

**BUILDING BRIDGES:
A WORLD RELIGIONS PROGRAM**

A Tapestry of Faith Program for Youth

8th-9th Grades



BY MARY K. ISAACS

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This program and additional resources are available on the UUA.org web site at www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith.

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THE PROGRAM

The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone. — Humanist Manifesto III

UU Humanists believe that religion is too important to be based on unprovable beliefs such as a belief in God. They wish to base the meaning of their lives on something that they can be sure of, that is here with us, that gives us meaning and purpose. — Rev. Christine Robinson

Humanism refers to the affirmation of the worth and dignity of every person, a commitment to human betterment, and the necessity for human beings to take responsibility for themselves and the world. — Rev. William R. Murry
I believe in God, but I spell it nature. — Frank Lloyd Wright

Building Bridges is a world religions program to deepen youth's understanding of the dynamic, fascinating, and varied world in which they live. It seeks to broaden their knowledge of humanity and embolden their spiritual search.

The program is organized roughly chronologically, capturing the strong parallel between societal change and religious evolution over human history. The Religions Time Line helps illustrate the emergence of religions in clusters at different points in history. However, this is not a history course. It is a series of workshops that attempts to lovingly and reverently examine some of the closest kept treasures of the human heart. This exploration nurtures participants' positive outlook toward other faiths and the people who follow them.

To study religion together is to invite a certain amount of discomfort for individuals and conflict in a group. This program provides youth a unique opportunity to engage the world's diversity of faiths in a safe, affirming atmosphere that is grounded in Unitarian Universalist faith. As facilitators, acknowledge tensions and disagreement and model how to work toward understanding. Help create an environment where respectful exploration and questioning are encouraged, where differences are encountered with open minds and hearts.

GOALS

- Increase knowledge of religions practiced around the world and in local communities
- Understand how religion addresses basic human needs
- Fosters acceptance of the diverse forms that religious expression takes
- Build awareness of the diversity of followers within every faith; understand that to know someone's religious identity is not the same as knowing what that person thinks, believes, or practices
- Support the faith development of participants
- Empower youth to better appreciate human diversity and connect with others and be able to respectfully discuss important matters with people with whom they disagree
- Nurture open-mindedness and critical inquiry.

LEADERS

Leaders need not be knowledgeable about world religions to facilitate this program. You do need:

- Respect for and curiosity about religions
- Enthusiasm for guiding youth through the explorations of this program
- Ability to respectfully engage with youth in both serious inquiry and fun.

Having respect for faiths does not necessarily mean agreeing with them. To successfully facilitate Building Bridges, you must be able to suspend judgment of a religion's impact on yourself, accept its validity for other people, and help youth decide what they believe is true and good. An attitude of respect and compassion is as important as any information gleaned in this program.

Building Bridges is designed for co-leadership. It is common safe practice to have two or more adult leaders present at each workshop. Co-facilitation also provides the benefit of shared preparation. Consider forming a teaching team with diverse theologies, to model theological pluralism.

PARTICIPANTS

This program is designed for youth in eighth and ninth grades, usually ages 13 to 15. Growing in their use of higher reasoning, these youth can attain significant understanding of different religious concepts and the roles religion plays in human experience. The program is adaptable for somewhat younger or significantly older groups. Each workshop offers activities diverse in style and complexity to address the needs of the group.

In her Tapestry of Faith Toolkit book *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*, Tracey L. Hurd identifies some characteristics of the young adolescent:

- Seeks support for self-esteem and body image as she/he transitions into an adult body
- Engages in abstract and hypothetical thinking
- Concentrates on self and other's perceptions of the self
- Engages actively with peers and social relationships
- Tries to reconcile the inner self with the outer self
- Explores gender, racial, and ethnic identities through affiliations
- Expresses criticisms of self and others
- Seeks belonging and membership, and is concerned with social approval
- Takes on others' perspectives and understands that sharing perspectives does not necessarily mean agreement
- Expresses interest in religion that embodies values
- Sustains faith development by engaging with a community that allows questioning
- Seeks love, understanding, loyalty, and support.

This program offers ways to support the young adolescent, including:

- Promote healthy body image and self-esteem
- Affirm and support the adolescent's many physical, emotional, and cognitive changes
- Model respect
- Be flexible and responsive
- Provide opportunities for complex thinking and the pondering of big questions
- Respect and take seriously the adolescent's self-consciousness
- Recognize that challenging authority provides an outlet for new cognitive skills
- Maintain clear expectations enabling adolescents to make independent decisions
- Keep some routines or rituals that provide continuity from childhood to adulthood
- Be a sounding board for youth's exploration of ideas
- Encourage involvement in multiple settings
- Actively support the adolescent's exploration of identity
- Encourage participation in a faith or religious community
- Provide outlets for questioning faith, religion, and creed
- Facilitate youth's work in the community
- Celebrate both change and continuity.

