

# ***With Justice and Compassion: Immigration Sessions for Children's Religious Education***

**By Mandy Neff**

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The stretching activity in Session 2, Grades 1-3 and Session 1, Grades 4-6 comes from Deep Fun, a publication of the Unitarian Universalist Association:

<http://www.uua.org/re/youth/start/deepfun>

## **Program Overview**

Welcome facilitators! You are about to embark on a lively journey with your learners. With Justice and Compassion offers two companion four-session curricula, one for children in grades 1-3 and one for children in grades 4 -6. Each 60-minute session explores immigration into the United States, from a Unitarian Universalist perspective of love, compassion and justice. The program emphasizes the inherent worth and dignity of all involved in the conversation about immigration, including the immigrants themselves and the wider group of Americans with different opinions on issues related to immigration. Parents and caregivers are invited to engage with the program along the way. The program concludes with a Family Night, where children share what they have discovered.

Immigration is a powerful and complex topic. As Unitarian Universalists and as spiritual guides for children, it is especially important for us to invite all voices, and to allow for multiple interpretations and points of view. It is also important to serve as a role model for your group of learners, speaking for just and compassionate change on issues about which you feel passionate. You may be working with children and parents with a wide range of experience. They may be recent immigrants themselves. They may have family members who are immigrants. Some may be unaware of any immigration stories in their own families. They may have discussed contemporary U.S. immigration issues

in a family setting or in school, or they may have no knowledge at all of the current issues. Anticipate a range of reactions from participants and parents.

If you find yourself in a difficult situation, make time to talk about it with your co-leader and your congregation's religious educator. Some discomfort is normal, for both you and your learners, as you delve into stories of immigrants. You need not be an expert—you will learn together. Your job is to provide a safe container for discussion and activity as the children and you, with parents and families, explore a faithful response to immigration justice issues.

#### *A Note on Language*

During the course of this program and in other discussions about immigration, please teach children and parents to use the term “undocumented immigrants” rather than “illegal aliens,” and “Latino or Latina” rather than “Hispanic.” Many immigrant activist groups object to the notion that a person can be illegal. Also, children at this age may still think very literally of extraterrestrials when they hear the word “alien.” The terms “undocumented immigrants” and “Latinos or Latinas” are the preferred terms of the groups they describe and their allies. Using these terms recall us to the humanity of the immigrants, and to our own Unitarian Universalist aspiration to treat every person with dignity.

#### *Using the Internet*

This program makes use of resources on the World Wide Web, so groups will need a computer with an Internet connection for some activities. While every effort has been made to verify the links provided in this curriculum, the World Wide Web is constantly changing. Please be sure to check links as you plan a session, and preview websites before using them with children.

#### *Involving Parents and Caregivers*

Parents, caregivers, and families are an important part of this program. Schedule Family Night on your congregation's calendar far enough ahead so families can plan to attend. Publicize the date well. The curriculum includes letters for you to customize and distribute to Grades 1-3 parents and caregivers after the first three sessions, so they will have a framework for sharing their own family stories, traditions, and experiences with children at home. A sample announcement and invitation for Family Night are also provided, at the end of this program

Please read the whole curriculum before leading it. Reading ahead will give you an overview of what is to come, and help your team plan ahead for special events such as Family Night.

Have a wonderful experience learning about immigration, in a community of seekers!  
Enjoy!

## **Sessions for Grades 1- 3: Introduction**

Children and their adult facilitators explore immigration in a variety of activities that spark compassion and curiosity, in four one-hour sessions and a Family Night event.

Each session begins with a practice of the Buddhist Metta, or lovingkindness, meditation. As the sessions progress, the meditation is expanded to include more people, helping children grow from considering their own happiness and the happiness of their families and loved ones to considering the happiness of the whole world. The group will respond to stories about contemporary immigration and create two projects, a world map mural and a spoken Sharing Our Stories project, based on the children's own family experiences, stories, and traditions.

With Justice and Compassion culminates in a Family Night where the children share what they have learned and created, with their own families and other members of the congregation. Family Night also includes a Faith in Action project, a sock drive for humanitarian relief to new immigrants in the Southwestern United States.

### *Leading First through Third Graders*

Early elementary-age children enjoy social time, hearing stories, and exploring morality, kindness, and ideas of right and wrong. Their fine motor skills are still developing, and gross motor activities are very appealing to them. Children in this age group are excited to share their experiences with each other, and—in a well structured and guided activity—with a larger group. This curriculum allows them to stretch and explore their growing world, especially through Sharing Our Stories and the sock drive.

## Session 1, Grades 1-3

### Learning Objectives

- Experience a practice of lovingkindness meditation
- Consider fairness in the context of human rights
- Explore fair rules through a group game
- Respond to a immigration story told by a Latina or Latino child, through discussion and art

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Tracing paper and color markers
- Parent/Caregiver Letter, Grades 1-3, Session 1 (page 57)
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation

- Customize the Parent and Caregiver Letter and make copies. If you have email addresses for all participants' families, you can also prepare the letter to send electronically after this session.

### ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)

#### Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)

Light your group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wick, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

## **Buddhist Metta Meditation (5 minutes)**

Tell the children you will teach them a meditation from the Buddhist tradition. Say:

*The Metta is a spoken meditation or prayer that starts with hopes for yourself, and expands to eventually include hopes for all of creation. Meditating is one way people come to have compassion for others. We will be doing this meditation together for a few weeks. Some people use this meditation for years.*

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. We will begin by taking three slow, deep, calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Now, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, let's return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all being.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

### **Fair Rules (13 minutes)**

Facilitate a conversation about rules with the children. Make sure you offer every child a chance to speak, and honor children's requests to pass. Use these or similar words:

*Today we'll talk about what is fair and what is unfair. Let's start by talking about sports. Lots of us love to play sports. What are some of your favorites?*

*Sports all have rules to make sure everyone playing gets the same treatment. Players get the same number of turns no matter who they are, and the size of your field or court is the same in this town or the next. Can you tell me a rule from your favorite sport? How does it keep things fair?*

*When you play sports, does everyone follow the rules? How does that feel?*

Let children briefly share frustrations as well as joys. Conclude the discussion with a positive wrap-up, such as:

*Here at our congregation/fellowship, we have rules to keep us safe. (And here in our group, we have a covenant we agreed on at the beginning of our year.) We can all help remind each other of the rules, and how much better it feels when everybody gets treated fairly.*

Invite children to play a quick game. Say:

*We're going to make a hand stack and we are all going to follow the same rules. Here they are:Everybody make two fists. Now, we are going to put our hands one on top of the other until we have a stack. Everyone needs to be able to put their hands in. Now, the person with the bottom fist needs to move their hand to the top. Great! Now the next person on the bottom of the stack needs to move their hand to the top. And the next, and so on. Let's begin!*

Direct the game briefly, then let the group take over. How long can the group go without messing up? Ask: "Was it hard to stay with the rules?" Say:

*Sometimes we all need reminders and help with the rules! Sometimes, rules are really hard to follow. And once in a while, the rules can even be wrong. Let's talk a little more about keeping rules fair.*

Note: If your group is large, modify the game by having each person use one hand. If you have a participant with mobility challenges, gather the group around them or make another appropriate accommodation so they can fully participate.

