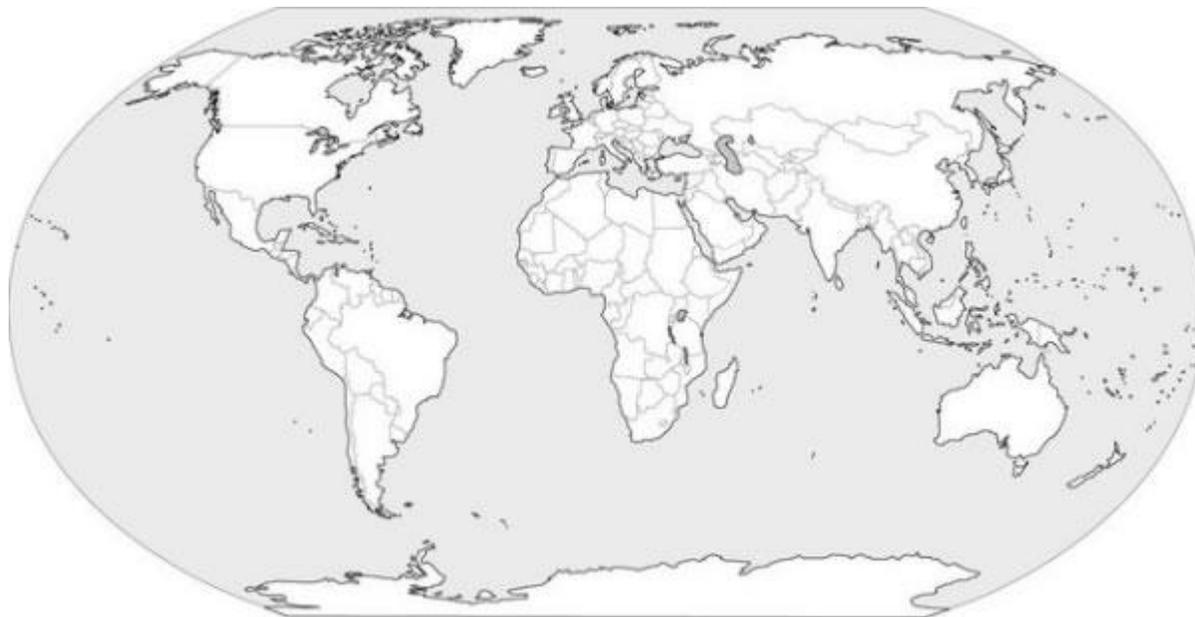
Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[427\]](#) for printing.



# LEADER RESOURCE 1: BASIC NEEDS

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[428\]](#) for printing



## FIND OUT MORE

### The Basic Needs of Humans

The United Nation [Declaration of the Rights of the Child \[429\]](#) can be found on the American Bar Association website.

Many websites address the basic human physical needs. Food: the [Feeding America \[422\]](#) website (formerly Second Harvest Food Bank), the [Free Rice \[423\]](#) site sponsored by the United Nations, and a site promoting [international meals for children \[424\]](#). Shelter: the [Habitat for Humanity youth programs \[425\]](#) with games and volunteering ideas for children ages five through eight. Clothing: Visit the website of [Goodwill, Inc. \[426\]](#)

## SESSION 13: PEACEFUL CHOICES

# INTRODUCTION

In a world where there is so much to be done, I felt strongly impressed that there must be something for me to do. — Dorothea Dix, 19th-century reformer and Unitarian

The sixth Principle, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair and free world," challenges Unitarian Universalists to make decisions that promote peace, justice, and freedom. This session engages children to experience how and why their behavior choices matter.

In role play and discussion, avoid judgment of a person when talking about unwise behavior. People are not "bad," though behavior can be. Affirm positive behavior choices.

## Goals

This session will:

- Reinforce the sixth Unitarian Universalist Principle, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair and free world"
- Teach that our behavior choices matter
- Empower participants to make choices that support a peaceful, free, and fair world.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Experience the story of Dorothea Dix
- Discover that every situation and every moment of the day offer us choices.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story — Barn School, Free School	10
Activity 2: Role Play — Daily Choices Help Us Grow	20
Activity 3: Collage — What's in the Barn?	15
Faith in Action: Socks for Tired Feet	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Poster — Sixth Principle	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Choices happen every minute of our day. A choice at a grocery store or a choice of a gift for a loved one shows our values.

List the small but important choices you have made today. Next to each item, write the words peace, freedom, or fairness to indicate how that decision connects to the world. For instance, your list might say "changed a light bulb." Next to it might be the word "fairness" if you chose to replace a bulb with one that is energy efficient. Reflect on your list, and how you can bring a message of peaceful, free, and fair choices to young children.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite them to find the indigo ribbon on their ribbon stick. Explain that indigo is a deep, bluish purple. As others arrive, engage participants to see who can remember the first five Principles and the colors represented on the ribbon stick.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide a space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair.

# OPENING

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Indigo cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Reinforce the first through fifth UU Principles and add the sixth Principle by repeating and matching the colors.

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Then, take a ribbon stick in your hand and invite the children to echo the Principles after you read each one:

We believe each and every person is important. (Hold up the red ribbon)

We believe all people should be treated fairly. (Hold up the orange ribbon.)

In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together. (Hold up the yellow ribbon.)

We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life. (Hold up the green ribbon.)

Everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them. (Hold up the blue ribbon.)

Now say:

Today we will learn a new Principle. The sixth Principle is, "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world."

Hold up the indigo ribbon and ask the children to find the indigo ribbons on their ribbon sticks. Tell them indigo represents the sixth Unitarian Universalist Principle. Lead the group to say the words again, with you.

Lead the opening chant:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together and come back to the circle.

When all the children have returned to the circle, say "Now we will light the chalice, the symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith." Light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY: BARN SCHOOL, FREE SCHOOL

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Barn School, Free School \[430\]](#)"
- Optional: "[Barn School, Free School](#)" coloring sheet [431], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story several times; it has a lot of conversation. Practice using differing voices for each character.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\) \[431\]](#). Place coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

Participants will hear the story of an imagined result of Dorothea Dix's real life choice to begin a free school for the poor.

Gather the children to hear a story. Say, in your own words:

Dorothea Dix exemplified the UU Principles in her life choices. Born into a poor family, Dorothea took responsibility for her own life. She left home at the age of 12 and went to live with her grandparents in Boson. She chose to go to school and learn. Dorothea never forgot the lack of hope in her life when she was poor. She offered to teach a free school in the barn of her Grandmother's house. After a period of exhaustion, Dorothea was exposed to the plight of the mentally ill. Again Dorothea chose to take that experience and make the world a better place. For the rest of her life, Dorothea was an active reformer for the mentally ill. Dorothea Dix was a Unitarian woman who made choices to make the world fair for others.

Lead a discussion with these process questions:

- Why did Dorothea choose to go to school and learn?
- How does going to school and learning help all of us learn to make good choices?

Say, "Now let's hear the story about Dorothea Dix."

Read/tell the story enthusiastically. Use these questions to process after the story.

- What do you think "free school" means?
- How did Dorothea use what she had to help others?
- If you could choose to go to school or not to go to school, what would you choose? Why?
- How does going to school and getting an education help us follow the sixth Principle?



"Barn School, Free School," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration, Nancy Weidner

Download the coloring sheet for "Barn School, Free School" ([PDF](#)) [431].

# ACTIVITY 2: ROLE PLAY, DAILY CHOICES HELP US GROW

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Role Play Flowers](#) [432]
- Leader Resource 2, [Role Play Situations](#) [433]
- Green construction paper
- A basket
- Masking tape or sticky tack

## Preparation for Activity

- Print out two copies of Leader Resource 1. Cut out eight strips of paper as indicated, each with a flower on its left-hand side.
- Print out Leader Resource 2. Cut out the eight blocks of text, each providing a role play situation. Glue or tape each block of text to a strip of paper from Leader Resource 1 that has a flower on it.
- Place all eight strips with flowers and text in the basket.
- Using green construction paper, make a 3-inch wide by 4-foot high green "stem" and attach it to a wall.

## Description of Activity

This activity asks participants to make choices that support the sixth Principle. It generates a display for the meeting space which shows that positive choices help us grow.

Center the group by asking them to breathe deeply in, count to five, and breathe out. If they are sitting on the floor, ask them to raise their arms in the air as they breathe in to improve posture.

Ask participants how many choices they make in a day. (What to wear, when to get out of bed, which shoe to put on first.) Repeat and affirm their suggestions:

We make lots of choices each day.

Say, in these words or your own:

We make choices everyday that help us grow. Today we will act out some situations that are found on these flowers. You will choose a flower and a partner and I will read the situation. Then you act it out and tell us about your choice. We will put the flowers on the big flower stem to remind us how we grow through our choices.

Ask if there are any questions. Lead the children to choose, read, and enact role plays. After each role play, process with these two questions.

- How does your choice make the world more peaceful, fair, or free?
- What did you learn from making this choice?

Then, attach the flower to the stem on the wall.

When all the flowers are posted on the stem, say, "Look how much we have grown by making good choices."

## Including All Participants

Invite physically or developmentally delayed participants to role play with a partner or as part of a small group.

# ACTIVITY 3: COLLAGE, WHAT'S IN THE BARN?

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Magazines and catalogs to cut up
- Construction paper - two sheets for each child, one red sheet and one sheet in another color
- Glue sticks and scissors (including left-handed scissors)

## Preparation for Activity

- Gather magazines or catalogs with diverse images of young children and pictures of school supplies.
- Cut sheets of red construction paper in half to make a set of barn doors to tape or glue on top of each child's collage.
- Make a sample of the project with the collage inside the barn door.

## Description of Activity

This activity extends children's experience of the story "Barn School, Free School" (Activity 1). Participants will each make a barn that opens to show children at school inside.

Show the children the barn sample. Ask them "What's in the barn?" They will answer all sorts of animals. Open the barn door and surprise them that there are children inside. Talk about the school that met in the barn. Invite volunteers to summarize the story.

Distribute the construction paper you have not made into barn doors, along with magazines, scissors, and glue sticks for children to share. Invite participants to cut out pictures of children and school supplies and make a collage to make their own barn school. Distribute construction paper. Using glue sticks, they will glue all the magazine pictures on a piece of construction paper.

As children finish, help them tape or glue on their barn doors to the edges of their collage.

Process with these questions:

- I wonder what your family will expect behind the barn door.
- How will you tell about the barn school?

- Why is it important that Dorothea Dix taught school to poor children?
- How did Dorothea Dix make the world fair and free?

## Including All Participants

Pre-cut pictures if the group includes very young children or some who may be unable to use scissors.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflecting on the time with your group, how do you feel the participants integrated the sixth Principle? Did they understand that they have choices leading to a peaceful, fair, and free world?

Look ahead to the next session we will explore the Unitarian Universalist seventh Principle, "We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us." Explore your feelings about the seventh Principle between now and the next session.

# FAITH IN ACTION: SOCKS FOR TIRED FEET

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Several large cardboard boxes, such as appliance boxes
- Large roll of plain paper
- Permanent markers
- Clear packing tape
- Tempera paint and a cookie sheet with edges
- Two chairs
- A dishpan of soapy water, and towels

## Preparation for Activity

- Check the website of the organization [Sharing and Caring Hands](#) [434] to learn about their mission and how to organize a collection of socks to donate.
- Roll out the paper. Hold it down with a chair on one end. At the other end, hold it down with a dishpan of soapy water and place towels nearby.
- At the "chair" end of the paper, set the cookie sheet. Pour paint into it.

## Description of Activity

Participants will use paint-covered bare feet to decorate paper. Then, use the paper to wrap boxes for collecting socks to send to Sharing and Caring hands.

### Background

Sharing and Caring Hands is a ministry started to help the poor no matter where they come from and no matter what their background. The people who receive aid are given socks, food, meals, or love, just because they need it. Ninety-three percent of donations received go to the poor.

Tell the children about Sharing and Caring Hands, in these words or your own:

Sharing and Caring Hands is a ministry that was started to serve those in need. Caring for the feet of the poor is an important part of Sharing and Caring Hands. Most of the transportation for the poor is through walking, yet some poor people do not have clean socks to protect their feet or shoes that fit them. Love is not just for those with six pair of shoes. Both Mary Jo Copeland of Sharing and Caring Hands and Dorothea Dix, who we learned about today, believed in caring for those in need.

Gather the children at the "chair" end of the paper. Invite them, one at a time, to remove their shoes and socks. While holding an adult hand they will stand in the paint (this may be slippery depending on the surface of the pan) and walk across the paper. At the end of the paper the participant steps into the soapy water and washes their feet. Still holding an adult hand, they step on the towel to dry their feet. Shoes and socks are replaced when feet are dry.

Let the painted footprints dry. Then, use the paper and clear packaging tape to wrap the large cartons. Write "Socks for Tired Feet - a Donation to Sharing and Caring Hands" with permanent marker on the boxes.

Place the boxes around the congregation or, with permission, at local department stores. Collect socks and mail to Sharing & Caring Hands, 525 North 7th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

## Including All Participants

If a child is unable to stand or walk, help them make a painted footprint to place on the box. Take off shoe and sock. Paint the bottom of the foot with paint. Bring the paper to the foot. Wash the foot with a cloth and dry. Replace shoe and sock.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: POSTER, SIXTH PRINCIPLE

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Poster - Sixth Principle](#) [435]
- Crayons and/or color markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

## Description of Activity

This activity invites participants to free draw and illustrate the sixth Principle.