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

Unitarian Universalism is an inclusive religion and Building Bridges is an inclusive curriculum. No one should be excluded from the program or its activities by real or perceived physical or other limitations.

Inclusiveness sometimes requires adaptation, and specific suggestions for adapting activities are made as appropriate under the heading "Including All Participants." By modifying activities or using alternates, you can include youth with a range of physical and cognitive abilities and learning styles, food allergies, and other sensitivities or limitations.

As you plan workshops, be aware of activities that might pose difficulties for any participants. All spaces, indoor and outdoor, need to be accessible to everyone. Check the width of doorways and aisles, the height of tables, and the terrain of outdoor landscapes.

Allow participants the opportunity to pass on any roles that involve reading. Be prepared to support young people who wish to read, but need assistance. Be alert to group dynamics and ready to do what is needed to keep the workshops safe for all participants.

Since discussion plays a central role in the program, deaf or hearing impaired participants will require an interpreter. For a blind or vision-impaired participant, have an adult volunteer (in addition to the facilitators) explain visuals and provide any other needed assistance. To accommodate a participant with a cognitive or learning disability, discuss with the youths' parents what adjustments you can make to support their full participation.

Find out about participants' medical conditions and allergies, particularly to food. Serve only food everyone can eat.

In the [Teachers section of the UUA website](http://www.uua.org/re/teachers/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/re/teachers/index.shtml), you will find descriptions of a helpful resource book, *Welcoming Children with Special Needs* by Sally Patton. The congregation's religious educator is another resource for adaptations to make workshops as accessible as possible.

FAMILIES

Youth are at a critical time in their faith development. The interest and participation of their most important spiritual guides—their parents—will greatly enhance the benefit they derive from this program. Recognizing the essential role of the family, each workshop includes a Taking It Home section that suggests specific ways families can be engaged. In addition, many Faith in Action activities include ideas for families. To help families utilize these opportunities, distribute Taking It

Home handouts in class, email suggestions to families, and post the Taking It Home handout and other resources you identify on a religious education bulletin board. The Engagement activities (the first Alternate Activity in each workshop) offer another opportunity for parental involvement. Chaperones and drivers may be needed for these offsite visits to various faith communities. Talk with your religious educator about safety procedures. In addition, some workshops suggest that congregational members talk with the group about their experience in different faith communities.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Each workshop focuses on one or more religions except Workshop 1, an introduction to the program, and Workshop 22, a conclusion. All workshops follow the same structure. An opening and a closing bracket each workshop meeting in ritual, establishing continuity and helping to define the religious education space and time as sacred.

Storytelling is an excellent teaching tool, and stories are central to Building Bridges. Each central story tells about the history of a faith or illustrates one of the religion's core concepts. Accompanying activities deepen understanding of the story and of the religion that is the focus of that workshop.

Quote

A quote introduces the subject of each workshop. Leaders may choose to share it with the group if they feel it enriches discussion. Co-leaders may choose to discuss the quote as part of their workshop preparation to help ground them in the workshop concepts and develop a shared understanding of the material.

Introduction

The Introduction identifies key concepts, offers suggestions about activities, and describes the workshop's connection to other workshops. The Introduction will also alert you to special preparation needed for the workshop.

Goals

The goals describe general outcomes for the workshop. Reviewing the goals will help you connect the workshop's content and methodologies with the four strands of the Tapestry of Faith religious education programs: faith development, Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual development, and ethical development. As you plan a workshop, consider the youth, the time and space available, and your own strengths and interests as a leader to determine the most important and achievable goals for the workshop and the activities that will best serve those goals.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives section describes what a participant will learn, become, or be able to do as a result of the workshop activities. Think of learning objectives as the building blocks used to achieve the larger goals of Building Bridges.

Workshop-at-a-Glance

This table lists workshop activities in a suggested order and provides an estimated time for completing each to conduct a 90-minute workshop. The table includes all core activities from the Opening through Closing, shows Faith in Action activities, and lists Alternate Activities. You will need to extend your schedule to fit in Faith in Action; you will need to adjust or extend the schedule to use Alternate Activities.

Workshop-at-a-Glance is a guide to use in your planning.

Many variables inform the time required for an activity. Large group discussion takes more time than small group discussion, but small groups will need time to share with the large group. Youth enthusiasm may lead you to continue an activity longer than planned, and youth disinterest may lead you to move on more quickly than you expected. When planning, remember to consider the time you will need to move participants from one space to another and for clean-up.

Spiritual Preparation

These exercises will guide you to call forth your own life experiences, beliefs, and spirituality. Taking time in the days before the workshop to reflect on its content and in the moments before the workshop to center yourself will support and free you in your work with youth.