### **Human Rights Brainstorm (10 minutes)**

Say:

*Human rights are things that all people need to stay alive, safe, and healthy. There are rules that help make sure everyone gets the same human rights, and rules like these apply to people all the time, not just when they're playing sports. Many countries make different laws about these rights. And some countries do a better job than others of making sure everyone has the same rights.*

Ask:

*What are some things that might be human rights?*

Post blank newsprint and write the children's suggestions, in their own words. You may need to prompt with an example, such as water, food, or a doctor's care when they are sick. Human rights include clean water, food, shelter, medical care, education, right to work, right to physical safety, right to be equal/be treated fairly, right to live somewhere. Be sure shelter and physical safety are included on the list the children create.

### **Story (5 minutes)**

One problem in the United States right now is that some of our laws about immigration are not working. These are the rules about who can come into our country and who can stay here. Right now, sometimes parents and children cannot stay together because of

these rules. Here's one of their true stories. While you listen, think about how it must feel to have your family stuck in an unfair law.

Share one of the following short stories with the children. The stories are from the website of the organization [We Belong Together \(www.webelongtogether.org\)](http://www.webelongtogether.org) and are included here with permission. We Belong Together is a project jointly sponsored by a number of immigration justice groups.

*Daisy's Story*

*Have you ever had a nightmare that you get separated from your parents and can't find them? That really happened to me. My name is Daisy. I am nine years old and my sister is 13. One day when I came home from school, my aunt and sister were crying, but our parents weren't there. They were sent back to Mexico. That is where they were born. I don't know why they left me. I don't know who sent them back to Mexico or why. I wish that someone could explain it to me, but when I ask, no one can. Now my sister takes care of me, but I miss my parents. When are they coming home? When am I going to see them again?*

*Max's Story*

*My name is Max and I am in first grade. Antonio is my best friend. We eat lunch, do the monkey bars and play soccer. Antonio has stopped coming to school. I'm sad. My mom said it's because his mom is scared. Antonio's mom heard that she might be taken away and then she won't see Antonio for a long time. Antonio's mom wasn't born here. Some people think that people who weren't born here need to leave their families and go back to where they were born. I miss Antonio. I'm scared about him being without his mom.*

After the story, invite responses, using these questions:

- How do you think Daisy/Max feels?
- Is what happened to her/him fair?
- Who is keeping her/him safe?
- How could she/he stay in touch with her parents/his friend?

**Home Drawings (20 minutes)**

Invite children to draw pictures of what makes them feel safe and taken care of. Suggest:

*Perhaps you feel safe and cared for when you are with certain special people? Or, maybe in a special place like your own spot in the woods, or at home in your room? Perhaps here, at our congregation/ fellowship?*

Say:

*We'll be sharing these pictures with other people in the congregation at Family Night, so draw something it is okay to share. Family Night is one of our chances to talk with adults in the congregation and help them learn more about some of these unfair immigration rules and help us work for change.*

Distribute tracing paper and color markers. About two minutes before the drawing time is up, ask children to finish and come into a sharing circle. Say: "Let's all look at our pictures! Does anyone want to share?"

Collect the pictures and set aside to include in a world map mural (Session 4).

### **Closing (5 minutes)**

Say:

*Next time we meet, we are going to share a special story from your family. Talk with your family and ask to learn a story that comes from your family's past. Everyone has a story, no matter what kind of family you have or where the people in your family come from. Maybe it is a silly story or maybe a very serious one. Maybe it is a story from long ago, or maybe it is one that happened just a little while ago. Perhaps you can tell us about a family tradition you like. Maybe it is a holiday you celebrate in a special way or with special foods. Maybe it's a story that happens here, or maybe in a house you used to live in, or maybe it's even a story from another country. This is your chance to share something special about yourself with all of us!*

Note: The term "immigration," when applied to themselves, can be sensitive for a variety of children, including children who are Native American, African American, or internationally adopted as well as children who are immigrants or whose families include immigrants. Therefore, with children, use the term "family story."

If there is time, give an example—a family story of your own. Then, hand out the letter to parents and caregivers.

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to the children.

## Session 2, Grades 1-3

### Learning Objectives

- Practice lovingkindness meditation
- Share family stories
- Explore the family stories by discovering common themes and different themes

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Parent/Caregiver Letter, Grades 1-3, Session 2 (page 58)
- Notebook and pen for each facilitator
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation

- Customize the Parent and Caregiver Letter and make copies. If you have email addresses for all participants' families, you can also prepare the letter to send electronically after this session.
- If you will record the children telling their stories in Session 3, create and copy a permission slip to send home. Plan how you will make any other accommodations necessary to uphold your congregation's safety policies.

### ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)

#### Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)

Light your group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wick, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

### **Buddhist Metta Meditation (5 minutes)**

Invite the children to practice the lovingkindness meditation from the Buddhist tradition, adding a new person this time. Say:

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. We will begin by taking three slow, deep, calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me.*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Now, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Next, direct the wishes to someone whom don't know very well and whom you have no particular feelings for. Maybe it is the person who sold you a bagel or a bus ticket to get here this morning. Repeat after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Then, return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

### **Sharing Stories (35 minutes)**

Give the children a chance to share their family stories with the group. If the group is large, share in two smaller groups. As the children tell their stories, take notes so you can help them recall the story when it is time to record their telling.

Take a stretch break halfway through the story sharing, giving children these instructions and demonstrating as you go:

*Get ready to move, and make sure you can stretch out your arms without bumping into anyone else.*

*Reach down to get power from the grassroots. (Touch your toes.)*

*Reach up to the sky for inspiration. (Reach your arms up in the air.)*

*Stomp out injustice. (Stomp feet on the floor.)*

*Move in the winds of change. (With arms out to your side twist your torso from left to right.)*

Repeat with a faster pace and repeat again, until you can't go any faster.

Explain to children that next time the group meets you will record their stories to share during Family Night. Tell them you will bring the notes you took to help everyone recall their stories.

### **Response and Game (10 minutes)**

Invite the children think back over the stories. Ask: "How were the stories alike? What were some of the special differences?" Use examples from the various stories children have shared.

Point out that everybody in our world is alike in some ways:

- We all have bodies and minds.
- We all have feelings and spirits that connect us to something greater.
- We all need the human rights we talked about last time we met.

Now say:

*Each of us has special qualities that make us unique—there is only one you, and only one me. And these differences are precious. Each of us gets to do something different with our life in this world, and only one "you" who can do it!*

Invite children to play Duck-Duck-Goose, explaining that it is a game that shows similarities, or things that are the same, and differences. Here are instructions:

- Children except one sit in a circle facing each other.
- One child goes around the outside of the circle, tapping each person gently on the head and saying "duck." When the tapper says "goose" instead of "duck," the child whose head was touched jumps up and chases the tapper around the circle.

- The tapper tries to get all the way back to the empty spot without getting tagged by the child who is chasing.
- If the tapper is tagged, they continues as tapper for another round. If the tapper succeeds in claiming the empty spot, the chaser is the new tapper.