Read the sixth Principle to the participants: "We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world." Ask participants to say the sixth Principle with you. Then, distribute the handout and invite the children to make a poster that illustrates the sixth Principle. Do not direct the drawing. Allow the children to use their imaginations in combination with what they have learned.

# TAKING IT HOME

In a world where there is so much to be done, I felt strongly impressed that there must be something for me to do. — Dorothea Dix, 19th-century reformer and Unitarian

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** participants learned how the sixth Principle applied to the life of Unitarian social reformer, Dorothea Dix. They learned about a barn school and they talked about choices. Our daily choices make a difference in how we work toward a peaceful, free, and fair world.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** choices children make each day. Affirm good choices that lead to a better world. Use these questions to talk about today's topic.

- What choices do we make everyday?
- Are there choices we make only occasionally?
- Share your hardest choice.

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...**

**A Family Adventure.** Attend a buffet meal. Decide ahead how many choices each person may have. Discuss how those choices were made at the meal. See if you can determine how the food choices you made support fairness, justice, freedom, or peace.

**A Family Game.** Set out many choices of games for a family game night. Together, choose a game to play that will help your family work together for a more peaceful, fair, and free world.

**A Family Ritual.** Place a basket of stones, feathers, leaves, or flowers on the table. Each person will choose one item from the basket and say, "I chose this \_\_\_\_\_ because it reminds me that to keep a free, fair and peaceful world I should, \_\_\_\_\_."

# BARN SCHOOL, FREE SCHOOL

By Janeen K Grohsmeyer

A story of Dorothea Dix (1802-1887), Unitarian teacher and social reformer.

"Finish eating your supper, Anna," said Florence. "We mustn't be late to school."

Anna nodded and ate another spoonful of soup. She was happy to get a piece of potato in the warm salty broth, instead of only cabbage. Usually she ate slowly, to make the food last longer, and usually after supper she stayed home. But she had turned six years old yesterday, and so tonight, her older sister Florence was taking her to school.

"Why can't I go?" her older brother Michael asked. He had finished his soup.

"You've already been," their mother answered. "Two full years at the public school. Now that you're twelve, you need to work. And you two girls need to be quick. Off you go!"

Anna finished her soup. Then she and Florence put on shawls and bonnets and kissed their mother goodbye. Their father was a sailor, away at sea, so they couldn't kiss him. He had left two years before. Anna didn't remember him very well.

Outside, the city of Boston smelled of dead fish and wet ropes, as always. Down at the harbor, the white sails on the tall ships snapped and billowed in the breeze, like sheets hung out to dry on a clothesline.

"How far do we have to walk?" Anna asked, as she and Florence went down the alley. They lifted their skirts to keep them out of the mud and hopped over puddles.

"Not far," Florence answered. "The school is at the teacher's house."

"In her house?" Anna asked, wondering if they would meet in the kitchen.

"Not in her house. At her house. Behind it. The school is in a barn."

Now Anna wondered if they would meet in a stall. "Are there horses?" she asked hopefully. "Or chickens?"

"No," said Florence. "The family doesn't keep horses or chickens anymore. The barn is clean."

"I would have liked a chicken," Anna said wistfully. "Or a goat."

The girls waited for a horse and cart to go by so they could cross a street. The horse's tail and mane were the dark gold color of straw, and its coat was a deep brown that looked red in the evening sunshine. Mother said a horse with those colors was called chestnut, just like the shiny, dark-brown nuts that people roasted to eat at Christmas time. The horse's hooves clip-clopped on the cobblestones as it went up the hill. The cart creaked along behind.

The cobblestones felt cold and rough through the thin soles of Anna's shoes. She hoped Florence might get a pair of shoes before winter, and then give her old shoes to Anna to wear. They would have thin soles, too, but at least they wouldn't squeeze her toes.

"What will we do at school?" Anna asked next.

"After prayers, we sit at a long table and do lessons. We read and spell and do sums. Sometimes the teacher tells us about stars or how the mountains were made. In the summer we learned about flowers almost every day."

Anna was pleased. She liked flowers and stars, and she wanted to learn about mountains, for she had never seen one. "What's the teacher's name?" Anna asked.

"Miss Dorothea Dix," Florence told her.

Anna repeated the name silently to herself so she wouldn't forget and practiced saying, "Good evening, Miss Dix" under her breath. She hoped Miss Dix would like her.

Anna could tell from the houses that they were getting close to the school. Instead of small, wooden houses with unpainted shutters like the one she lived in, the houses on this street were very large, with window panes of glass. They had tall brick chimneys and shining brass handles on their doors. Many houses had barns out back. Some even had gardens.

The girls passed a fine brick church. On the other side of the street Anna saw a dozen girls in pretty dresses sitting in a garden. All of them were busy sewing.

"Is that the school?" Anna asked, for she knew twelve girls couldn't all be sisters.

"That's Mrs. Rowson's Female Academy for young ladies," Florence said. "Girls come from all over the country to attend. I hear it's very expensive."

"Is our school expensive?" Anna asked, suddenly worried. Their family couldn't afford an expensive school. Their family couldn't afford new shoes. Some days they couldn't afford food. Mother worried about money all the time.

"No," Florence said. "Our school is free."

"Free?" Anna repeated in surprise.

"Free," her sister said firmly. "During the day, Miss Dix teaches a class for young ladies, and they have to pay. In the evening, Miss Dix teaches children like us, and it's free."

Anna didn't know many people who did things for free. "Why does she do that?"

"Miss Dix believes it's everyone's duty to help each other. She says that those who have enough have a special duty to give to those who don't. Some people give money; Miss Dix gives a school."

"A school in a barn," Anna said, but she didn't mind. She was just glad to have a school. Their family couldn't afford to pay, and girls couldn't go to public schools like their brother had. Their mother had never been to school at all.

"A free school," Anna said. "A barn school." She liked the sound of that so much she said it again, skipping along with the words: "Barn school, free school. Barn school, free school."

Florence started skipping too. "Barn school, free school," they chanted until finally Florence stopped. "Here's the barn," she said. "And here's the school."

In front of them was a very large house in a garden. Beautiful flowers lined all the paths, and Anna realized that the air didn't smell like dead fish and wet ropes anymore. It smelled soft and fresh and sweet.

Off to one side was a little cottage and farther back was the barn. A row of trees stood tall against a fence. "Those are Dix pear trees," Florence said. "Miss Dix's grandfather developed them years ago. The pear I brought home last month grew from those trees."

Anna remembered that pear. She and her mother and brother and Florence had each had one slice. Anna had never eaten a pear before, and she had thought it was most delicious thing in the whole world.

"Her grandmother lives in the cottage, along with Miss Dix," Florence explained as they walked down one of the paths between the beautiful flowers. "They rent the big house to other people."

"And they let us use the barn for free!" Anna said in delight. She might have started skipping and chanting "Barn school, free school" again, but then she saw Miss Dix, standing at the door of the barn.

Miss Dix was tall and slender. She wore a pretty blue gown with tiny white ruffles at the sleeves and a soft white shawl around her shoulders. She wasn't old at all. Her hair was a deep brown touched with red, just like the chestnut color of the horse. "Good evening, Florence," she said, and her voice was soft and sweet, just like the scent of the air.

"Good evening, Miss Dix," Florence replied.

"Good evening, Miss Dix," Anna repeated, just as she'd practiced.

"This is my sister, Anna," Florence explained. "She's six years old, and she wants to learn."

"Good evening, Anna," Miss Dix said, and her smile was as beautiful as the flowers. "Welcome to the school. I'm glad you're here."

Anna smiled back. "Thank you, Miss Dix. I'm glad I'm here, too."

They went inside, and Florence showed her where to hang their shawls and bonnets. As Anna sat at the long table and started on her very first lesson, she chanted very softly: "Barn school. Free school."

And then she whispered, "Thank you, Miss Dorothea Dix."

## COLORING SHEET

"Barn School, Free School" (Dorothea Dix) (PDF) [431]

Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff



"Barn School, Free School," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

# HANDOUT 1: POSTER, SIXTH PRINCIPLE

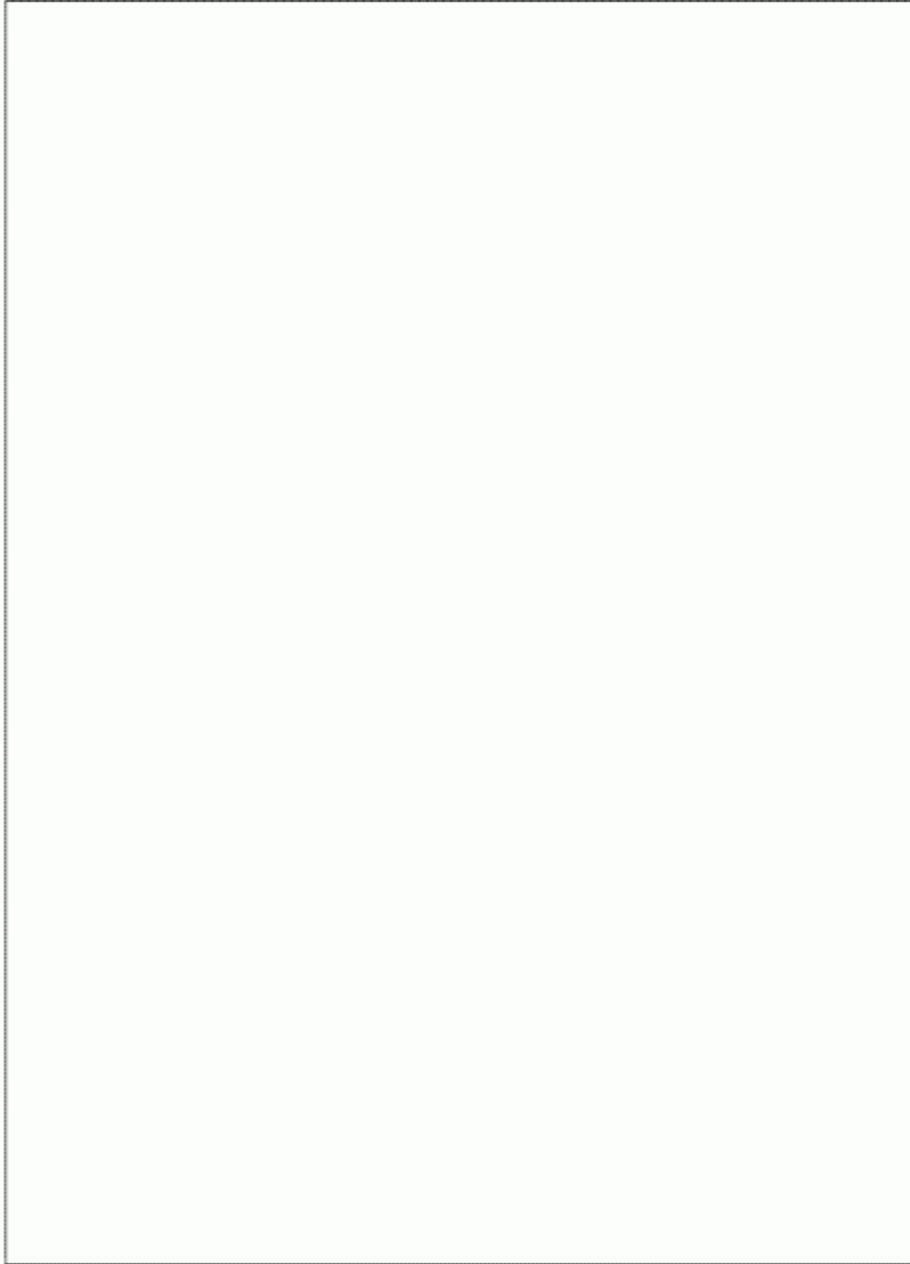
Unitarian Universalist Sixth Principle

We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[436\]](#) for printing.