Workshop Plan

The Workshop Plan presents every workshop element in detail and in the sequence shown by the Workshop-at-a-Glance table. It also includes Faith in Action, Leader Reflection and Planning, Taking It Home, Alternate Activities, and Resources.

If you are reading Building Bridges online, you can move as you wish among a workshop's elements: Opening, Closing, Faith in Action, Activity 4, Resources, etc. Each element occupies its own web page. You can click on "Print This Page" at any time. However, if you click on "Download Entire Program" or "Download Workshop," you will have a user-friendly document on your computer that you can customize as you wish, using your own word processing program. Once you decide which activities you will use, format and print only the materials you need.

Two regular activities deserve special mention:

- Fact Sheet – Participants review a handout on the workshop's featured religion. Review

concepts not covered in earlier activities and answer questions. Since participants take the fact sheets home, consider providing a folder for each participant. Keep extra copies of fact sheets for youth who miss a workshop.

- Time Line – The Religions Time Line is updated or referred to in every workshop. The time line visually places each religion in its historical context and shows that major religions have emerged in clusters.

The sequence of activities has been carefully thought out, with some leading into the next. Look through the full workshop before deciding how to adapt it.

Activities are designed as a mix of the quiet and the active, and involve a variety of skills and learning styles. Keep this balance in mind as you adjust the workshop to meet your group's needs.

Faith in Action: Every workshop offers a Faith in Action activity. While these activities are optional, Faith in Action is an important element of all Tapestry of Faith curricula. Some Faith in Action activities can be completed in one meeting; others are longer-term and require the involvement of congregants or community members outside your group.

Closing: Each workshop ends with a spoken unison closing and extinguishing of the chalice. This bracketing of the workshop in ritual establishes an element of continuity and helps define the religious education space and time as sacred.

Leader Reflection and Planning: It is helpful for co-leaders, at the end of each workshop, to spend a few minutes reviewing what they have done and planning what they will do next. This segment suggests a few discussion ideas.

Taking It Home: This section provides activities and suggestions for involving families in the ideas and projects of Building Bridges, including discussion, games, family trips, photography, and faith in action activities. Taking It Home activities are primarily addressed to youth, but will be more effective if read and supported by parents. Discuss with parents the best way to communicate with them.

Alternate Activities: Every workshop offers alternate activities. Depending on your time and interests, you may choose to replace one or more of the workshop's core activities with an alternate activity, or add an alternate activity to your workshop. You may also use the alternate activities outside the program for gatherings such as family retreats, multigenerational dinners, or other events involving youth.

Engagement: There is no substitute for direct experience and personal contact with people of other faiths. A special alternate activity in most workshops is the Engagement activity. While your circumstances will affect which and how many of the 16 engagements can be arranged, the more, the better, to assure youth gain the maximum benefit from this program. See "Implementation" for more about engagement.

Resources: Each workshop contains the stories, handouts, and leader resources needed for the workshop. Under the heading "Find Out More," are book and video titles, website URLs, and other selected resources to further explore the workshop topics.

MATERIALS

Each activity includes a list of all materials needed for that activity. Have a poster of the Unitarian Universalist Association Principles and Sources for reference throughout the program. Create the Religions Time Line before the first workshop.

Creating the Religions Time Line

The time line can be created from standard poster board.

- Purchase two sheets of 20- by 28-inch poster board in any light color.
- Cut each sheet in half to create four 20- by 14-inch pieces.
- Match two of the pieces along their 14-inch sides; overlap 2 inches.
- Glue the 2-inch overlap together, making one 14- x 38-inch strip.
- Match a third piece along one of the 14-inch sides; overlap 2 inches.
- Glue the 2-inch overlap together, making one 14- by 56-inch strip.
- Make a heavy, black horizontal line, centered, down the entire length of the 56-inch strip.
- Write "Religions Time Line" across the top of the middle of the strip.
- Starting at the far left edge, measure one inch from the edge; make a hatch mark across the central line, extending one inch above and one inch below. Continue making identical hatch marks at one-inch intervals along the entire length of the long line.
- Go back to the left hand side, and count to the third hatch mark (three inches from the left edge). Darken this hatch mark with a heavier marker and lengthen it to four inches—two inches above and two inches below the central line. Then, count ten hatch marks more (13 inches from the left edge), and darken and extend this hatch mark the same way. Continue darkening every 10th hatch mark. Each hatch

mark indicates a century; the heavier marks indicate a millennium (1,000 years).