Play one round with the usual words, and then invite the children come up with new categories for the game, such as “lemon-lemon-blueberry” or “truck-truck-bicycle.” Continue playing, using the new words instead. At the end, ask: “Was it easy or challenging to play with the different words?” Say:

*Sometimes it's fun to have a challenge like that. Now let's talk about some other different words—different from what we are used to hearing when we are together, because they are not in English!*

### **Closing (8 minutes)**

Invite children to learn a few phrases in another language before the group meets again. For example, they can learn to count to five, say hello and good-bye, or say the name of a food in another language. Suggest they might learn to say some things in a language from one of their family members' countries of origin. Mention one or two languages related to countries mentioned in the children's stories. Give the children the Parent/Caregiver Letter and tell them this will explain the assignment to the adults at home. Tell them you will invite them to share some of what they have learned, the next time you meet. Some may already speak another language and be eager to share now; ask them to be patient and wait until next time when others will have something to share.

If you will record the children in Session 3, send home the permission slips you have prepared.

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to children in your congregation.

## Session 3, Grades 1-3

### Learning Objectives

- Practice lovingkindness meditation
- Explore the theme of journeying, by creating art
- Rehearse and record stories for Family Night

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- Drawing paper and color markers or pastels; or painting paper and watercolor paints, cups of water, paint brushes, and smocks
- Notes facilitators made as children told their family stories in Session 2
- Audio or audio/video recording and playback equipment. One possibility is to use a computer with free recording software such as [Audacity](#).
- Parent/Caregiver Letter, Grades 1-3, Session 3 (page 59)
- A large world map
- Two-minute timer, or stopwatch
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation

- Customize the Parent/Caregiver Letter and make copies. If you have email addresses for all participants' families, you can also prepare the letter to send electronically after this session.
- Obtain a large world map you can decorate to make a world map mural. Post the map on a wall where you will be able to transform it into a mural with the children's artwork (in Session 4). Ideally, this will be the same place you plan to display it on your scheduled Family Night.
- Recruit a volunteer to record children's stories.
- Prepare and test your recording equipment.

- Make sure all children have permission slips before making recordings and that you have made any other accommodations necessary to uphold your congregation's safety policies.

### **ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)**

#### **Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)**

Light your group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wick, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

#### **Buddhist Metta Meditation (7 minutes)**

Invite the children to practice the lovingkindness meditation from the Buddhist tradition, adding a new person this time. Say:

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. We will begin by taking three slow, deep, calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me.*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Now, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Next, direct the wishes to someone you don't know very well and whom you have no particular feelings for. Maybe it is the person who sold you a bagel or a ticket to get here this morning. Repeat after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, think of someone that you are angry with or that you don't like, and send the blessings to them.*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Then, return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating*

*May I be peaceful*

*May I be happy*

*May I be healthy and free from pain*

*May I have energy and zest for life*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

### **Sharing New Languages (7 minutes)**

Invite each child to share the words or phrases they learned since the previous session.

Teach them all a new word they can say together, such as “Welcome!” in Spanish: “Bienvenidos!”

### **Traveling (12 minutes)**

Point to the United States on the world map you have posted. Engage the children in a conversation about entering the United States, saying:

*People who come to the United States from another country have to travel to get here. They might come here by many different ways, depending on where they’re coming from and how much money they can afford to spend on the trip.*

*Imagine you were coming here from Australia. Where is Australia? [Invite a child to point it out.] Could you drive a car from Australia to the United States? What would you have to do to get across the ocean? [Wait for children’s answers.] What if you lived in Canada? [Invite a child to point it out.] Then, how could you get here? [Wait for their answers.]*

*Imagine you didn't have a car or a lot of money for your trip. What's a way you could get here? [Listen for "walking."] That's right, you could get here by walking! And that is exactly what many immigrants from Mexico are doing now. [Point out Mexico on the map.] Many people cross the border into the United States on foot every day. They come through the mountains and even the desert. It can be a very hard trip!*

*Does walking ever make you tired? Imagine walking all day in the hot sun. Some people travel very far in the heat. What would you most want to have with you? [Listen for "water."] That's right. Water is very important for people traveling in the desert. It keeps you healthy. No matter where people are traveling, no matter how they are traveling, and no matter why they are taking their trip, we all know that water is important for human beings. Clean, fresh water to drink is a human right. And it's important to Unitarian Universalists that all people have human rights.*

*How about you? What ways have you traveled? How did you get here today?*

*How do you feel about traveling on a longer trip, maybe one that takes a whole day? Sometimes it can be exciting; sometimes it can be scary; it can even be boring. What do you think? Would you like to go on a trip?*

### **Art Response (15 minutes)**

Remind the children of the pictures they drew two sessions ago (Session 1) of a place where they felt safe. Say:

*Some of you drew pictures of home. Today we're going to paint (or draw) a picture about going on a journey away from home. Is there anywhere you've been that you might like to go again? Is there someplace you'd like to explore? Think about what you'd want to bring with you. How might you travel? By boat, by train, by walking? On a bicycle? In an airplane? In a car? What would you like to find when you get there? Let's paint a picture about it!*

Distribute art supplies and encourage each child create a piece of art about journeying. Save artwork for the mural you will create in the next session.

### **Sharing Our Stories (15 minutes)**

Tell the children you are going to practice recording the family stories they shared last time the group met. Say this will be a rehearsal for the recordings they will make next time the group meets.

Consult your notes to refresh each child's memory of their story. Use a timer to help children learn to tell their story in two minutes.

**Closing (2 minutes)**

Distribute the Parent/Caregiver Letters. Tell the children the letter invites families to Family Night.

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to children in your congregation.

## Session 4, Grades 1-3

### Learning Objectives

- Practice lovingkindness meditation
- Interact with their family stories, by preparing a mural and story recordings to share at Family Night

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- World map from Session 3
- Artwork on tracing paper from Session 2, and clear, strong adhesive or decoupage glue (such as Mod Podge), brushes, water; and smocks
- Artwork from Session 3, and tape or sticky putty
- Small sticky notes and color markers; and a basket
- Notes facilitators made as children told their family stories in Session 2
- Notes facilitators made as children told their family stories in Session 2
- Audio or audio/video recording and playback equipment. One possibility is to use a computer with free recording software such as [Audacity](#).
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation

- Make sure the world map is posted where the group can decorate it, as described below. Ideally, today you can work on the mural in the same space where you will display it on Family Night. If not, make sure you decorate in a way that leaves the mural portable!
- Recruit a volunteer to record children's stories and prepare them for playback.
- Prepare and test your recording equipment.

- Make sure all children have permission slips before making recordings and that you have made any other accommodations necessary to uphold your congregation's safety policies.

### **ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)**

#### **Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)**

Light your group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wick, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

#### **Buddhist Metta Meditation (7 minutes)**

Invite the children to practice the lovingkindness meditation from the Buddhist tradition, adding a new person this time. Say:

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. Begin by taking three slow, deep calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Now, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Next, direct your wishes to someone you don't know very well and whom you have no particular feelings for. Maybe it is the person who sold you a bagel or a bus ticket to get here this morning. Repeat after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, think of someone you are angry with or someone you don't like, and send the blessings to them. Repeat, after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Finally, envision all of creation, as you recite the blessings and send them out to every being that lives, from person to blade of grass to whale to amoeba. Some people even consider rocks to be alive for this blessing.*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

### **Finishing the Mural (15 minutes)**

Help children attach the “safe and taken care of” drawings from Session 2 and the journey artwork from Session 3 to the world map. The tracing paper drawings can be pasted on top of the map and will be transparent. The journey artwork can be displayed on the perimeter of the map.