## **Unitarian Universalist Sixth Principle**

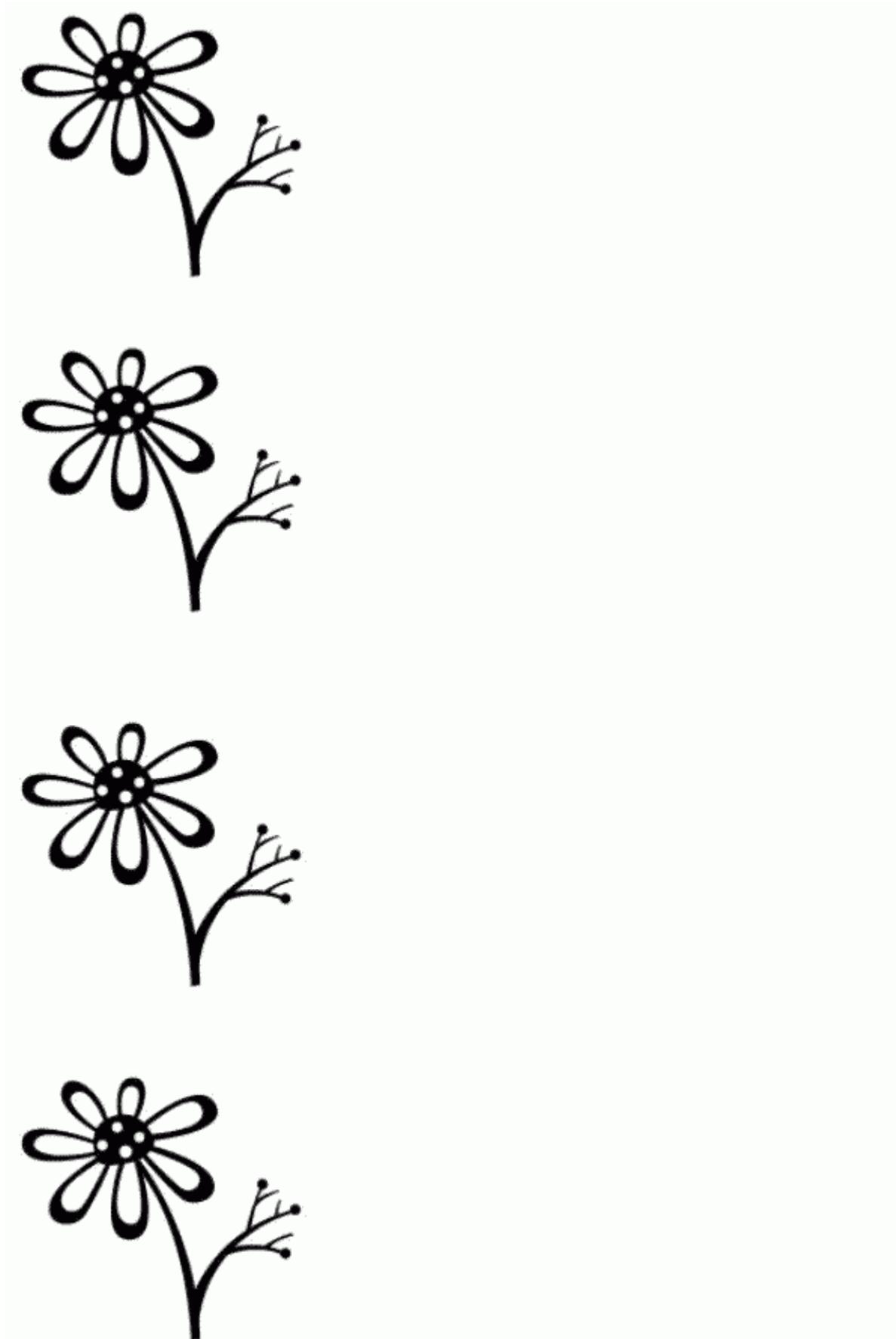


**We believe in working for a peaceful, fair and free world.**

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: ROLE PLAY FLOWERS

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[437\]](#) for printing



# LEADER RESOURCE 2: ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS

Your Mom wakes you up. Do you choose to get up immediately or snuggle in for a few more moments?

Your little brother is late for the bus. You get on the bus. Do you say anything to the bus driver?

Your best friend accidentally drops her backpack and dumps it in the busy hallway. What do you do?

Your dog is whining at the door to go outside. But the dog is your big sister's job. What do you do?

You get to your after-school program and the regular teacher is not there. There is a substitute who doesn't know everyone's name. Can you help?

You get to watch a family movie. Your siblings pick one you don't like. What do you do?

Your friends will all be at a birthday party on Sunday but the rest of your family is going to visit your grandmother. You have not seen your grandmother for a long time, but, your mom says it's up to you. What will you do?

You've played six innings while your best friend sits on the bench. The coach gives you a choice to play or rest. What do you choose?

## FIND OUT MORE

### **Dorothea Dix**

Two books include *Breaking the Chains: The Crusade of Dorothea Lynde Dix* by Penny Colman (ASJA Press, 2007) and *Dorothea Dix: Social Reformer* by Barbara Witteman (Bridgestone Books, 2003).

### **Barns**

A children's book is *Tuttle's Red Barn* by Richard Michelson (Putnam Juvenile, 2007). A book with pictures is *The Ultimate Book of Historic Barns: History, Legend, Lore, Form, Function, Symbolism, Romance* by Robin Langley Sommer (Thunder Bay Press, 2000).

# SESSION 14: LOVE SURROUNDS US IN NATURE

## INTRODUCTION

It is good to realize that if love and peace can prevail on earth, and if we can teach our children to honor nature's gifts, the joys and beauties of the outdoors will be here forever. — Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States

The Unitarian Universalist Principle that we are all responsible for the planet and we are connected to all beings is perhaps the most concrete of our Principles. Children are especially attracted to the strong association with animals and nature. This session encourages our children to care for the earth and helps them understand that our actions affect every living thing on our planet, including ourselves. The session theme is "We are connected to the earth in love."

When we show love for our planet by advocating protection of animal habitats or trees, we are living our seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle. In the story, set in the Amazon Rainforest, a man is about to cut down a tree when he learns how many different animals depend upon it for their lives. The session highlights the unique animals and plants that live on this earth and helps participants understand the interdependence of all life.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist belief in caring for our planet earth and every living thing that shares it with us—our seventh Principle
- Demonstrate how what happens to one aspect of nature affects us all
- Teach that acting to take care of the earth is an expression of love for every living thing.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn that Unitarian Universalists believe we must show love to all living things by taking special care of the earth
- Understand the interdependence of all life, through a story in which one tree is important to the survival of many other living things
- Learn about the Amazon Rainforest, an endangered animal habitat.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — The Great Kapok Tree, A Tale of the Amazon Rainforest	10
Activity 2: Shake-and-Make Animals	20
Activity 3: Rainforest Life	20
Faith in Action: Adopt a Rainforest	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: The Great Kapok Tree Play	20
Alternate Activity 2: Fish Kite	20
Alternate Activity 3: Heart Ribbon Magnet	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

It is often overlooked how precious each living thing is to all of us. We forget the tree that shelters animals or the plant that provides sustenance. Think about the animals and plants that are essential to your own life. When you sit down for a meal or take a walk, do you recognize how interdependent we are? How can you be more mindful of this interdependence? How can you help the children better understand those connections? Relax and make yourself ready to help participants discover their connection to all living things.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite them to find the violet ribbon on their ribbon stick. Explain that violet is a kind of purple.

Invite the children to draw and color a picture of what they think is in a rainforest.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

Provide an accessible space at a work table for any child who is unable to sit at a chair.

# OPENING

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Violet cloth for centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Reinforce the first six UU Principles and add the seventh Principle, by repeating and matching the colors.

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head. Then, take a ribbon stick in your hand and invite the children to echo the Principles after you read each one:

We believe each and every person is important. (Hold up the red ribbon)

We believe all people should be treated fairly. (Hold up the orange ribbon.)

In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together. (Hold up the yellow ribbon.)

We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life. (Hold up the green ribbon.)

Everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them. (Hold up the blue ribbon.)

We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world. (Hold up the indigo ribbon.)

Now say:

Today we will learn a new Principle. We will use the color violet to remember it. There are seven Principles, and this one is the seventh: Caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us.

Hold up the violet ribbon and ask the children to find the violet ribbons on their ribbon sticks. Lead the group to say the seventh Principle words again, with you.

Lead the opening chant:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together and come back to the circle.

When all the children have returned to the circle, say "Now we will light the chalice, the symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith." Light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY, THE GREAT KAPOK TREE, A TALE OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Great Kapok Tree, A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest \[438\]](#)"
- A world map or a globe
- Optional: "[The Great Kapok Tree](#)" coloring sheet [439], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to tell it to the group.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\) \[439\]](#). Place the coloring sheets and crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

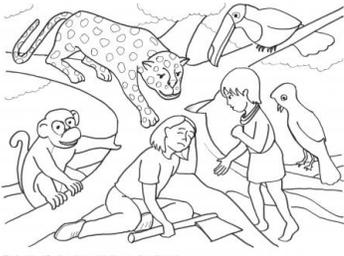
This story is about how a young man learned how much a whole forest depended on just one tree.

Gather the children to hear a story. Tell them you will read a story about a rainforest. Explain that the Amazon is a huge rainforest in South America. Point it out on the map. Show where South America is in relation to where you live. Say that the Amazon rainforest is the largest rainforest in the world.

Read or tell the story. Then, process with these questions:

- Why did the young man decide not to cut down the tree?
- What made him change his mind?
- Do you think the man will go off now and cut down a different tree? Why or why not?
- Have you ever changed your mind about doing something because you realized how it would affect other people or things? Explain what happened.

Download a coloring sheet (PDF) [439] for children to use before, during, or after the story "The Great Kapok Tree."



"The Great Kapok Tree," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration: Nancy Meiskoff

# ACTIVITY 2: SHAKE-AND-MAKE ANIMALS

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Animals for Shake-and-Make \[440\]](#)
- Three bowls
- Modeling clay in red, yellow, blue, and green
- Waxed paper

## Preparation for Activity

- Print out Leader Resource 1. Cut out each animal. You will need one animal per participant. If you do not have enough for all participants, print another copy of the leader resource.
- Cut each animal picture into three parts: head, body (including tail), and limbs/wings. Place the heads in one bowl, the bodies in another bowl, and the limbs/wings in the third bowl.
- Tear off sheets of waxed paper so each child will have one for molding a clay animal.
- Set bowls, clay, and waxed paper on work tables where all children can reach them.

## Description of Activity

Participants each create and name an imaginary animal. They imagine its habitat and consider what it needs to live.

Gather participants at work tables. Tell them each bowl contains a part of a real animal. One has heads, one has bodies, and the other has legs or wings. Invite the children to choose one picture from each bowl and arrange their three pictures to make an imaginary animal that does not really exist on earth.

Then, invite them to build the animal using clay and choose a name for the kind of animal they have made. Ask them to think about what their animal eats and what kind of habitat it lives in. Explain, as needed, that a habitat is the environment where a living creature is at home and has everything it needs to survive.

When everyone has finished, gather participants to share. Ask each child their animal's name. Have them describe its size, color(s), habitat (where it lives), diet, and any other needs or habits.

After everyone who wants to has shared, ask:

- Was it hard to create a new animal?
- Could your animal really exist? Why or why not?
- If this animal existed, would people like it or be afraid of it?
- Would people want your animal for a pet? Why or why not? Should it stay in its wild habitat, instead of being a pet?

## Including All Participants

Some participants may need help shaping their animal with clay. Others may welcome help thinking of names for the animal. During the sharing time, help participants describe their animal if needed.

# ACTIVITY 3: RAINFOREST LIFE

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A large cardboard box, such as an appliance container
- Leader Resource 2, [Amazon Animals](#) [441]
- Construction paper - green, and a variety of shades of brown
- Crayons and markers
- Scissors, including left-handed scissors, and glue

## Preparation for Activity

- Set up the box so it stands by itself. Using a marker, outline a tree trunk. Do not go all the way up; leave cardboard at the top to make a rainforest canopy.
- Cut brown construction paper into rectangles about 4x5 inches. Make enough to cover the "trunk" of the tree.
- Cut green construction paper into "bunches" that look like leaves on a tree. Have enough bunches of leaves (make them look like green "cloud" shapes) to cover the upper part of the box: the rainforest canopy.
- Print out one or more copies of Leader Resource 2, Amazon Animals. Cut the animals apart. You will need at least one animal for each child.

## Description of Activity

Participants make a rainforest tree and populate it with animals that depend on the tree.

Tell participants they will make a rainforest tree and populate it with the animals that live there. Pass out the brown rectangles to participants. Depending on the size of the group, each participant may receive more than one rectangle. Ask participants to glue the rectangles on the cardboard box, inside the outline of the tree trunk. The different shades of brown will give the trunk a bark-like appearance; have participants glue them randomly within the outline.

Then, distribute green leaves and ask participants to glue them on the cardboard along the top, to make the treetop. Tell them this is the rainforest canopy.

Once the tree is completed, pass out animals so that each participant has one animal. Duplicates are fine. Invite the children participants to glue their animals to the part of the tree where those animals live.

Ask:

- What would these animals do without this tree?
- Why is important to have these animals on the earth?

## Including All Participants

For younger participants or participants with physical limitations, ask other participants or leaders to help place items where they belong.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the participants who participated in the session today. Did they learn what it means to be interconnected? Were participants able to identify why caring for the earth is important not only to animals but to themselves? Does anyone need more assistance in crafts? Are there participants who could help others? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: ADOPT A RAINFOREST

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Construction or poster paper and color markers
- Container or shoe box for collecting money
- Rubber cement or glue
- Use tape or other material allowed on your walls in your church to hang posters

## Preparation for Activity

- Go to the [Rainforest Alliance website \[442\]](#) and visit the page on adopting a rainforest.
- Compile information on rainforest projects that need funds.
- Explain the fundraising project to leaders of the congregation. Obtain permission to raise money in the congregation for the project, advertise in congregational communications, and set out a collection container for donations.

## Description of Activity

This activity will help participants understand the real need of saving our rainforests and give them an opportunity to educate others. Gather participants together to decide what project they would like to fund. Once you have decided, help participants make posters to advertise your fundraising and decorate a can or box for people can fill with financial donations. Consider using your cardboard tree for advertising. Decorate posters with rainforest animals and an explanation of the actual project you have chosen. Hang posters throughout the church and establish a deadline for collecting funds. Advertise in congregational communications including announcements in worship; consider taking a special collection for your project during a service. At the end of your fundraiser, publicize how much money was raised. Publicize a "Thank you" to donors. Send the donation to the appropriate location, as indicated on the website.

## Including All Participants

Pair children with limited abilities with others to make posters and a collection container. Be sure all participants have an opportunity to help decide the particular rainforest project they would like to fund.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: THE GREAT KAPOK TREE PLAY

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Great Kapok Tree, A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest \[438\]](#)"
- Leader Resource 2, [Amazon Animals \[441\]](#)
- Other resources for pictures of the 14 characters, such as magazines to cut up
- Card stock, large popsicle sticks/tongue depressors - one for each character, scissors, and glue sticks

## Preparation for Activity

- Adapt the story into a scripted play and make copies for a number of adult volunteer readers.
- Arrange to present this story as a play to another RE group, a parent group, or the congregation.
- Cut card stock into pieces about 3 inches square-enough for 14 characters.
- Gather pictures of these characters: Narrator, man, boy, monkey, frog, anteater, snake, butterfly 1, butterfly 2, toucan, jaguar, porcupine 1, porcupine 2, and a sloth. Find some on Leader Resource 2, Amazon Animals; cut others from animal magazines or download them from websites such as the [Rainforest Alliance website \[442\]](#) or Enchanted Learning.

