

For Ministers, Religious Educators and Leaders



August, 2009 – Story for All Ages

Tapestry of Faith lifespan faith development curricula are published online by the UUA for our congregations to use, at no charge. In the K/1 program, Creating Home, this story explains bees' home lives in terms that evoke a listener's own sense of home. The interactive instructions are designed for an audience of young listeners. Adapt the story and the telling as you wish.

You can enhance the story with a poster or picture book that shows bees and a hive. To refresh your knowledge about bees before telling the story, see "Find Out More" in Session 3 of Creating Home; you will find a resource list and a link to a leader resource, Background on Bees and Beehives.

See all Tapestry of Faith programs for children, youth and adults: www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith.

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What Bees Do at Home

How do you think bees get into their hives?

(If you have an illustration, point to the opening in a beehive.)

That's right; a hive has an opening so the bees can go in and out. We have doors to our homes that we use to go in and out. The bees' home has a door, also.

Some homes have a room or rooms. Beehives have chambers. Someone made the homes we live in and the beehive had to be made, too. Some people build their own homes; some live in homes that have been made by other people, whose job it is to make homes. The bees make the beehive themselves by producing wax and building honeycombs.

What are some of the things people do in their homes?

(You will probably get most of the desired responses: "eat," "sleep," "be safe," "stay away from rain/snow/cold/heat." If not, ask leading questions. As listeners offer responses, tell them what you know about the bee version of each human activity they suggest.)

Do you eat at home? Bees eat at home, too. Do bees eat with spoons, forks or other utensils? No. Can you show me how you think bees eat?

They eat pollen, nectar, and honey. Some of the worker bees have the job of leaving the hive to find pollen and nectar. After finding it, they store it in sacs on their legs and fly back to the hive, where they share it with all the other bees.

Have you ever gathered vegetables from a garden or picked berries from a bush? Let's all pretend we are gathering food.

(Stand up and pretend to pick vegetables or berries.)

Does someone in your home leave to gather food? Some people farm the land for their food. Others work at other jobs to earn money or goods that they trade for food. No matter how the food is collected, people and bees come home to share their food with their families, communities, or colonies. A colony is what you call a hive of bees. Some colonies have 60,000 bees! That's a lot of bees to feed!

Bees rest and sleep in their hive, much as you do at home. How do you think bees sleep?

(Allow listeners to show you how they think a bee might sleep.)

Worker bees take care of the young bees and old bees in their hive. People sometimes take care of children and elderly family members in our homes, too.

We need our homes for protection. Beehives give bees protection from rain and storms. The hive protects the bees when it is too cold or too hot outside.

We use our homes to store the things we need to live: like food and clothing. Bees don't need clothes, but the hive keeps their food, like honey, close by, so they can reach it when they need it.

Within the hive, bees have special jobs to do. The drones are male bees that fertilize some of the eggs. There are not too many drones in a hive. Each hive has more drones than queens because there is only one queen in each hive. The queen's job is to lay the eggs and she can lay thousands of eggs a day! The queen also spends time with the worker bees, which help take care of her.

Most of the bees in a hive are worker bees. These are female bees and they do all of the other jobs in the hive. Worker bees feed and take care of the eggs and baby bees. They build the hive. They add on to the hive when it needs to grow, by producing the wax to build the walls of the hive. They keep the hive cool or warm, as needed. They protect the hive from invaders. They leave the hive to search for pollen and nectar from plants, bushes, and trees and bring it back to the hive as food for everyone. They are always working to keep the hive healthy. That's why people talk about being "as busy as a bee!"

In our homes, we have jobs to do, too. Some people clean and repair the home. Some take care of the young. Some people bring home food and some cook. Our homes provide for many of our basic needs, just like the beehive does for the bees. Bees in a colony also work together to make their beehive a nice place to live.