Invite children to write their names on small sticky notes. Based on stories and language they have shared, help them place a note on a country with which they have a personal connection. Help children prepare a basket of small sticky notes with markers, so their family members can do the same on Family Night.

### **Preparing for Sock Drive (5 minutes)**

Say:

*Remember when we talked about taking a journey and we said how hard it can be to cross the desert? That much walking can really hurt your feet. There are groups near the border between the United States and Mexico that give medical care to people who have just arrived after walking all that way. What do you think people need when they arrive? [Affirm answers.]*

*One thing people who have made such a long, hard journey need is socks! We'd like to help, so let's ask everyone who comes to our Family Night to bring a clean, new pair of socks. The letter to we sent home with you last time asked the adults to bring socks, but make sure to remind them. Ask everyone who is coming to bring a new pair of socks! That way, we can help immigrants get healthy and show them we care about their human rights.*

### **Family Stories (25 minutes)**

Say:

*We have done a few things together that we can share on Family Night. One is our mural. Another is our family stories. Let's record all of our stories for everyone to enjoy.*

Record each child telling their family story. Play back recordings to test them!

### **Closing (6 minutes)**

Gather the children in a circle. Close the session with a reminder about working together for a more compassionate world, using words such as these:

*We've done a lot together here. We learned about immigration. We learned about human rights. We created a mural, we learned to meditate and send blessings to ourselves and to others. And we have gotten our stories ready to share at Family Night. The next time I see you we'll be sharing our work with our families and our congregation.*

*Let's celebrate all our work with a friendship squeeze. Take the hands of the people next to you, and we are going to pass a squeeze in silence. When you feel the squeeze from one person, pass it to the next person without saying anything. Let's see if we can get the squeeze to go all the way around the circle. I'll start.*

If the group has not done this activity before, you may need to restart two or three times. Be sure to tell them you are starting a new squeeze if you do. When the squeeze returns to you, let them know they have succeeded!

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to children in your congregation.

## **Sessions for Grades 4-6: Introduction**

Children and their adult facilitators explore immigration in a variety of activities that spark compassion and curiosity, in four one-hour sessions and a Family Night event.

Each session begins with a practice of the Buddhist Metta, or lovingkindness, meditation. As the sessions progress, the meditation is expanded to include more people, helping children grow from considering their own happiness and the happiness of their families and loved ones to considering the happiness of the whole world. The group will respond to stories about contemporary immigration and the words of immigrants from the past century. With this background, the children will create two projects, a time line mural and a quiz show on immigration.

With Justice and Compassion culminates in a Family Night where the children share what they have learned and created, with their own families and other members of the congregation. Family Night also includes a Faith in Action project, a sock drive for humanitarian relief to new immigrants in the Southwestern United States.

### *Leading Fourth through Sixth Graders*

Late elementary-age children enjoy increasing intellectual challenge, as well as movement and exposure to varied media. They are becoming more peer-motivated at this age. Typically, they are excited to focus on issues of social injustice and to take action to right things in the world. This curriculum allows them to affirm and stretch their growing competence, especially through the Quiz Show and Sock Drive.

## Session 1, Grades 4-6

### Learning Objectives

- Be introduced to and practice lovingkindness meditation
- Explore fairness and human rights, in discussion and by storytelling through pictures
- Hear a Latino/a immigration story

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- *Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Story* by S. Beth Atkin (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2000)
- Comic strip templates and color pencils
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation

- Purchase *Voices from the Fields* or borrow a copy from your public library.
- Find templates for drawing comic strips, and print one for each participant, plus a few extra. One source is Donna Young's website, [Donnayoung.org Printables and Resources](http://Donnayoung.org/Printables%20and%20Resources). You can easily make a template: Hold an unlined sheet of paper horizontally and draw three squares across the page. Make enough copies so all participants will have at least two sheets.

### ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)

#### Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)

Light your group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wick, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

### **Buddhist Metta Meditation (5 minutes)**

Tell the children you will teach them a meditation from the Buddhist tradition. Say:

*The Metta is a spoken meditation or prayer that starts with hopes for yourself, and expands to eventually include hopes for all of creation. Meditating is one way people come to have compassion for others. We will be doing this meditation together for a few weeks. Some people use this meditation for years.*

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. We will begin by taking three slow, deep, calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Now, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, let's return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

### **What You Know (13 minutes)**

Say: "Human rights are things all people need to stay alive, safe, and healthy. But what are those things? Let's make a list."

Post blank newsprint and write participants' suggestions. They might suggest water, food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. Prompt with these ideas, as well: right to work, right to freedom from torture or slavery, right to be equal/treated fairly, right to live somewhere.

Then say:

*In our meditation, we wished for health for ourselves and for others. But what does it mean to be healthy? Not just in our bodies, but in our minds and spirits? Are body health and mind or spirit health related?*

Help children form two groups: healthy body and healthy mind/spirit. Read aloud the list of human rights you recorded on newsprint, one item at a time. For each item, ask the children whether this item keeps you healthy in body, or in mind and spirit, and invite children to raise their hands if they think the item belongs to their group. Some items may pertain to both a healthy mind and spirit and a healthy body. For instance, children may decide that freedom from slavery belongs to both the healthy body and the healthy

mind and spirit group. In such a case, ask a volunteer in each group to briefly say why they raised their hand.

Ask: "What do you think it might be like if your human rights were not honored?" Invite them to imagine that they have been running and playing on a very hot day and they are thirsty, but they are not allowed to drink water, even though there is a big barrel of drinking water nearby. Would that be safe? How would your body feel? What about your mind and spirit? Invite them to think of other examples of not honoring human rights. For each example, ask how their body would feel? Their mind or spirit?

### **Story (8 minutes)**

Say:

*Here's the story of someone your own age who is an undocumented immigrant in the United States. "Undocumented" means someone is living in the United States, but does not have papers (called documents) that say they have permission to live here. In the story, listen for which human rights the people in this story have and don't have. Do they have the same ones you have every day? Pay special attention to how your body feels as you hear this story.*

Read aloud "Working in La Fresa" by Jose Luis Rios from *Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories*. Show the photographs as you read.

### **Response (10 minutes)**

Lead a discussion, asking:

- What did you notice?
- How did you feel during the story? What sensations did you notice in your body?
- Did everyone in the story have access to all of their human rights? Who was lacking which human rights? How did you feel about this?

Say:

*Sometimes when we talk about what is unfair, it can make us tense or angry. That tension and anger create a kind of energy.*

*Sometimes people use energy created by their anger about unfairness to help other people. That's a good thing to do, and we'll work on it together. Unitarian Universalists all over the country are finding ways to help undocumented immigrants get better treatment. Once we learn more, we can be advocates and*

witnesses for those who need us. This might mean making art or telling stories, or standing up and speaking in front of a group. We can even help our congregations work together for larger change.

Sometimes we need to do something more personal. If we need to calm down from tension and anger, those are times we might turn to prayer, or to the lovingkindness meditation we learned earlier today. Some people like to sing. And sometimes we want to do something physical to channel that energy and tension. Let's try one of those things now.