## Description of Activity

Preparing a play for one another, another religious education group, parents, or a wider audience helps the participants take a more active role in the story and helps them identify with the animals. This play could be used as the children's story during an earth day service or other special occasion such as a Blessing of the Animals.

Ask participants to each take a picture and cut it out and glue it to a piece of card stock. Help them glue each card stock picture to a wooden stick.

Assign parts of the play to participants and leaders.

Perform the play with each participant holding up their character stick as they speak.

## Including All Participants

If you have non-readers, they can hold the character stick while another participant does the reading. If you have more participants than parts to play, you can have more than one character stick per character.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: FISH KITE

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Two sheets of large, light-colored construction paper per participant
- Bright-colored crayons and/or markers
- Pipe cleaners - one for each participant
- Craft glue
- Masking tape
- Three pieces of 12-inch string per participant
- Yardstick

## Description of Activity

Participants make fish kites to symbolize our care for the all living creatures.

Ask participants to place one sheet of paper on top of the other and draw one long fish shape on the top sheet. Then have each child cut out their fish from both sheets of paper at the same time to make two, identical fish. Then invite them to color the fish in bright colors in any way they like. Remind them to give the fish an eye and scales.

Help them each glue their two fish together along one long edge of the fish. Fold in about one inch of the paper along the mouth part of the fish so that the fold faces into the fish. Glue or tape the pipe cleaner inside the fold, leaving the ends sticking out each side. Fold the pipe cleaner and glue the bottom long side of the fish closed until you hit the tail. The tail should be left open.

After the glue has dried, shape the pipe cleaner into a circle to make the mouth of the fish. Attach the strings to the mouth with tape and attach the other end of the strings to the yardstick. (Knot the string to the yardstick yourself to make sure it is secure.)

If feasible, bring children outdoors and have them hold up their fish and walk quickly to see them "fly."

Remind participants that every living thing deserves a space on earth and this fish can remind them of the color and beauty of all animals.

## Including All Participants

Help children who need assistance drawing, gluing, and inserting the pipe cleaner. If a participant is unable to walk quickly to watch their fish fly, ask another participant to do it for them so they can see their fish in the air.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HEART RIBBON MAGNET

5 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Felt hearts mounted on felt squares and magnets, assembled in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1
- A roll of 1/8-inch violet ribbon
- Extra felt and magnets for new participants, plus glue, sharp scissors, and permanent marker

## Preparation for Activity

- Set on work tables the Heart Ribbon Magnets children began making in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1.
- Cut violet ribbon into 16-inch lengths and set on work tables.
- Review Session 2, Alternate Activity 1 to start Heart Ribbon Magnets for new participants.

## Description of Activity

Ribbons added in colors associated with the Principles help kindergarten and first graders learn the Principles.

This activity connects the color violet and the seventh Principle as children complete their Heart Ribbon Magnets to take home at the close of the program.

Invite children to find the Heart Ribbon Magnet they have been working on and sit at work tables. Tell them the violet ribbon represents the seventh UU Principle, "We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us." Demonstrate how to fold a length of violet ribbon in half, push the folded end into the hole on the side of the heart next to the indigo ribbon, and insert the two loose ends of violet ribbon through the loop formed by the folded end. Pull the violet ribbon through tightly.

Help any new children or visitors begin a Heart Ribbon Magnet, following instructions in Session 2, Alternate Activity 1, and add all seven colors of ribbon. Have all participants check that they have all seven colors. If they are missing any of the ribbons, give them the colors they need to add to their magnet. Invite them to take the magnets home at the close of this session.

## Including All Participants

Partner a very young child with an older child who can help them.

## TAKING IT HOME

It is good to realize that if love and peace can prevail on earth, and if we can teach our children to honor nature's gifts, the joys and beauties of the outdoors will be here forever. — Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the participants learned about the Unitarian Universalist principle about caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us. We read a story about how the animals in a rainforest convinced someone how important even one tree can be their existence. This session demonstrated how we are all interconnected and as human beings, we have the responsibility to care for the earth and everything on it.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Participants learned about some specific rainforest animals. Ask your child about the unusual and exotic animals that live in the rainforest and what they can remember about them. Have them share with the entire family.

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Ask family members what places or animals on earth they are concerned about. How can your family find out more? Explore the Internet or the local library together.

**Family Adventure.** What kinds of animal rescue agencies are located near you? Are there animal shelters or perhaps a raptor center nearby? Are there any wildlife rehabilitation centers nearby? Visit one to see how your family can help these animals, such as donating food or towels. After your visit, discuss the experience. How did everyone feel about the visit? Was it difficult to see the animals? Is there something that you could do to minimize the need for such organizations? What did you learn?

**Family Discovery.** Go to the [World Wildlife Fund \[443\]](#) website and find out what animals are endangered. Choose an animal that the entire family is interested in. Find out more about that animal and identify things to do every day to help save that animal. Consider "adopting" this animal or check out a local zoo to see if they have adopt-an-animal opportunities to help the wild cousins of their endangered residents.

**A Family Game.** Charades: Ask every family member to write the name of an unusual animal on a piece of paper and fold it up and put in a bowl. Each person picks a paper and acts out the animal and until other family members guess what it is. The person who wrote the animal may not guess, but if they get their own animal they can act it out. You cannot talk or give letter clues (e.g., using your fingers to shape an "L" for "lion"). Pair adults or older children with younger children, if appropriate.

**A Family Ritual.** For a specified period of time, choose books about animals to read before bed. Have different family members take turns reading aloud.

# THE GREAT KAPOK TREE, A TALE OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

*Book by Lynne Cherry (A Gulliver Green Book), (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990); permission pending.*

Two men walked into the rain forest. Moments before, the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling monkeys. Now all was quiet as the creatures watched the two men and wondered why they had come. The larger man stopped and pointed to a great Kapok tree. Then he left.

The smaller man took an ax he carried and struck the trunk of the tree. Whack! Whack! Whack! The sounds of the blows rang through the forest. The wood of the tree was very hard. Chop! Chop! Chop! The man wiped off the sweat that ran down his face and neck. Whack! Chop! Whack! Chop! Soon the man grew tired. He sat down to rest at the foot of the great Kapok tree. Before he knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled him to sleep.

A boa constrictor lived in the Kapok tree. He slithered down its trunk to where the man was sleeping. He looked at the gash the ax had made in the tree. Then the huge snake slid very close to the man and hissed in his ear: "Senhor, this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down."

A bee buzzed in the sleeping man's ear: "Senhor, my hive is in this Kapok tree, and I fly from tree to tree and flower to flower collecting pollen. In this way I pollinate the trees and flowers throughout the rain forest. You see, all living things depend on one another."

A troupe of monkeys scampered down from the canopy of the Kapok tree. They chattered to the sleeping man: "Senhor, we have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. When the heavy rains come, the soil will be washed away and the forest will become a desert."

A toucan, a macaw, and a cock-of-the-rock flew down from the canopy. "Senhor!" squawked the toucan, "you must not cut down this tree. We have flown over the rain forest and seen what happens once you begin to chop down the trees. Many people settle on the land. They set fires to clear the underbrush, and soon the forest disappears. Where once there was life and beauty only black and smoldering ruins remain."

A bright and small tree frog crawled along the edge of a leaf. In a squeaky voice he piped in the man's ear: "Senhor, a ruined rain forest means ruined lives... many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this great Kapok tree."

A jaguar had been sleeping along a branch in the middle of the tree. Because his spotted coat blended into the dappled light and shadows of the understory, no one had noticed him. Now he leapt down and padded silently over to the sleeping man. He growled in his ear: "Senhor, the Kapok tree is home to many birds and animals. If you cut it down, where will I find my dinner?"

Four tree porcupines swung down from branch to branch and whispered to the man: "Senhor, do you know what we animals need in order to live? Oxygen. And, Senhor, do you know what trees produce? Oxygen! If you cut down the forests you will destroy that which gives us all life."

Several anteaters climbed down the Kapok tree with their young clinging to their backs. The unstriped anteater said to the sleeping man: "Senhor, you are chopping down this tree with no thought for the future. And surely you know that what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today. The big man tells you to chop down a beautiful tree. He does not think of his own children, who tomorrow must live in a world without trees."

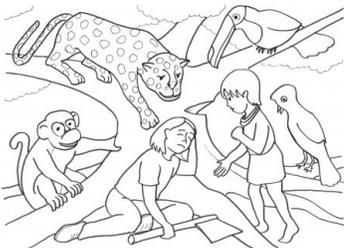
A three-toed sloth had begun climbing down from the canopy when the men first appeared. Only now did she reach the ground. Plodding ever so slowly over to the sleeping man, she spoke in her deep and lazy voice: "Senhor, how much is beauty worth? Can you live without it? If you destroy the beauty of the rain forest, on what would you feast your eyes?"

A child from the Yanomamo tribe who lived in the rain forest knelt over the sleeping man. He murmured in his ear: "Senhor, when you awake, please look upon us all with new eyes."

The man awoke with a start. Before him stood the rain forest child, and all around him, staring, were the creatures who depended upon the great Kapok tree. What wondrous and rare animals they were!

The man looked about and saw the sun streaming through the canopy. Spots of bright light glowed like jewels amidst the dark green forest. Strange and beautiful plants seemed to dangle in the air, suspended from the great Kapok tree. The man smelled the fragrant perfume of their flowers. He felt the steamy mist rising from the forest floor. But he heard no sound, for the creatures were strangely silent.

The man stood and picked up his ax. He swung back his arm as though to strike the tree. Suddenly he stopped. He turned and looked at the animals and the child. He hesitated. Then he dropped the ax and walked out of the rain forest.



"The Great Kapok Tree," Love Surrounds Us, Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

## COLORING SHEET

"The Great Kapok Tree" (PDF) [439]

Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: ANIMALS FOR SHAKE-AND-MAKE

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[444\]](#) for printing



## LEADER RESOURCE 2: AMAZON ANIMALS

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[444\]](#) for printing.





## FIND OUT MORE

### Rainforest Animals and Habitats

Download a [booklet to print out \[445\]](#) on the Enchanted Learning website.

Find information on the [Rainforest Animals website \[446\]](#).

[Rainforest Conservation Fund \[447\]](#) has information on rainforests and preservation.

The [Rainforest Alliance \[442\]](#) website offers projects and stories for children.

### Picture Books on Rainforests

Two are *A Walk in the Rainforest* by Kristin Joy Pratt (Nevada City, CA, Dawn Publications 1992) and *Jaguar* by Helen Cowcher (New York, Scholastic, 1997).

## SESSION 15: CARING FOR THE EARTH

# INTRODUCTION

The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope. —  
Wendell Berry, 20th-century American poet and essayist

The theme of this session is "We can do many things to show love for the earth." When we do act to benefit our planet, we are living the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, affirmation of the interdependent web of life. With a story about Rachel Carson, one of the earliest environmental activists, the session highlights not only what can hurt our environment but also what everyone can do to protect it.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the Unitarian Universalist seventh Principle: We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us
- Affirm that although people have damaged our world it is not too late for people to save it
- Develop understanding that we can show love for the earth by actively participating in planet-affirming activities.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn that Unitarian Universalists believe we must show love to the earth because it is our only home
- Learn that each and every human, animal, and plant depends on this one small planet for life
- Understand how taking care with our environment benefits everyone and every living thing.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story — Brave Enough	10
Activity 2: Johnny in the Ink Pot	10
Activity 3: Recycled Photo Album	30
Faith in Action: Planting Trees	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Planet Earth Paper Mache	30
Alternate Activity 2: Monster Mouth	20
Alternate Activity 3: Poster — Seventh Principle	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

It can be easy to take our earth for granted. We would rather not think about the fact that if the earth is destroyed, we are also destroyed. Think about the things you do each day to help protect the earth. Do you recycle? Do you turn off electronic devices? Do you use daylight rather than lamps when possible? Are there things that you do that damage the environment? Take a few moments to reflect on the things you do for the environment and what things you could do to better protect the environment.

How can you help the children better understand the impact of their actions on the environment? In what ways can you help them understand that the earth is essential to our own survival? Make yourself ready to help participants discover their responsibility to care for our earth.

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Drawing paper and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Place container of ribbon sticks by the door.
- Set drawing paper and crayons on work tables.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. It emphasizes the seventh Principle.

Welcome each child as they enter. Invite them to take their ribbon stick from the container by the door and move to the large group area. Invite them to sit at work tables and draw a picture of the earth.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks (or wrist ribbons) in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Session 1, Leader Resource 1, [Rote Teaching - Love Surrounds Us Song \[340\]](#)
- Cloth for centering table (if possible, violet colored)

## Preparation for Activity

- If you have not previously made ribbons sticks or wrist ribbons for each child do it now as per instructions in Session 1, Opening.
- Spread the cloth on a centering table. Place the container filled with ribbon sticks and the chalice, candle, and lighter on the cloth.
- Check ribbon sticks to be sure all ribbons are still safely attached.

## Description of Activity

Invite children to find their ribbon sticks and then come sit together. Welcome the children.

Optional: Lead the group to sing the song "Love Surrounds Me."

Have each child say their name and wave their ribbon stick above their head.

Then, take a ribbon stick in your hand and invite the children to echo the Principles after you read each one:

We believe each and every person is important. (Hold up the red ribbon)

We believe all people should be treated fairly. (Hold up the orange ribbon.)

In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together. (Hold up the yellow ribbon.)

We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life. (Hold up the green ribbon.)

Everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them. (Hold up the blue ribbon.)

We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world. (Hold up the indigo ribbon.)

Now say:

We use the color violet to remember our seventh Principle: Caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us.

Hold up the violet ribbon and ask the children to find the violet ribbons on their ribbon sticks. Lead the group to say the seventh Principle words again, with you.

Lead the opening chant:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together and come back to the circle.

When all the children have returned to the circle, say "Now we will light the chalice, the symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith." Light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Help attach wrist ribbons (Session 1, Opening) to children's wrists, legs, or fingers, and later, help remove them, if any children are physically unable to use a ribbon stick.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY, BRAVE ENOUGH

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Brave Enough](#) [448]"
- Optional: "[Brave Enough](#)" coloring sheet [449], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to tell it to the group.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet](#) [449] for "Brave Enough." Place crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

This story is about a woman who discovered how people were destroying the environment and making healthy, living plants and animals sick.

Gather the participants so all can see and hear you clearly. Tell them they will hear a story about a woman who discovered how humans were destroying the earth. Tell them she was a Unitarian and one of the first people to fight for saving the environment.

Read or tell the story.

Once you have finished the story, ask:

- What did Rachel Carson do as a child that helped her become a scientist and writer when she grew up?
- How did Rachel first discover something was wrong?
- Do you think Rachel had love for the earth? Is her love what made her speak up? Did everyone listen to Rachel?
- Do you think Rachel was brave? Why or why not?
- Have you ever had to convince anyone that you were right about something? Was it hard? Did you give up? Why or why not?



"Brave Enough" Love Surrounds Us, Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

## COLORING SHEET

"Brave Enough" (Rachel Carson) (PDF) [449]

Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

# ACTIVITY 2: JOHNNY IN THE INK POT

10 minutes

## Description of Activity

This active game encourages participants to think of ways to help the environment.

Explain that you will be playing a game like Charades that some children play in England. The game will be about ways to help the environment. Choose one child to stand away from the group so they cannot see or hear the group. Tell the others to think of something they can do to help the environment and how they can act it out, without speaking, to help the "Johnny" guess what they are doing. Examples of activities could be picking up litter or turning off lights. Then teach the participants to chant "Johnny in the ink pot, what shall we do today?"

Bring the "Johnny" participant back to the circle and lead the children to chant "(Participant's name) in the ink pot, what shall we do today?" Direct the "Johnny" to respond, "Get to work!"

Now invite every participant in the circle to do the agreed-on charade and "Johnny" to guess what they are doing. After "Johnny" guesses, they can choose the next participant to be "Johnny" and repeat the game. Ask these discussion questions:

- Can anyone think of other activities you could have acted out?
- What would that have looked like?
- Are the things you acted out easy things to teach others to do? Why or why not?

## Including All Participants

Some participants may need to just shut their eyes and cover their ears so the group can decide on an activity. If the group is large or you think some children may have a hard time guessing, partner children to be a "Team Johnny." Assist children with hearing or sight challenges to participate in the group's choice of an action and gestures to act it out.

# ACTIVITY 3: RECYCLED PHOTO ALBUM

30 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Empty cereal boxes
- Large brown grocery bags - at least two for each participant
- One-hole punch
- Scraps of yarn, construction paper, and colored tissue paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Color markers
- Optional: Assorted buttons and/or wiggly eyes

## Preparation for Activity

- Ask participants' families (and, if you wish, the congregation) to collect empty cereal boxes so each participant will have one cereal box.
- Set all materials on work tables.

## Description of Activity

This activity demonstrates how participants can transform things we would usually throw away into something beautiful and useful.

Tell the children you will be creating your own photo album out of scraps of paper and other things they might think should be thrown away. Give a cereal box to every participant. Help children cut apart the large front and back of the cereal box into two identically shaped squares or rectangles as the front and back covers. Then, help the children cut the brown paper bags into pages for their album, the same size as the cover or slightly smaller.

Now invite participants to use any of the scraps and odd items to decorate one side of each piece of box. Participants may cover with construction paper or tissue paper first and then add buttons or yarn or other scraps.

Help children assemble the cover, inside pages, and back. Punch several holes to bind the sheets together with yarn.

Talk to participants about what they might save in their album: photos, post cards, or special papers from school. Ask children why it is good to reuse materials when you can, rather than going out to buy something like a photo album.

## Including All Participants

Children will need varying levels of help to cut out boxes and paper bags, tie yarn bows, and perhaps even decorate their photo album cover. Offer assistance as needed; be sure to leave children plenty of tasks to do on their own.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about the participants who participated in the session today. Did they learn what it means to protect the earth? Were participants able to identify why it is important to care for the earth? Did participants understand how we can recycle everyday items into art? Did participants learn that they can alter their behaviors to benefit the planet? Reflect on your effectiveness in presenting this week.

# FAITH IN ACTION: PLANTING TREES

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Information about various tree-planting campaigns
- Poster paper and markers, and masking tape
- Can or box for collecting money

## Preparation for Activity

- Explore tree-planting options at the [Arbor Day Foundation](#) [450]; membership in the Arbor Day Foundation is \$10 and members receive 10 free trees upon joining. Or learn more about the [United Nations Billion Tree](#) [451] campaign that the UN turned over to children, the next generation, via the [Plant for the Planet Foundation](#) [452]. Alternatively, explore a local organization, for example [Trees Atlanta](#) [453].
- Choose a project and secure appropriate congregational permissions.
- Choose native or non-invasive trees to plant and purchase or find smaller, free trees.
- Set a date for planting trees.
- Publicize your effort and sign up volunteers.
- Contact local media if you will have a planting ceremony.

## Description of Activity

Plan and implement a project to engage children in the direct action of planting trees that will help protect the environment for future generations.

Once you have decided on the particulars of your project, help participants make posters to advertise the tree planting and attract volunteers to help. You may decide to ask individual families to "sponsor" a tree if they need to be purchased or find a local nursery that would be willing to donate a few trees. If possible, ask families if they can get one or more of the trees to be planted after the arrangements have been made; this way, children will see the process from start to finish.

Give participants active roles in the actual planting so they will understand all that goes into the tree planting. Talk to participants about the importance of trees and tell them about the particular kinds of trees you are planting. On the day of the planting, make sure to take pictures of the young trees and the participants planting them. You might display a photo montage of the project for members of the congregation. After the planting, publicly thank all the people involved in the project. Consider holding a worship service on the environment or trees on the day you will do the planting. If this is not possible, highlight the tree planting during a later worship service. If your congregation celebrates a Water Communion at the start of the program year, consider using some of the water from that to water the trees each fall.

## **Including All Participants**

Pair children with limited abilities with others who can help them make posters and plant the trees.

Make sure at least one of the planting locations is accessible to everyone.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: PLANET EARTH PAPER MACHE

30 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Balloon
- A platter or bowl to hold balloon steady
- Newspaper strips
- Flour, water, and a shallow dish
- Tissue paper in blue, green, and brown
- A paper clip and fishing line or thin string

## Preparation for Activity

- Plan to work on this project over two sessions.
- Blow up the balloon and secure the end with a knot. Attach a paper clip to the knot for hanging. Place "earth" on glass or bowl.
- Cut or tear newspaper into strips one to three inches wide. Make enough to cover the entire balloon three or four times.
- In the shallow dish, mix flour and water to make a glue-like mixture.
- Set newspaper strips, glue mixture, and balloon on a work table where children can gather and work together.

## Description of Activity

This activity can be completed and then hung in the meeting space to remind participants we must all protect our fragile planet. It may take more than one day to complete the project. On first day, create the surface of the globe. On the second day, decorate the globe.

Have participants dip paper strips into glue mixture, run their fingers down the paper to get rid of the excess mixture, then place the strip on the surface of the balloon as smoothly as possible. Have all children repeat until the globe has been covered at least three times with wet paper.

Allow globe to dry. On the next project day, make a new glue mixture. Use small pieces of torn tissue paper dipped in the mixture to create the oceans and continents. Use green and brown for continents and blue shades for the oceans. Form brown tissue into balls after dipping to show mountains or islands and cover with another single layer of the same color tissue paper to make realistic elevation changes. When the globe is complete and dry, hang from the ceiling with fishing line tied to the paper clip.

## Including All Participants

Encourage participants to help one another dip and scrape paper and perhaps help place paper on balloon. Be sure all the children can reach the balloon, particularly if any cannot stand and move to reach the globe and lay strips of newsprint on it.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MONSTER MOUTH

20 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Brown paper grocery bag
- Scissors
- Markers
- Stapler
- Old newspaper and magazines
- Rubber bands
- Masking tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Set out materials where participants can reach them.

## Description of Activity

Tell participants that you all will design a Garbage Monster that "eats" garbage rather than garbage being litter. Invite participants to decide what the monster will look like and create it according to the group's suggestions.

First, draw a monster face on the bag. Ask participants what color and shape to make the eyes. What kind of eyebrows should it have? Cut silly ears but don't cut them out completely; bend them out from the side of the bag. Cut a funny nose and bend it out as well. Ask participants what colors they want the face parts and color them with markers. Cut out a large hole for a mouth. Make the hole large enough for children to later toss in the "garbage balls" they will make.

Draw teeth or lips around the outside of the hole on the bag. Fringe the top of the bag to make hair. Close the open end of the bag with staples.

Now invite the children to make garbage for the monster to eat. Ask them to crumple newspaper and make three balls each. Wrap each ball in a colorful page from a magazine. Secure and weight each ball with two rubber bands. Then, play "Feed the Garbage Monster." Put the monster on the floor and place a piece of tape on the floor where participants will stand to throw their garbage. Allow each child to throw their three balls of trash into the monster. As a group, try to get 10 balls in. Ask participants what they think would happen if no one threw their garbage away where it belonged? What can they do to make sure people dispose of garbage properly?

If you can recycle your Monster Mouth as paper, be sure to remove rubber bands from balls first.

Affirm that it is part of the Unitarian Universalist faith to care for our earth by disposing of trash properly.

## Including All Participants

Cut the mouth hole large enough and set the throwing line close enough so every child can be successful at throwing in balls.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: POSTER, SEVENTH PRINCIPLE

10 minutes

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Poster - Seventh Principle](#) [454]
- Crayons and/or color markers

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.
- Set crayons/markers at work tables.

### Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite children to think about an example they can draw of the seventh Principle: We can do many things to show love for the earth.

# TAKING IT HOME

The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope. —  
Wendell Berry, 20th-century American poet and essayist

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** the participants learned about the Unitarian Universalist Principle about caring for our planet. While all life shares this earth, human beings are the only ones who do things to destroy it and are also the only ones who can save it. We heard a story about Rachel Carson, one of the first environmental activists in America's history, and how she had to fight very hard for people to listen to her about how humans were hurting the environment.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Participants learned about pollution. Discuss what you know about your own area. Are there major pollution problems where you live? How do you feel about it? Is there something you can do to make it better?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Ask your child about their own habits around the house. What have they learned about the environment that will make them adjust some of their habits such as turning out lights or recycling paper and cans? How can they make sure the whole family has good environmentally friendly habits? Discuss with the entire family.

**A Family Adventure.** Many communities hold annual stream or river clean-ups. The [American Rivers website](#) [455] will tell you where and when local efforts are planned. Arrange to have your entire family participate. After the clean-up day, discuss what the experience was like. How did everyone feel about the work? Were they surprised by the trash they found? Does it make them think about their own waste?

**Family Discovery.** Participants learned about a time in history when companies did not fully comprehend the negative impact they made on the earth. Even individuals do not always realize how their day-to-day lives can have a negative impact on the environment. Go to the Nature website together and [calculate your family's carbon footprint](#) [456]. Think about ways you can all make less of a negative impact.

**A Family Game.** On the Environmental Protection Agency's website, find a number of kids' games including crossword puzzles and online games that help children learn about protecting the environment. [What's Wrong with This Picture?](#) [457] invites the whole family to spot ways our everyday actions can harm the earth and suggests actions to take.

**A Family Ritual.** Make your walks count. Whether you are walking the dog or taking a family stroll after dinner, carry a waste bag with you and pick up garbage that you see along the way. Make sure you wear gloves when you pick up waste. Be sure to recycle and properly dispose of the items you find. Just for fun, keep a list of the things you find. After several months, you might be surprised by the unusual items people toss out their doors!

# BRAVE ENOUGH

By Noreen Kimball

There was once a girl who loved to write stories and poems. She often wrote about the land and birds around her home. Her name was Rachel Louise Carson and she was born in 1907. When Rachel grew up she became a writer and a scientist. Rachel wrote wonderful stories and she always explained the beauty of nature so well you could almost see what she was describing. As a scientist, Rachel was also very careful to describe things exactly as she saw them. She made sure everything she wrote was true.

Since Rachel was always outside studying nature or writing about it, she noticed that a lot of birds and fish were dying. She figured out that the animals were dying from poisons being sprayed from airplanes to help farmers get rid of insects that damaged plants. The poison not only killed the insects, but it also got into the soil and water and killed other animals. Eagles and many other birds and species of animals began to disappear.