### **Social Justice Stretching (5 minutes)**

Say:

*Get ready to move, and make sure you can stretch out your arms without bumping into anyone else.*

*Reach down to get power from the grassroots. (Touch your toes.)*

*Reach up to the sky for inspiration. (Reach your arms up in the air.)*

*Stomp out injustice. (Stomp feet on the floor.)*

*Move in the winds of change. (With arms out to your side twist your torso from left to right.)*

Repeat with a faster pace and repeat again, until you can't go any faster.

### **Cartoon Story Drawings (15 minutes)**

Invite children to draw their own cartoon stories. Explain that the cartoons will go onto a group mural you will make together at a future meeting. Assure them they can use stick figures if they like for the people in their cartoon. Give these instructions:

- Your story needs to have at least two characters. And it has to have at least two panels—what happens first, and what happens next. Then, extend the story using as many panels as you need to get to the ending.
- For your cartoon, think of a situation where someone was treated unfairly and did not have their human rights respected. You can use one of the examples we talked about earlier of someone's human rights not being respected, but this time you have a chance to make up your own happy ending.

- Take a minute to think before you start drawing. What is going on in your story? Think about the characters in it. What do they look like? How tall are they? What color hair or skin do they have? Do they wear a hat or something else that could help you tell them apart in the cartoon?
- What happens between the characters? A good story has some kind of a conflict or problem. Keep the story going until the conflict or problem is solved. How do they resolve their conflict? How do they get to a happy ending?

Distribute comic strip templates and color pencils. Explain that this is meant to be a quick cartoon; they will have 10 minutes for drawing. If children finish quickly, have them add some details showing what happened and who each character is.

Collect the cartoon stories to include in a group mural (Session 3).

### **Closing (2 minutes)**

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to children in your congregation.

## Session 2, Grades 4-6

### Learning Objectives

- Practice lovingkindness meditation
- Gain knowledge of historic United States mistreatment of new immigrant populations
- Affirm that Unitarian Universalists appreciate learning about new people and activities
- Understand the role of immigration in United States history through creating an immigration time line

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- A world map
- Computer(s) with Internet connection
- A roll of mural paper; and bright paper, scissors, tape and/or sticky putty, color markers (or other coloring supplies), and sticky notes
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation

- Post the world map.
- Test your Internet connection; verify links and preview websites children will access.

### ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)

#### Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)

Light your group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wick, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

### **Buddhist Metta Meditation (5 minutes)**

Invite the children to practice the lovingkindness meditation from the Buddhist tradition, adding a new person this time. Say:

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. We will begin by taking three slow, deep, calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Now, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Next, direct the wishes to someone you don't know very well and whom you have no particular feelings for. Maybe it is the person who sold you a bagel or a bus ticket to get here this morning. Repeat after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Then, return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

### **Finding Out about Immigration (20 minutes)**

Provide this introduction in the following words or your own. Use the world map to point out places as you talk about them. Children may wish to affirm or add information; if so, encourage them to contribute. Say:

*Many people around the world think of the United States a place where people come to make a new start. What have you learned in school about immigrants? [Take several responses.] People sometimes call the United States a "nation of immigrants," where people from all cultures, countries, ethnicities, and races*

*have come together to share a new life and to help their children get a better education and a better chance at a life without poverty. It is true that hardworking immigrants have made great contributions to this nation. It is also true that our nation has a history of treating these new immigrants badly.*

*Immigrants often come to the United States when there are problems in their own homelands. During the Irish Potato Famine in the 1800s, immigrants fled Ireland to the U.S. and other countries seeking enough food to eat. In Boston, they discovered they were not wanted for available jobs. Many shops posted the sign "No Irish need apply." But things have changed over the years. Today Boston is a city proud of its Irish heritage that celebrates St. Patrick's Day with an enormous parade.*

*In San Francisco during the mid-1800s, immigrants came from China because they could get jobs building the railroad tracks in the American west. It was hard and dangerous work, and yet the Americans already living here did not act grateful. Instead, the Chinese immigrants faced higher taxes and other expressions of hostility. A series of racist laws beginning in 1882 made it very difficult for more Chinese to immigrate to the U.S., and prohibited Chinese immigrants who were already here from becoming citizens, forcing them to register and carry papers or face deportation.*

Tell the children you are going to examine some information about immigration to the United States about a hundred years ago, when many people came into the country, and then investigate immigrants to this country today. Acknowledge that many people came to this country earlier than the time we will investigate; Native Americans probably migrated from Asia more than 10,000 years ago. Some people came here not of their own free will; millions of people were brought from Africa as slaves. Tell them that today they will look at only a small part of the nation's immigration history, between 1880 and 1920.

Share the [immigration map](#) on the website of the [National Constitution Center](#) (<http://constitutioncenter.org>). Ask, "Do some of us have ancestors who came to this country during the period of time shown in the map?" Name the countries represented on the map. Suggest that if children have a grandparent, a great-grandparent, or a great-great grandparent who came from one of these countries to live in the United States, that person may have been an immigrant during this time period.

Then, investigate with the group a [New York Times online interactive map](#) ([www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/03/10/us/20090310-immigration-explorer.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/03/10/us/20090310-immigration-explorer.html)) that

shows where the newest immigrants to the United States come from and where they live in our country today. Click the box that reads "All Countries" on the upper left-hand side of the map to see settling patterns for different foreign-born groups.

Say:

*Today a wave of immigrants from Latin America are escaping violence, starvation, and water pollution that makes people sick. And again, there is a backlash in our country against the newcomers. Immigrants who come across the border in the American Southwest are facing very harsh treatment once they arrive. New, harsh laws have been passed in the State of Arizona, and other U.S. states are copying those laws.*

*Because of the harsh treatment and harsh laws, many Unitarian Universalists have traveled to Arizona to stand up for the human rights of all people, including immigrants. Many of us will go to the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Phoenix, Arizona in June, to work with partners there who are standing up for human rights and justice for immigrants. This is why it's important for us to learn about the immigrant experience in the U.S. today and to share what we learn with others. We want to help make sure the laws of our country support fair treatment and equal human rights for everyone.*

*Children and youth who come to the United States as immigrants often have trouble learning in our schools when they first arrive because they must learn a new language. What do you think about learning another language? Does it sound like fun, or a lot of work? If you moved to another country, would you want to learn that language? What if you were forced to learn that language? Would that be fair?*

Invite children to remember the lovingkindness meditation and the good wishes they offered not just to people they know, but to people whom they do not know personally. Share this quote from Jack Kornfield, an American Buddhist teacher:

*Compassion is the heart's response to sorrow. We share in the beauty of life and in the ocean of tears. The sorrow of life is part of each of our hearts and part of what connects us with one another. It brings with it tenderness, mercy and an all-embracing kindness that can touch every being.*

### **Creating a Time Line (20 minutes)**

Post a large piece of mural paper on the wall. Invite the children to create a time line of immigrant groups to this land. Explain that the time line will be the background for a group mural, to display during Family Night.

Begin the time line with the earliest immigrants of whom we have a record, the Native Americans who came over on the Siberian Land Bridge more than ten thousand years ago. Help children recall the European colonization of this land, identifying the first European settlers to this land as “immigrants.” Use information found in the online time line, [Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930](http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/timeline.html), published by the Harvard University Library (<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/timeline.html>). Help the children visit other websites to identify national groups and the years of their major waves of immigration to the U.S.