Rachel wrote articles and spoke to the U.S. Congress so everyone would know how we were destroying the environment. She even wrote a book about the problems caused by the poison. In her book she described a spring where the skies were quiet and still because so many birds had died. She called that book *Silent Spring*.

People who read Rachel's book started to demand that the government stop spraying the chemicals. The President and Congress asked scientists to look at the chemicals to make sure Rachel was right about what she had said. At first, the chemical companies said that Rachel was wrong, but eventually scientists figured out that the chemicals were getting into the earth and water and were killing many animals, just like Rachel's book said. Because Rachel kept writing and speaking until someone would listen, the government finally stopped using the dangerous chemicals and began to test new ones much more carefully.

People still use poisons and chemicals in the wrong way today, but Rachel Carson helped start a whole new kind of environmentalism—a movement to control pollution of our earth. Even though Rachel was a small, quiet woman, she believed people have the power to save the environment. If Rachel had not been brave enough to stand up for the environment and fight for it until someone listened, we might not have as many species of birds and fish that we do today. Thanks to this brave woman who always told the truth, we still have Bald Eagles flying in our beautiful blue skies.

## COLORING SHEET

"Brave Enough" (Rachel Carson) (PDF) [449]

Illustration: Nancy Meshkoff

# HANDOUT 1: POSTER, SEVENTH PRINCIPLE

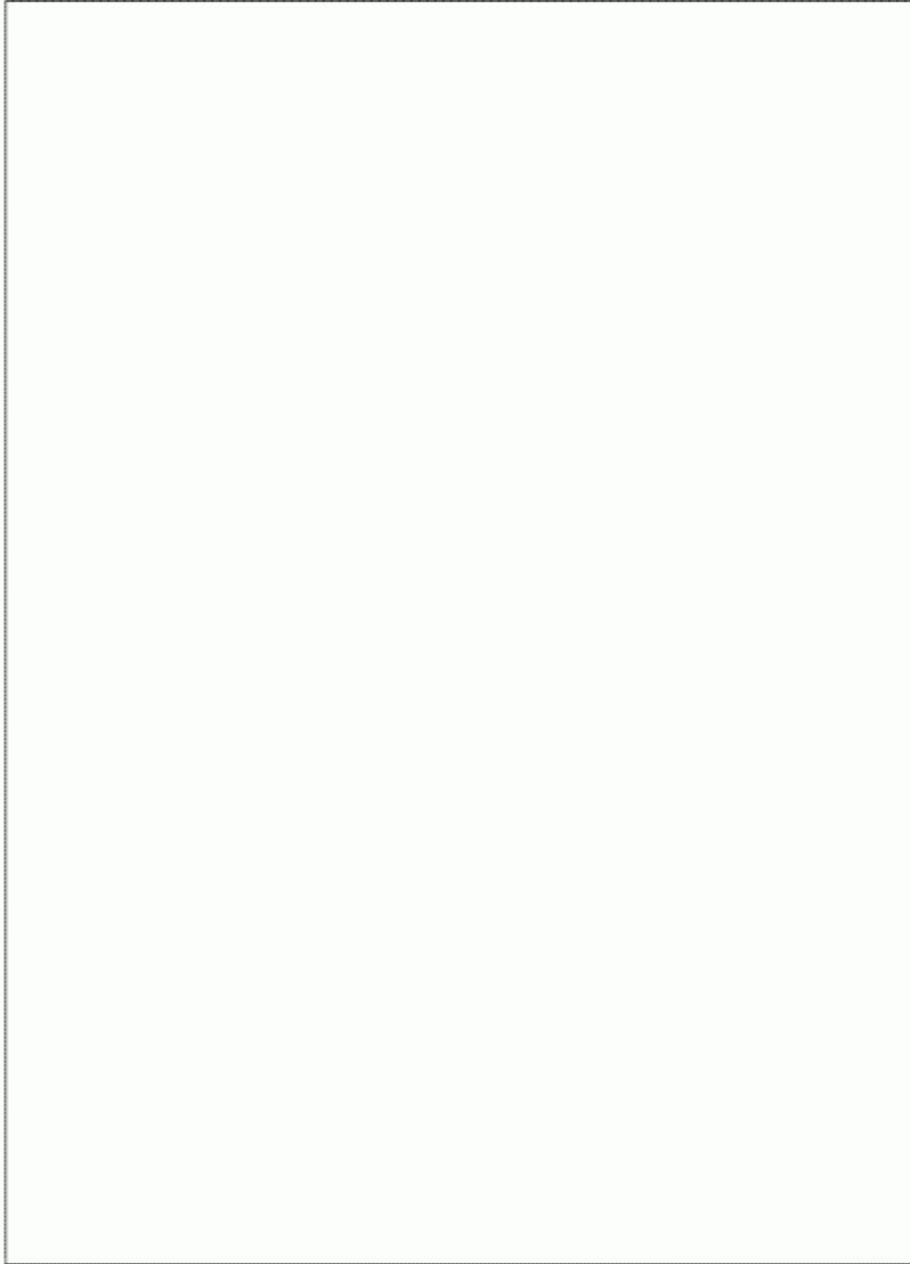
Unitarian Universalist Seventh Principle

We can do many things to show love for the earth.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[458\]](#) for printing.

## **Unitarian Universalist Seventh Principle**



**We can do many things to show love for the earth.**

# FIND OUT MORE

## **Rachel Carson**

The National Women's History Museum website has a [Rachel Carson biography and bibliography](#) [459].

## **Projects, Games, and Stories about the Environment**

For more ideas and resources for teaching children about the environment, look at the Care2 site's [environment pages for children](#) [460], the [Environmental Health and Safety Online](#) [461] website, or the [KidSource environmental pages](#) [462].

## **Picture Books about the Environment**

*The Dandelion Seed* by Joseph P. Anthony and Cris Arbo (California, Dawn Publications, 1997)

*Dear Children of the Earth* by Schim Schimmel (Nevada City, CA, Northword Press 1994)

*Everybody Needs a Rock*, by Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnell (Atheneum, New York, 1974)

*Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood and Cheng-Khee Chee (New York, Scholastic, 1992)

# SESSION 16: OUR UU PRINCIPLES

# INTRODUCTION

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear. — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This session reviews the Principles and celebrates their application in all the Beloved Communities participants can name. Home, school, neighborhood, and faith community all provide places for kindergarteners and first graders to affirm their Unitarian Universalist identity and faith by acting in accord with the Principles. The seven Principles give us tools to meet the world in a fair, just, and loving way. Send a note to parents a week before this session, reminding them to have children bring pennies for the Faith in Action activity; Leader Resource 2 provides a sample.

## Goals

This session will:

- Affirm Unitarian Universalist Principles as a way to proclaim faith
- Help children become strong, informed, and courageous Unitarian Universalists by showing them ways they can act on the seven UU Principles in their Beloved Communities
- Celebrate ways love surrounds us in Beloved Community.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Experience the story of Clara Barton, a Universalist whose life and accomplishments reflect our Principles
- Connect the UU Principles as a set of guiding affirmations for living, surrounded by love, in community
- Engage in putting parts together to understand the whole.

# SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story — Angel of the Battlefield, Clara Barton	15
Activity 2: Making 19th-century Nurse Caps	15
Activity 3: Seven Principles Mobile	15
Faith in Action: Magic Penny Party	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Principles Song	10
Alternate Activity 2: Principle Pictures	30

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Hold a list of the Principles in your hand. Read them to yourself. Read them aloud. Which Principle is the hardest for you to live out? Which Principle feels easiest for you? Think of your work community or home community. How do you express the Principles in your life? How do you tell others about your Unitarian Universalist faith?

# WELCOMING AND ENTERING

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Ribbon sticks or wrist ribbons in a container (Session 1, Opening)
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- A multicolored cloth to cover centering table

## Preparation for Activity

- Arrange a small centering or worship table with multicolored cloth and chalice.
- Place ribbons sticks (or wrist ribbons) in the container by the door.

## Description of Activity

Use this activity when children arrive individually-that is, straggle in-before the session begins. Welcome each child as they enter. Help them find a ribbon stick or wrist ribbon. Ask them to sit in the large group area and hold their ribbons carefully. Suggest they look at each color of ribbon and name it or turn to a friend and match the colors on their two ribbon sticks.

## Including All Participants

Give a ribbon stick to any new child or visitor and write their name on it.

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# OPENING

10 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Chalice and candle or LED/battery-operated candle
- Ribbon sticks
- Empty container
- List of participants

## Preparation for Activity

- Add the chalice and candle to the altar cloth.
- Place empty container in the center of the group area.

## Description of Activity

This activity reinforces the UU Principles as children repeat them and match them with the colors.

Welcome participants. Invite them to name the colors on the ribbons sticks. Ask them to echo you, repeating each Principle after you read it:

We believe each and every person is important. (Participants repeat and hold up a red ribbon.)

We believe all people should be treated fairly. (Participants repeat and hold up an orange ribbon.)

In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together. (Participants repeat and hold up a yellow ribbon.)

We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life. (Participants repeat and hold up a green ribbon.)

Everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them. (Participants repeat and hold up a blue ribbon.)

We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world. (Participants repeat and hold up an indigo ribbon.)

We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us. (Participants repeat and hold up a violet ribbon.)

Now read slowly through the Principles inviting participants to say them with you and then to remember (call out) the color that matches the Principle and hold up that color on their ribbon stick.

Finally, ask participants to wave their ribbon sticks to show how all the colors together make beauty.

Do the opening chant together:

Group chants "Love surrounds us everyday. The Principles show us the way."

Leader says "\_\_\_\_\_ please, put your ribbons away." (Child named returns their ribbon stick.)

Guide children, as they are named, to return their ribbon stick to the container and then return to the circle. This is a way to acknowledge the presence of each participant. If the group is large, say only several names, then direct the others to put away their ribbon sticks all together.

When all ribbon sticks are returned and the children are in the circle, explain that participants will get to take their ribbons sticks home today.

Light the chalice. Lead the group to say together:

Love surrounds the chalice and we are included by the light of the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Provide wrist ribbons for children who are physically unable to wave a ribbon stick. Help attach wrist ribbons to wrists, legs, or fingers according to the mobility of the child.

# ACTIVITY 1: STORY, ANGEL OF THE BATTLEFIELD, CLARA BARTON

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Angel of the Battlefield, Clara Barton \[463\]](#)"
- Optional: "[Angel of the Battlefield](#)" coloring sheet (PDF) [464], and crayons

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable guiding the children's parts when you read or tell it.
- Optional: Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\) \[464\]](#) for "Angel of the Battlefield." Place crayons where children can use them when invited but will not be distracted beforehand.

## Description of Activity

Participants hear a story about a person who lived the seven UU Principles in her life.

Gather the children. Teach them the actions for the story listed at the beginning of the text. Ask them to listen and participate with the actions while you tell the story.

Use these questions to process the story:

- I wonder how it feels to live on a farm.
- How would you feel if your sibling fell from the roof of a barn?
- How did nursing David help show David was important?
- Who remembers how Clara helped the students at her school feel accepted, when she was a teacher?
- Have you ever been shy?

- Being shy did not stop Clara from showing her beliefs when she thought something was not fair. Do you remember the part where Clara did not take a job? Do you remember why she would not do that job? (She showed her belief that all people should be treated fairly, when she chose not to take a job for less money than another employee was going to get for the same job.)
- What did Clara learn from the Red Cross in England?
- Clara Barton organized the Red Cross in America. Do you remember what the Red Cross does? How does the Red Cross help people? Can you think of how the Red Cross shows the UU Principles to many people? How does the Red Cross show fairness? Freedom? Acceptance? Caring? What kinds of things does the Red Cross do that show every person is important?

## Variation

For older children, ask them to stand up (or to raise their hand) each time they hear Clara do something that is from one of the UU Principles.

## Including All Participants

To fully include physically challenged participants in the actions the story calls for, instruct the entire group to move their bodies in ways every child in the room can move (e.g. raising an arm or wiggling fingers).



“Clara Barton, Angel of the Battlefield,” Love Surrounds Us  
Illustration: Amy Paschall

Download, print, and copy the coloring sheet ([PDF](#)) [464] and use it to help children engage with the story.

# ACTIVITY 2: MAKING 19TH-CENTURY NURSE CAPS

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Nursing Caps \[465\]](#)
- White, 9x12-inch construction paper
- Large, stick-on labels
- Red crayons or markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Fold one nursing cap as per instructions on Leader Resource 1.
- Optional: Draw a red cross on each stick-on label, leaving room for participants to write their names.
- Optional: On the [Cyber Nurse \[466\]](#) website, see how nurse's caps have changed over the years.

## Description of Activity

This activity connects the early nursing tradition of "capping" to present day nursing. Say, in your own words:

We heard the story about Clara Barton, a founder of the American Red Cross and a nurse. Nursing has a long history of using white caps to identify nurses. A ceremony was started called the Capping Ceremony. A nurse got "capped" once they were trained to do their job. Today nurses-both men and women-often wear scrubs with a colored cap.

Nowadays, some schools that train nurses have changed the ceremony to a stethoscope ceremony. That shows how important nurses' knowledge and care can be, when people are injured or sick. All of these ceremonies are a way to show that nurses are important people.

Today we will fold a simple nurse's hat and color a red cross on it to remind us of Clara Barton, the Universalist woman who helped start the American Red Cross.

Show the sample cap you have folded. Distribute construction paper. Lead the children through these steps to make nursing caps together.

- Fold construction paper in half so the short ends meet together.

- Turn the paper so the fold is away from your body and the open end toward you.
- Fold in the two triangles on the sides through both pieces of paper.
- Fold over the top triangle.
- Fold the bottom small triangles up on each side of the cap.