If children know when some of their ancestors came to the United States, invite them to use bright-colored paper or a sticky note to mark that event. Encourage them to may ask their families for more information after this session, so they can add to the time line next time the group meets.

### **Spectrums (10 minutes)**

Say, in these words or your own:

*Unitarian Universalists are often at the forefront of fighting discrimination. In 1992, delegates from Unitarian Universalist congregations voted to work toward “a vision of a racially and culturally diverse Unitarian Universalist Association... and Unitarian Universalist faith which reflects the reality of a racially diverse and multicultural global village.” Our fourth Principle, “A free and responsible search for truth and meaning,” also honors the value we place on lifelong learning. Our Unitarian Universalist calls us to be open to what is new and unfamiliar, including people whose culture and language is different from what we are used to.*

Invite children to play a game that names ways we like to learn about and try new things. Invite children to form a line facing you in an open space in the meeting room. Tell them you will name some new experiences and they will show which new things they like best. Say, “I will read some statements. Go to the left side [indicate] if you agree with the statement, the right side [indicate] if you disagree, and in the middle if you feel neutral or not sure.”

- I like trying new foods.

- I like big parties with lots of new people to meet.
- I like reading.
- I like to design or build things.
- I like to hear and speak other languages.
- I have friends who speak languages other than English.
- There is someone in my family who has lived in another country.
- I like finding out about other countries.
- I like exploring.
- I like to sing.

Say, "What did you notice? Are we a group that loves to try new things?"

**Closing (2 minutes)**

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to children in your congregation.

## Session 3, Grades 4-6

### Learning Objectives

- Practice lovingkindness meditation
- Examine immigrant experiences more deeply through online research
- Understand United States immigration history, through making a time line mural for Family Night

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- Computer(s) with Internet access
- Paper and pen/pencil for each participant
- Upbeat background music and player/speakers
- Cartoon stories (Session 1)
- Time line mural (Session 2)
- Clear strong adhesive or decoupage glue (such as Mod Podge), brushes, and water
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook

### Preparation

- Post the time line mural begun in Session 2.
- Test your Internet connection; verify links and preview websites children will access.

### ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)

#### Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)

Light your group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wicks, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

### **Buddhist Metta Meditation (7 minutes)**

Invite the children to practice the lovingkindness meditation from the Buddhist tradition, adding a new person this week. Say:

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. Begin by taking three slow, deep calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Now, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Next, direct the wishes to someone you do not know very well and that you have no particular feelings for. Maybe it is the person who sold you a bagel or a bus ticket to get here this morning. Repeat after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, think of someone you are angry with or whom you do not like, and send the blessings to them:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

### **Exploring Poems from Angel Island (12 minutes)**

Help children recall their discussions from the previous session about immigration history and the idea that the United States still has many immigrants. Tell them that now you will take a closer look at immigrant experiences in history and now. Explain that Angel Island is a place where immigrants from China were detained while they were questioned and a decision was made about whether or not to allow them into the United States. An immigrant would be forced to stay there for at least two weeks, and sometimes as long as six months. While they were waiting, some immigrants wrote poems that they painted or carved on the wooden walls. Say, "Let's look at some photos and some poems written by immigrants in those days, so we can better understand what it was like to be in a detention center."

Visit the [photo gallery](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/angel/gallery.htm) at the Angel Island project website of the Modern American Poetry Project of the English Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ([www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/angel/gallery.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/angel/gallery.htm)). Share poems from [Angel Island Immigrant Station](http://www.cetel.org/angel_poetry.html) ([http://www.cetel.org/angel\\_poetry.html](http://www.cetel.org/angel_poetry.html)), a resource of the PBS series *Ancestors in the Americas*.

### **Why Do People Immigrate? (12 minutes)**

Say:

*Many of us have neighbors, friends, and relatives who immigrated. Why have people come to the United States as immigrants over the years? What reasons can you think of why someone would leave their home, and maybe leave their family, to move to another country?*

Affirm children's responses. If these are not mentioned, suggest: needing a job, needing help to feed their family because they cannot earn enough money for food, wanting to live with family members who have already immigrated to the United States, wanting to make a new start in a new country, running away from violence and danger, wanting free choices about religion or beliefs that are not allowed in the country where they live.

Lead a discussion, using these questions:

• Do you think the reasons people come to the United States now are similar to the reasons they came through Angel Island a hundred years ago? What is the same? What seems different?

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• What would you do if you were an adult and you lived someplace where you couldn't find any work to earn money to buy food for your family? What if you were an adult whose family was in danger from violence in the country where they were living? What would you do?

• Can you imagine yourself trying to travel to a safer country, even if the trip was dangerous? Even if you did not know the language of the new country? Even if you had to come in without permission?

Remind the children that in the group's lovingkindness meditation, they have been wishing peace, happiness, and good health for people they do not even know. Ask: What if we think of people whose lives are very hard in other countries, using our lovingkindness meditation? If we do that, what wishes do we have for them? If we wish to show them lovingkindness, what would that look like? What actions could we do?

Tell the children that showing lovingkindness is not always easy. Say:

*As Unitarian Universalists, we work to offer compassion (lovingkindness) and justice to all people. One way to be loving and fair is to try and understand something about why people immigrate to this country.*

### Poetry Response (12 minutes)

Invite children to write a short poem in response to what they now know about immigration. Ask:

- What story or detail touches you most deeply about what we've learned?
- Of all the things we've learned this month, which is the hardest thing to know?
- Is there anything you wish wasn't happening?
- What can we work on together to change in our hurting world?

If children are ready to write, let them do so. If they want help with creating a poem, suggest an easy form:

- An acrostic, which is a poem based on one word that runs down the beginning of each line. The first letter of each line then begins with a letter of the theme word.

- A three-line poem where all three lines rhyme.
- A poem that has no rhymes at all.

Play uplifting background music while children work on their responses.

Ask children to use clear adhesive to attach the poems and their cartoon stories from Session 1 on the time line in places where there is no writing.

### **Embodying Game (14 minutes)**

Say:

*When we work together we have a better chance of making changes in the world. If we all learn more about how to be compassionate and teach others the same, we can help everyone be treated more justly.*

*Let's work as a team to play "Crossing the Great Divide." This game is simple, but not easy!*

Set up a long, open playing area (up to 40 feet, as your space allows). Form three- or four-person groups. Explain:

*The object for each small group to "Cross the Great Divide" with everyone in the group connected by touching feet with another person. Each group of players lines up at one end of the playing area with all of their feet touching. They then try to get all the way down the field without their feet losing contact. If someone in the group loses contact with someone else's feet, the whole group returns to the starting area and begins again. The first group to get across wins!*

### **Closing (2 minutes)**

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to children in your congregation.

## Session 4, Grades 4-6

### Learning Objectives

- Practice lovingkindness meditation
- Design and rehearse Quiz Show for Family Night
- Play a cooperative game that reinforces compassion

### Materials

- Chalice, candle, and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
- Bells or chimes for Quiz Show teams
- [Quiz Night questions](http://channing.uua.org/documents/washingtonoffice/immigration/quiz_night.pdf) from the [Immigration Quiz Night materials](#) on the UUA website  
([http://channing.uua.org/documents/washingtonoffice/immigration/quiz\\_night.pdf](http://channing.uua.org/documents/washingtonoffice/immigration/quiz_night.pdf))
- Paper and pen/pencil for each participant
- Computer(s) with Internet access
- Invitation letter for Family Night (page 60)
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist Association hymnbook
- Optional (for alternate Embodying Game): One thin dowel for each participant that can be easily broken, an additional eight dowels of the same width, and two rubber bands

### Preparation

- Post the time line mural begun in Session 2.
- Print several copies of the quiz questions from the [Immigration Quiz Night materials](#) on the UUA website.
- Test your Internet connection; verify links and preview websites the children will access.