Distribute sticky labels and red markers or crayons (or distribute the labels on which you have drawn Red Cross symbols). As needed, invite the children to color a red cross on their badges and write their names. Invite them to stick their Red Cross badge on their cap and wear their cap.

Say:

How does it feel to wear a special nurse's cap? The First UU Principle we says that every person is important. Remember that caps are just part of being a nurse just like the importance of each person is just one of our UU Principles.

How does it feel to have all of us wearing a cap together? I wonder how it feels to know that all Unitarian Universalist's believe the same Principles.

## Including All Participants

For younger participants, make the caps ahead of time. Have the children color the Red Cross symbol on a label and stick the label on their cap.

# ACTIVITY 3: UU PRINCIPLES MOBILE

15 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [UU Principles Mobile \[467\]](#)
- Scissors, including left-handed scissors
- Crayons or markers: red, green, yellow, orange, blue, indigo, and violet
- Single-hole punch
- Yarn
- Transparent tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Obtain permission to hang mobiles where the whole community can see them.
- Copy Handout 1 on light-colored card stock. For very young children and children with fine-motor limitations, you may wish to cut out the shapes.
- Cut yarn into 10-, 12-, and 15-inch lengths.

## Description of Activity

Children express the UU Principles individually and as parts of a whole community belief.

Gather participants at work tables. Distribute handouts and hold one up. Ask: What do you see on the handout? Allow children to tell about the big circle and the small circles.

Invite them to color the small circles in this way:

- We believe each and every person is important. - Red
- We believe all people should be treated fairly. - Orange
- In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together. - Yellow
- We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life. - Green
- Everyone deserves a say about the things that concern them. - Blue

- We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world. - Indigo
- We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us. - Violet

As participants color, read the Principles aloud slowly, reminding them which color goes with each Principle. When coloring is finished, have participants cut out the mobile shapes and the small circles. Help them punch holes where indicated and choose a variety of yarn lengths to tie their seven small circles to the larger shape. Yarn-tying will work for those who can tie shoes. Use transparent tape or knots to secure yarn after children thread it through the holes.

Ask everyone to hold up their mobiles. Say in your own words:

How do you feel when you hold up your UU Principles mobile? Let's hang these where our whole community can see them. We are part of the whole community just like one Principle is part of all our beliefs.

## Including All Participants

Be ready to help cut shapes and string, tie, and tape the yarn for younger children or any who lack the dexterity for these tasks.

## CLOSING

5 minutes

## Description of Activity

Invite everyone to gather in a circle and hold hands. Start by squeezing the hand to your right and saying: "Today I found love, today I gave love." Lead the group to move the hand squeeze around the circle until everyone has had a chance to say the words.

Then, invite the group to unclasp hands lead them to say the closing words in unison:

Be good to yourself.

Be excellent to others.

Do everything with love.

## Including All Participants

If participants do not want to hold hands, invite them to just say the words to the person to their right. If needed, repeat the words aloud with each child.

# LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Think about all the sessions you completed. How did you grow in knowledge of the Unitarian Universalist Principles? How does it help the participants to know what we believe? Are there other ways, in the future, to bring the UU Principles into the life of communities?

# FAITH IN ACTION: MAGIC PENNY PARTY

0 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Parent Note for Magic Penny Party \[468\]](#)
- A large metal bucket, dish pan, or wash tub
- Paper penny rolls
- Two clean, empty, plastic gallon jugs
- 5 dollars in pennies
- Child-size non-folding chair
- Metal pie plate
- A five-quart pan
- Four 12-ounce paper cups
- Masking tape
- A broom handle or a three-foot long 1-inch around dowel
- Scissors

## Preparation for Activity

- Send note to parents/caregivers (Leader Resource 2) by email or postal mail.
- Arrange for extra adult volunteers-an adult to supervise each of up to six penny stations.
- Cut off the threaded openings of the plastic jugs to enlarge the top holes.
- Set up six stations around the perimeter of the meeting space. Place metal bucket, dishpan or wash tub by the door. Make a large group gathering place in the middle of the room.
- Instruct adult helpers how to run each learning station.

## Description of Activity

This Faith in Action activity shows how we come as individuals into a community surrounded by love with the purpose of doing good in the world.

## Penny Stations

- **Drop the Penny.** Place a child-size non-folding chair. In a line from the outside of the back of the chair, place the two empty milk jugs. Participants kneel on the chair and reach over the back to try to drop pennies into the top of the milk jugs.
- **Penny Toss.** Place the metal pie tin on the floor. Walk off 4 feet and tape a length of masking tape to the floor. Participants stand on the line and throw pennies until they get pennies into the pan.
- **Wishing Well.** Fill the five-quart pan with water. Tape a length of masking tape to the floor, three feet away. Participants throw pennies into the water and each time a penny goes in, make a wish.
- **Penny Pass.** Using paper cups, pairs of children pass a penny back and forth. Children start standing close to one another and take a giant step backward each time they catch the penny and try to pass the penny from the new spot.
- **Wrapping Pennies.** Participants work together to count out 50 pennies and put stacks in penny wrappers.
- **Penny Pick-up.** Roll a length of masking tape into a loop and stick the loop on the bottom of the broom handle or dowel. Participants try to pick up pennies off the floor using the tape and dowel. Change tape for each participant.

As children enter, welcome them and invite them to drop their pennies one by one in the bucket. How does it sound when the pennies hit the bucket?

Gather participants in the large group area and say, in these words or your own:

Today we are having a Magic Penny Party to celebrate our UU Principles and our community. A penny is a part of a quarter just like we are a part of a community. Each of you brought pennies today. What sound did those individual pennies make when they hit the bucket? Plunk, plunk, plunk. We're going to play some games that use individual pennies. At the end of our time together, we will dump all the pennies into a big container and see what all the pennies sound like. Then we'll count the pennies and donate them to the American Red Cross. There will be an adult to help you at each station. So let's have some fun.

Use pennies from the container at the door to play the games. While you explain the activity to participants, a co-leader or adult volunteer can put 25 pennies in the container at each station to start the games.

Reserve 15 minutes at the end to bring all the pennies from plastic jugs, pie plates, sauce pans, and buckets to the middle of the large group. Dump the pennies into the largest container. You might say:

Wow! When we put all our pennies together how does it sound? I wonder how many pennies we have here. Let's work in small groups and count the pennies.

Form small groups and give them 10 minutes to count and wrap pennies, with adult help. (It won't be a perfect count; you may not get all the pennies counted.) Re-gather the children and process with these questions:

When we all work together, does more get finished? When we are in community we can make a loud difference. Just like all those pennies.

How should we post the number of pennies so everyone in our whole community knows what we collected?

Send a check for the amount of the pennies to American Red Cross National Headquarters, 2023 E. Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006.

## **Including All Participants**

Have several small paper bags with fewer than 50 pennies for children who did not bring pennies from home. Direct children with physical challenges to the stations where they can succeed.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: PRINCIPLES SONG

10 minutes

## Preparation for Activity

- Read the song in the Description of Activity and practice singing it to the tune of "Farmer in the Dell" so you can teach the group.

## Description of Activity

This activity sets the UU Principles to a commonly known tune, "The Farmer in the Dell."

Teach the song one verse at a time. Participants will catch on quickly. Once they learn the song, try adding a simple circle dance: Hold hands in a circle facing inward. Circle left on the odd numbered verses (1, 3, and 5); circle right on the even numbered verses 2, 4, and 6; and raise hands high on the 7th verse.

1. Each person is important.

Each person is important.

We know, the Principles.

Each person is important.

2. Each is treated fairly.

Each is treated fairly.

We know, the Principles.

Each is treated fairly.

3. Acceptance and growth.

Acceptance and growth.

We know, the Principles.

Acceptance and growth.

4. The search for true and right.

The search for true and right.

We know, the Principles.

The search for true and right.

5. Everyone can vote.

Everyone can vote.

We know, the Principles.

Everyone can vote.

6. A free world and peace.

A free world and peace.

We know. The Principles.

A free world and peace.

7. Care for living things.

Care for living things.

We know, the Principles.

Care for living things.

# ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: PRINCIPLE PICTURES

30 minutes

## Materials for Activity

- Blank booklets, one for each participant
- Large, stick-on labels
- Crayons and/or markers

## Preparation for Activity

- Use a computer to print the words "My Principles Drawings" on each label or write the labels by hand.
- Stick a label on the front of each booklet.

## Description of Activity

Children process the UU Principles by drawing creatively.

Gather participants at work tables. Explain that the UU Principles are the center of our UU beliefs. These Principles guide us in all that we do.

Pass out booklets and ask each child to write their name on the front (offer help, as needed). Tell participants they may decorate the covers later and invite them to open their books to the first page.

Read the first Principle aloud:

- We believe each and every person is important.

Ask participants to draw a picture to illustrate this Principle. Allow 3-4 minutes; then continue the process, reading each Principle and allowing children 3-4 minutes to draw. Note: Participants may not have finished drawing a Principle before you read the next one; tell them they may choose to move to the next page and draw the next Principle or continue the drawing they are making.

- We believe all people should be treated fairly.
- In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together.
- We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.

- Everyone deserves a vote about the things that concern them.
- We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.
- We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us.

After you have read all the Principles, process using these questions:

- Why is it important that we know all the UU Principles?
- How can we use the UU Principles in our everyday life?
- If someone asks you "What do Unitarian Universalists believe?" what will you answer?

## Including All Participants

Allow participants to draw creatively. Younger children may mostly scribble while older children may draw elaborate scenes. Avoid setting the expectation of a right or wrong answer. Use comments such as, "I like the way you draw" to keep judgment away from the drawings.

# TAKING IT HOME

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear. — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**IN TODAY'S SESSION...** participants celebrated learning all seven Unitarian Universalist Principles and heard about a Universalist woman, Clara Barton, who lived the UU Principles. Participants made nurse caps to remind them of Clara's story and mobiles that demonstrate the gift all the individual Principles are to the whole community.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER.** Do some family role-playing. Talk about situations that happened in your lives this week. Then apply one of the UU Principles to discover how it can relate to the situation. In child-friendly language, the seven Principles are:

We believe each and every person is important.

We believe all people should be treated fairly.

In our congregations, all people are accepted and we learn together.

We believe each person is free to search for what is true and right in life.

Everyone deserves a vote about the things that concern them.

We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.

We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us.

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...** making UU Principle Posters for different rooms in the house. How would you make a poster to display on the refrigerator? How would you make a poster to stick on the bathroom mirror? How would you make a poster to hang by your bed?

**A Family Adventure.** Visit a zoo. Watch each kind of animal. Is there a UU Principle that guides us about caring for animals? How do we care for animals in the world? What ways can one or two families help?

**Family Discovery.** Check out this website to hear a clip of the [Magic Penny Song](#) [469], written by Malvina Reynolds; the lyrics encompass all the UU Principles. Read the words, learn the song, and discover the connections.

**A Family Ritual.** Place a penny next to each plate at your meals to remind you of the basics of the Unitarian Universalist Principles. Give the penny away outside your family.

Download, print, and copy the [coloring sheet \(PDF\)](#) [464] and give to children with their Taking It Home handouts to help them engage with and remember this session's story, "Angel of the Battlefield, Clara Barton."



"Clara Barton, Angel of the Battlefield," Love Surrounds Us  
Illustration: Amy Paschall

# ANGEL OF THE BATTLEFIELD, CLARA BARTON

By Betsy Hill Williams

Teach participants these sounds and actions. Invite them to listen for your cues to act them out during the story.

1. Gallop a gallop a gallop (slapping hands on legs)
2. Clippity Clop, Clippity Clop (slapping hands on floor)
3. Taking care of you (patting your neighbor on the shoulder)
4. ABCs and 123s (just repeating the words)

"Hang on tight to the mane!" Clara heard her brother call as she galloped bareback across the field. **(Gallop a gallop a gallop)** Clara was only five years old, but already her older brothers and sisters had taught her to do more than most five-year-olds did—especially in 1826! She was the baby of the family, and she loved learning to read, spell, and do arithmetic. Clara lived with her family on a farm in North Oxford, Massachusetts.

Every Sunday, Clara's family drove five miles in a horse and carriage to the Universalist church. **(Clippity Clop, Clippity Clop)** Clara's father had helped to build that church and Clara never forgot the Universalist teachings she learned there. She learned that God is love, and that all lives are precious gifts that should not be destroyed.

When her family was not with her, Clara was very shy. This worried her parents, so they sent her away to school when she was nine years old. They hoped she would make friends and forget to be shy. But Clara was so homesick she asked to come home.

When Clara was eleven, her brother David fell from the top of their new barn and was badly hurt. The doctor said he might die. "Please," begged Clara, "let me be David's nurse! I'll take very good care of him!" Her parents and the doctor agreed to let Clara try, so she stopped going to school. **(Taking care of you)** Clara stayed with David day and night. She fed him, gave him his medicine, and changed his bed. This was Clara's first job as a nurse and she did it cheerfully every day for two years!

When she was seventeen, Clara took her first job outside of home. She taught a class of forty participants, from four years old to thirteen years old—all in one room! **(ABCs and 123s)** Clara heard that some of the boys liked to make trouble for the teacher, so on the first day at recess, she offered to play baseball with them. They were surprised to see that she could throw a ball just as hard as they could, and run just as fast! The boys felt a deep respect for their new teacher, and Clara never had to spank or hit her students with a ruler the way other teachers did in those days.

A few years later, a friend in Bordentown, New Jersey, asked Clara to start a public school. **(ABCs and 123s)** Some people there didn't like the idea of public schools that were free, but that didn't scare Clara away. It just made her feel even more sure that she wanted to start the public school. She offered to open a school for participants of all ages and teach without any pay for three months. The school board agreed to give her an old building. On the first day, only six students came to class. But Clara was so popular and such a good teacher that soon there were six hundred participants coming! The town built a new, eight-room schoolhouse. Clara wanted to be the principal of the new school, but in those days nobody would hire a woman to do that job. Instead, the townspeople asked Clara to be the "female assistant". Her pay would be only half the amount of money the town would pay a man to be the principal. Clara felt this was unfair so she gave up teaching and moved to Washington, D.C. to find a new career. **(Clippity Clop, Clippity Clop)**

Clara was living and working in Washington when the Civil War broke out. She saw that the soldiers who were coming home from the war were hungry and they needed clothes and bandages for their wounds. The government was not able to help so many soldiers. Clara saw what they needed, and she used her own money to buy food and clothes for the soldiers. She wrote to the newspapers and asked them to tell people what the soldiers needed. People gave blankets, medicines, and other supplies. **(Taking care of you)**

Then news came from the battlefields that medicine and food did not get to the soldiers. Wounded soldiers fell to the ground and lay there without food or water. Many died of thirst or cold because there was no one to take them to the army hospitals. There were no women nurses to help them. In those days people thought that women were not strong enough to take care of soldiers or be near a war! Seeing women on the firing line shocked the soldiers.

But Clara knew she must do exactly what most people thought no woman could do. At first the Army laughed at the idea, but Clara kept right on asking until she got permission to go to the front lines of the battle. With a wagon full of supplies pulled by four mules, she came to a battlefield in Virginia at midnight. **(Clippity Clop, Clippity Clop)** The army doctor who was in charge was very tired and he had completely run out of supplies. Clara went to work cooking and taking care of the wounded right away. **(Taking care of you)** She even learned to take bullets out of wounded soldiers with a penknife! Later the army surgeon wrote, "If heaven ever sent out a holy angel, she must be the one!" After that, Clara was known as "The Angel of the Battlefield."

For fourteen battles, Clara brought supplies and took care of wounded soldiers from both sides, Confederate (South) and Union (North). **(Taking care of you)** She nursed anybody who needed help, because she still believed what she learned in her Universalist church when she was a child: that every life was precious. She said, "I have no enemies."

Once, she was kneeling beside an injured man, giving him water, when a bullet tore through the sleeve of her dress. It hit the man and killed him instantly. Another time she barely escaped from a battle by jumping onto a horse and then leaping from the horse onto a moving train! **(Gallop a gallop a gallop)**

When the war ended, eighty thousand men were missing from the Union armies. Every day, Clara would hear from women and children who wanted help to find their loved ones. President Abraham Lincoln asked Clara to come to the White House to help him work on this problem. Two weeks later, President Lincoln was shot and killed. Clara was working by herself again. With money President Lincoln gave her, and some of her own money, Clara set up an office. She asked prisoners and others who had been in the war about what had happened to the missing people. She wrote down what they told her and kept the information to help find the missing soldiers.

Soon the money ran out and Clara needed to raise more. Since there was no TV or radio in those days, people would buy tickets to hear speeches about what was happening in the country. Clara began to give lectures about what she had seen during the war. It was hard for Clara to speak in front of hundreds of people. She was still shy. "I would rather stand on the battlefield, than speak at a public meeting," she once said. But large crowds came to hear her wherever she went, and she was able to make enough money to keep her office going. After two years of public speaking, she lost her voice and had to quit.

Clara's doctor suggested she go to Europe to rest. In Geneva, Switzerland, Clara learned about a new organization called the International Red Cross. This organization was started to help soldiers in battle no matter whose side they were on. **(Taking care of you)** Clara went back to the United States and talked to the American lawmakers and asked them to join this organization. She wanted them to sign the Geneva Treaty. This treaty was a promise by all the countries who signed it. The promise meant that during a war, doctors and nurses could take care of the sick and wounded soldiers no matter what country they were from. It was not easy, but she finally convinced the lawmakers. In 1882, the United States became a member of the International Association of the Red Cross.

But Clara didn't stop there. She had an idea. Why should the Red Cross only help people during wars? Why not use the Red Cross to help people in all kinds of disasters like forest fires, floods, and earthquakes? She explained her idea to other countries, and many foreign leaders gave her medals for her work. Clara was president of the American Red Cross for twenty-three years and a Red Cross worker until she was eighty-three!

The next time you take Red Cross swimming lessons, learn Red Cross first aid, or read about the Red Cross coming to the rescue in a disaster, remember Clara. She was a shy but very brave young Universalist girl who grew up to start the American Red Cross!

**COLORING SHEET**

"Angel of the Battlefield, Clara Barton" (PDF) [464]

Illustration: Amy Paschall



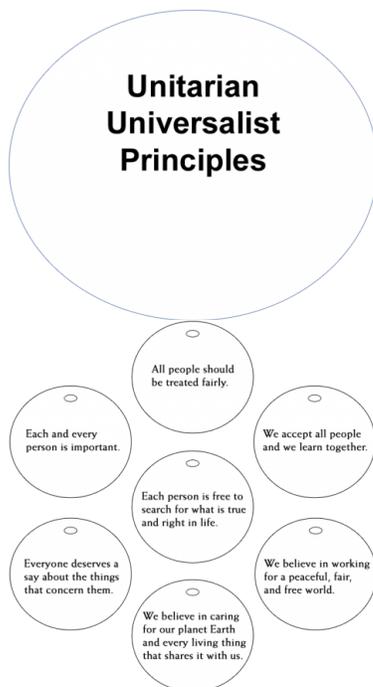
"Clara Barton, Angel of the Battlefield," Love Surrounds Us  
Illustration: Amy Paschall

# HANDOUT 1: UU PRINCIPLES MOBILE

Cut out the large circle and the 7 small circles. Punch holes where indicated. After children color the small circles the color associated with that Principle, tie the small circles with yarn to hang from the large circle, and hang the large circle with yarn to display mobile.

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[470\]](#) for printing.



# LEADER RESOURCE 1: NURSING CAPS

## Printing This Handout

Download a [high-resolution copy of this Handout \(PDF\) \[471\]](#) for printing.

Figure 1:

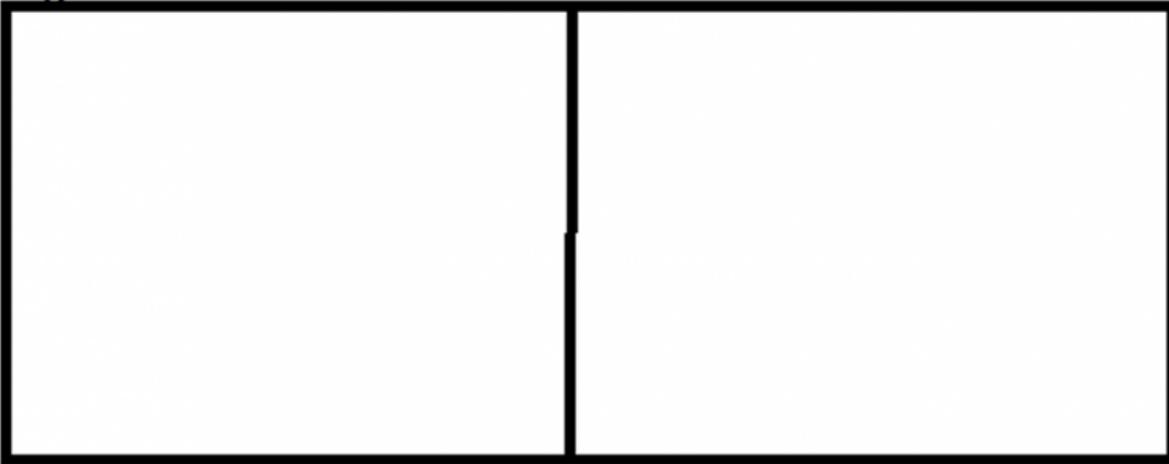
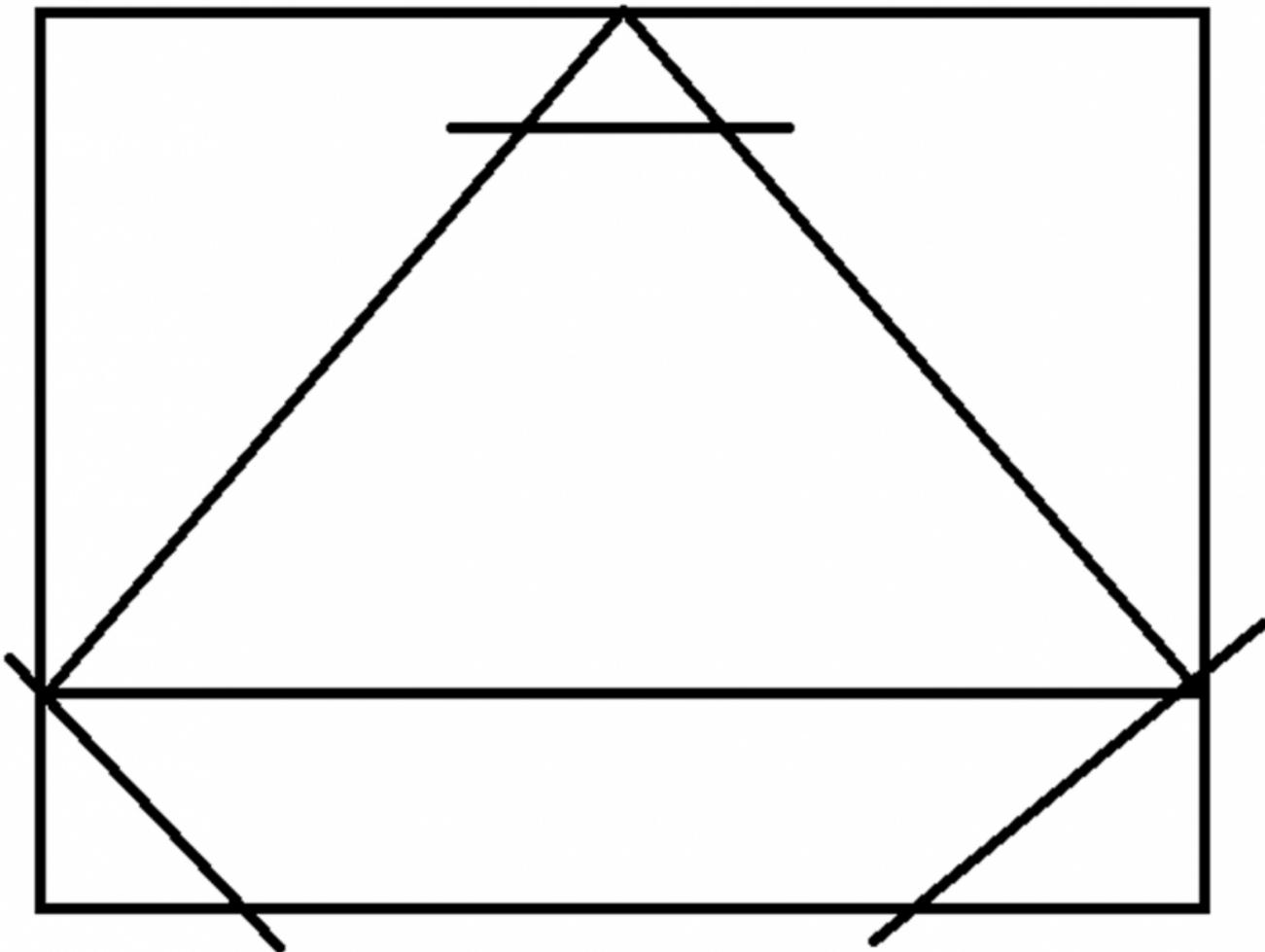


Figure 2:



Nurse Cap. Figure 1: Fold top construction paper in half in middle. Figure 2: Fold sides in. Fold top down. Open the bottom. Fold corners on front and back. Fold up cuff.

# LEADER RESOURCE 2: PARENT NOTE FOR MAGIC PENNY PARTY

Dear Parent,

Next week, on (day, date), the Love Surrounds Us group will have a Magic Penny Party. Please send fewer than 50 pennies in a small bag with your child. We will combine the pennies to make a donation to the American Red Cross in the name of Clara Barton, its founder and a Universalist. We will also play games with the pennies. Help your child count the pennies. Maybe you could agree on some extra chores your child can do to earn the pennies.

Sincerely,

(Co-leader names and contact information)

## FIND OUT MORE

### **Clara Barton**

Read biographies on the [Civil War Home website](#) [472] and in *Clara Barton: Spirit of the American Red Cross* by Patrician Lakin (Aladdin, 2004) or *The Echoes of War (Penny Book)* by J.M. Barrie.

### **The Red Cross, Past and Present**

Research online using the [Red Cross website](#) [473], especially its history pages.

### **Nursing Caps in History**

An online keyword search for "nursing caps" will bring you to a variety of images.

## STORIES IN LOVE SURROUNDS US

## HANDOUTS IN LOVE SURROUNDS US

## LEADER RESOURCES IN LOVE SURROUNDS US

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**Source URL:** <https://www.uua.org/book/25066>

## Links

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[469] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FB5Z\\_30xSe8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FB5Z_30xSe8)

[470] <https://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/lsu/mobile.pdf>

[471] [https://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/lsu/nursing\\_cap.pdf](https://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/lsu/nursing_cap.pdf)

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