- Recruit a volunteer to transcribe quiz questions the children choose, to create a quiz question sheet (including correct answers) for the emcee to use at Family Night.
- Customize the invitation letter to Family Night (page 60) and copy for all participants.
- Optional: If you are using the dowel game, test to make sure you can easily break a single dowel and that a bundle of dowels will not break.

### **ACTIVITY PLANS (60 MINUTES)**

#### **Lighting the Chalice (2 minutes)**

Light the group chalice and share these words:

*We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.*

*We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.*

*We light this flame because together, like wax, wicks, and matches,*

*We create something more when we are together.*

#### **Buddhist Metta Meditation (8 minutes)**

Invite the children to practice the lovingkindness meditation from the Buddhist tradition, adding a new person this week. Say:

*Find a comfortable space where your body is not touching anyone else. When people meditate, they often close their eyes so they can concentrate best, so try to do that. Begin by taking three slow, deep calming breaths together. I will count them out for you: Breathe in one, and out one. In two, and out two. In three, and out three.*

*First, direct good wishes to yourself. Repeat each wish after me:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

*Then, think about someone you love, like a parent, a friend, or a sibling. Try to form a picture of them in your imagination. Repeat good wishes for that person after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Next, direct the wishes to someone you don't know very well and that you have no particular feelings for. Maybe it is the person who sold you a bagel or a ticket to get here this morning. Repeat after me:*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Now, think of someone that you are angry with or that you don't like, and send the blessings to them.*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Finally, envision all of creation, as you recite the blessings and send them out to every being that lives, from person to blade of grass to whale to amoeba. Some people even consider rocks to be alive for this blessing.*

*May you be peaceful.*

*May you be happy.*

*May you be healthy and free from pain.*

*May you have energy and zest for life.*

*May you be tender to all beings.*

*May you know laughter with good friends.*

*May you be whole.*

*Then, return to saying the blessings for yourself, repeating:*

*May I be peaceful.*

*May I be happy.*

*May I be healthy and free from pain.*

*May I have energy and zest for life.*

*May I be tender to all beings.*

*May I know laughter with good friends.*

*May I be whole.*

**Responding (25 minutes)**

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Say:

*We want to witness—to share with the larger congregation all we have been learning. At Family Night, we'll display our time line and put on a Quiz Show. Questions for the Quiz Show have already been prepared by some people who work at the Unitarian Universalist Association. Today we'll select some of those questions. We may need to check for new information to update some of the questions—information is always changing.*

Distribute paper, pens, and copies of the Quiz Night questions that have already been written. Point out that the questions are presented in six categories:

- Immigration and Migration in United States History
- Famous Immigrants in the United States
- Immigration and Migration in Art & Literature
- Immigration and Geography
- Questions from the U.S. Citizenship Test
- Immigration Today

Form pairs or triads. Assign one or two categories to each pair or triad, and ask the children to select three or four questions they think are good ones, marking these with a pencil.

Invite children to make up their own additional category and questions. Here are three ideas:

- Justice GA. In June, General Assembly, which is a meeting of representatives from congregations all over the United States, will be held in Phoenix, Arizona. Explore details of Justice GA on the UUA website ([www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)). Make up questions that include things like GA dates, events, cost, and information about scholarships.
- Immigration news from our city, town, or state. Has anything to do with immigration been in the local news lately? Find out using the Internet and make up quiz questions.
- Congregational stories. What is our congregation doing to respond to immigration issues or support immigration justice? Share what you know. Make up some quiz questions.

Distribute paper and pens. Invite the children to use the Internet for research and to check facts. Congratulate the group when they finish. Ask the children to thank the

volunteer who will transcribe and compile the questions for the Quiz Show at Family Night

### **Quiz Show Rehearsal (10 minutes)**

Rehearse using some of the questions the children have selected. Teach them how the game is played so they can explain it on Family Night:

*Players will be divided into teams of four or five. Each team is given a bell or buzzer to use. Children will read a question aloud and have teams talk about the answer. When a team thinks they think they have the correct answer, they should ring their bell or buzzer. If their answer is correct, they score a point. If it is not, another team has a chance to score. Post newsprint for keeping score.*

Choose a different child to read questions for each round of the game, and others to act as referees in case there is a close call as to who rang a bell first. Allow all the children who might like to read questions to rehearse. Do a trial run of a “close call” with bells and the referee.

### **Preparing for Sock Drive (5 minutes)**

Introduce the sock drive:

*During Family Night we want to do something that shows compassion for all. Do you remember our conversation about human rights? One of the most basic human rights is medical care when you are injured.*

*A group called No More Deaths is a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson. The people in No More Deaths give clean, new socks to people who have crossed the Sonoran Desert on foot from Mexico and have no clean clothes when they arrive. New socks help keep their feet clean and safe after the long and difficult journey. We're going to collect socks to send to No More Deaths (or to another group that provides humanitarian aid to new immigrants). So please remind your family to bring a potluck dish to share and a clean, new pair of socks for a new immigrant when you come on Family Night.*

### **Embodying Game (8 minutes)**

Invite participants to play a game. Say: “We’ve been working as a team this month to create the Family Night. Let’s play one final game to remind ourselves that, working together, we can accomplish great things!”

Ask children to stand in a circle very close together, shoulders touching. Ask everyone to turn to face the same direction. Ask everybody take one sideways step inward, which will bring them even closer together. Then, ask the group to slowly and gently sit on each other's laps. The circle should be able to hold the whole group up.

Here is an alternate activity: Give each child a small dowel/stick and ask them to break it. They should be able to do this. Then, pass a group of six to eight dowels/sticks held together by rubber bands and ask them to try and break the bundle. They should be unable to break the larger group.

To conclude, say:

*Look what working together can do! Let's remember this feeling of accomplishment and support at Family Night. Together we will tell the congregation about immigrants, and how we can respond with compassion and work to end injustice.*

### **Closing (2 minutes)**

Distribute the invitation to Family Night.

Extinguish the chalice using the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones, Reading 456 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or chalice-extinguishing words familiar to children in your congregation.

### III. Plans for Family Night

Congratulations on the good work you and the children have done! Family Night is the culmination of the children's month-long experience exploring immigration. The activities invite the children to take a teaching role as they share what they've learned with their families and the congregation. They turn their efforts outward and demonstrate compassion as they collect socks for immigrants who have recently made the crossing. This is a good event for building multigenerational community in your congregation, as people of all ages enjoy art, food, stories, and a Quiz Show.

Note: This Family Night plan assumes you have offered this program for both first-to-third graders and fourth-to-sixth graders. Make any necessary adjustments for your plan and publicity if this is not the case in your congregation.

#### Preparation

*At least one month ahead...*

- Set a date, time, and reserve a space where you will be able to display murals, present the children's family stories, and gather attendees to compete in the Quiz Show. Reserve equipment, e.g., a microphone for the emcee.
- Recruit a registrar to receive RSVPs and to welcome attendees at the event.
- Recruit a sock drive coordinator and choose an organization to receive the donations. One possibility is No More Deaths in Arizona, at (520) 495-5583, or [donations@nomoredeaths.org](mailto:donations@nomoredeaths.org). More information can be found on the [No More Deaths website](#).
- Recruit volunteers to help set up, lead, and clean up on Family Night, including people for food and beverages set-up and clean-up, audio/visual set-up and presentation, kitchen set-up and clean-up, and perhaps an event emcee.
- Write and submit publicity for website, newsletter, and congregational announcements. Use the sample announcement (page 60). Include contact information for RSVP.
- Send special invitations your minister(s), GA delegates, religious educator, social action committee members, and other appropriate people.

*One week ahead...*

- Send a reminder to all who have registered.
- Send invitation letters home with children (page60).
- Recruit volunteers to provide drinks.
- Purchase any needed supplies, such as paper goods for the dinner.
- Check in with group leaders about any final needs or changes on the evening of your event.

*On the day of your event...*

- Display the children's murals (world map, time line). Set out a basket with sticky notes and markers, and any other materials you wish to provide for attendees.
- Set up audio or video playback equipment to share Grades 1-3 family stories; set up microphone for Grades 4-6 Quiz Show
- Set up newsprint for keeping score during the Quiz Show.
- Set up tables and chairs, dishes/cups/utensils/napkins, and buffet area.
- Make a collection area for sock donations.
- Obtain a copy of *Singing the Living Tradition* for the closing reading.

### **Welcoming**

If you expect people to arrive over an extended time, you may wish to encourage mural viewing before lighting a chalice.

- Registrar welcomes attendees as they enter and lets them know where to put hot or cold foods.
- Sock drive coordinator collects socks as people arrive.
- Once most people have arrived, the emcee welcomes participants with the chalice lighting the children have used during the program.

### **Chalice Lighting**

We light this flame because we burn with the passion for justice.

We light this flame because we glow with the light of knowledge.

We light this flame because together, like wax, wicks, and matches,

We create something more when we are together.

### **Stories from Grades 1-3**

Share the younger children's stories first, in case they have an early bedtime.

Emcee invites audience to listen to (or view) the stories and to save applause for the end.

### **Mural Viewing**

Emcee invites attendees to visit and view the murals. The younger children may invite attendees to add notes to countries on the map with which they have a connection, using the basket of sticky notes and markers. While they do this, set-up crew makes any set-up changes needed for the Quiz Show.

### **Sharing Food**

Emcee invites attendees to say a grace or to sing "We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table" (Hymn 407 in *Singing the Living Tradition*) before visiting the buffet table(s) to try the variety of foods people have brought. Remind participants to take a look at the labels to find out where different dishes have come from!

### **Quiz Show**

Emcee announces Quiz Show and helps form teams if needed. Older children can lead the Quiz Show—explaining the game, reading the questions, and keeping score.

### **Closing**

Sock drive coordinator announces how many socks have been collected and where they will be going.

Emcee reminds participants of all the children and volunteers' hard work on this event, to encourage a final round of applause. Extinguish the chalice and share Reading 456 by Elizabeth Selle Jones in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

## **IV: Resources**

### **Parent/Caregiver Letter, Grades 1-3, Session 1**

[Date]

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Today we began a new curriculum: *With Justice and Compassion*. Children will learn about immigration for the next four Sundays [or, insert scheduled dates]. At our next session [date], the children will share family stories with the group. We will work on recording the children's voices telling their stories later in the month, so that we can share these stories at Family Night on [day, date, time].

Please talk with your child this week to prepare them to share a story from your family. Of course, as UUs we know every family is unique! Our group may have biological, adopted, and foster children, with many different kinds of families with stories from many different countries of origin. What's important is to share something special about your family that you are comfortable with. Perhaps you know something about how an ancestor came to be in the United States. Perhaps your child can share a favorite holiday tradition or celebration from a country of origin that is represented in your family. Whatever it is, we look forward to hearing it next Sunday!

Thank you for your support at home!

Your Religious Education leader(s),

[Name(s)]

## Parent/Caregiver Letter, Grades 1-3, Session 2

[Date]

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We heard some great stories today! Thanks for sharing them with us.

Today, we talked about being open to learning or experiencing something new. Before our next meeting [date], we'd like each child to spend a few minutes learning a few simple words or phrases to share in a language other than English. If you choose a language you already speak at home, teach your child a few words or phrases they don't already know! If you choose a language new to your family, ask a family friend who speaks a language other than English, take a trip to the library, or look together at websites that teach language to young children, such as the Learn a Language website, [www.learnalanguage.com](http://www.learnalanguage.com). Learn to count to five, or try simple phrases such as:

- Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I like to eat (favorite food).\_\_\_\_\_.
- It is sunny (or raining).

In whatever way works best for your family, help your child learn and practice one or two phrases to share with the group. They may want to make a note to help themselves remember.

Thank you for your support at home!

Your Religious Education leader(s),

[Name(s)]

## Parent/Caregiver Letter, Grades 1-3, Session 3

[Date]

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Thank you for helping the children in With Justice and Compassion to learn new words!

The children will have one more meeting on [date], and then this program culminates with a Family Night. We invite you to join our group at [location] for Family Night [day, date, and time], when the children will have the opportunity to show and tell you what they have been learning about immigration. We're asking everyone to bring a favorite family dish to share at our potluck—maybe one with a special story! We ask that you please label your dish with ingredients.

At Family Night, you'll get to hear audio recordings of children telling the family stories you've shared with us. The children will show you our group mural, and we'll all enjoy the Quiz Show created by the older children.

We've learned about human rights in our group and are holding a sock drive to support humanitarian aid to [organization] as part of Family Night. We're asking everyone to bring a clean, new pair of socks as your admission to Family Night.

We can't wait to see you there!

Your Religious Education leader(s),

[Name(s)]

## Sample Family Night Announcement

Please join us for Family Night! The children in our congregation's immigration study program, With Justice and Compassion, have been busy learning about immigration over the last month, and they want to share their discoveries with you! We will meet on [day, date, time] at [location].

Please bring an international potluck dish to share, and please label your ingredients and the country the dish comes from.

At Family Night, we're holding a Sock Drive to benefit [insert organization name], a humanitarian organization offering aid to new immigrants. Please also bring a pair of clean, new socks for our donation.

Please RSVP to [volunteer@domain]/phone] by [date] so we have room at the table for you!

## Sample Invitation to Family Night

[Date]

Hello [Name],

The children in our congregation's immigration study program, With Justice and Compassion, extend a special invitation to you to join us at Family Night. We have been busy learning more about immigration and compassion for all people over the last month, and the children want to share their discoveries with you! We'll be sharing family stories, seeing the murals they created, and we'll even get to compete in a Quiz Show before enjoying a potluck meal.

Please bring an international potluck dish to share, labeled with ingredients. We're also asking everyone to bring one pair of clean, new socks for our donation to [insert organization name]. Please RSVP to [volunteer@domain]/phone] by [date] so we know how many people to set up for.

We really hope you can join us!

Sincerely,

Your Religious Education leader(s),

[Name(s)]