- Above the first heavy mark, write (with a marker that will be easily visible against the poster board) "3000 BCE." With the same dark marker, write "2000 BCE" above the next dark hatch mark, "1000 BCE" above the next, "YEAR 0" above the next, "1000 CE" above the next, and "2000 CE" above the last. There will be three inches before the 3000 BCE mark and three inches after the 2000 CE mark. (Note: "CE," denoting the Common Era, and "BCE," denoting Before the Common Era, are used here, having replaced the earlier standard of "AD," denoting Anno Domini and "BC," denoting Before Christ. The CE and BCE notations refer to the same years as their earlier counterparts, but are preferred for academic use as they do not refer explicitly to a particular faith or culture.)
- The Religions Time Line is now ready to use. When you introduce a new religion, you will place a sticky note, with the name and date of the religion's inception, above or below the appropriate spot on the time line.

Holy Texts

Holy books are important for reference throughout the program. Comb your congregation's library and/or purchase them as soon as you decide which workshops you will offer. At a minimum, obtain a New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (Hebrew and Christian scriptures), a Qur'an, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tao De Ching, and the Dhammapada.

LEADER GUIDELINES

Keep Your Sense of Humor

While keeping a sense of humor is a good idea under most circumstances, it is especially valuable when working with youth. Keeping a sense of humor will help you maintain internal balance and diffuse any tension that might arise. Equally important, it will enable you to model humor that is kind and appropriate, not sarcastic, cynical, or cruel.

Know When to Excuse Yourself

In a subject as heartfelt as religion, almost everyone eventually comes up against a particular facet they cannot reliably present without bias. If you do not feel comfortable leading a workshop or an activity, ask your co-leader to do it. Supporting each other in this way will ease the way for you and enrich the program for the youth.

Resources

When doing research online, determine, if you can, who created a site so you have a better idea of its ideological foundations and biases. Many sites with neutral-sounding names are media arms of groups whose beliefs or purposes color the content. Use critical inquiry to ensure you do not unintentionally serve someone else's agenda or spread inaccurate information.

IMPLEMENTATION

Scheduling

Planning and coordination are important to this program. Note that engagements (visits) are not included in the 90-minute workshop time. Schedule the placement of engagements, whether on Sundays or other days, as part of the flow of the program. Planning well in advance of engagement dates allows for recruitment of chaperones, notification of families, publicity for the events, and all necessary permissions and arrangements.

Age Groups

While appropriate or adaptable for a number of age groups, ideally participants in this program will be fairly close, if not in age, then in experience and maturity. Activities and discussions will work best if the age span in the group is not too wide.

Promotion

If possible, begin to publicize the program before the end of the previous spring. Mention it in the congregation's newsletter or other publications, put up articles or one-page flyers in the church, and talk with enthusiasm about this important opportunity for the youth. Building enthusiasm will spur strong attendance, make volunteer recruitment easier, and generate family support.

Youth as Co-Leaders

Consider inviting youth to help shape the program as co-leaders. This option will not appeal to or be appropriate for all youth. Yet, it can help build leadership skills and illustrate theological diversity in the group.

If youth volunteer to co-lead a workshop, invite them to assist in planning, but remember that the final responsibility rests with adult leaders. You might start by inviting youth to co-lead an activity—one with little or no advance preparation. If you extend an invitation to co-lead, find ways to use every youth who volunteers, even those with little experience who may need more support.

Engagements

The engagements with other religious communities are a prime feature of this program. Think them through carefully with your co-leaders.

Choosing your engagements. With the help of the youth, decide which communities you are interested in engaging. After the religions have been chosen, research contacts that already exist with this community through families of participants or communities your congregation has worked with. Contact the religious communities you have chosen and explain your program and your desire to engage with them. Be flexible.

No matter the method of engagement, you will need to include preparation, shared time with members of another religious community, and time for youth reflections after the shared time. It is important to include all three aspects in every engagement.

Preparation. Preparing for engagement helps participants feel at ease. The best way to prepare is to invite a member of the religious community you will engage with to speak to the group about what to expect. If this is not possible, you can prepare the group, using information from the workshop. You might do additional research by talking to religious leaders or reading books or websites that give information on what to expect when visiting different houses of worship. Information about what to wear, where to sit, how to behave, and what youth may hear or see will be useful.

Methods. There is more than one way to engage a religious community and share time with people of a different faith. The most common method is attending worship with another religious community. This is also the easiest. You will want to alert the church, temple, mosque, or other community that you are coming and bringing a group of youth. Ask if someone from the religious community can meet with the group before and/or after worship.

Another form of engagement is meeting with the other religion's youth group. This meeting should be informal. Consider providing food or snacks, but research the religious dietary restrictions. Be aware of any conflicts with holy days or other religious observations when suggesting dates.

A third option involves inviting members of your congregation who currently identify as a member of the religion being studied or have come from that religion. This kind of engagement helps youth understand our own UU theological diversity; Workshop 22, Neo-Paganism offers an engagement designed along these lines.

For religions that could prove difficult to engage, workshops will suggest other ways to experience the religion.

Reflection. Always process the engagement with reflection questions. Common topics for discussion include the nature of the sermon or message, appearance of the worship space, music heard, languages used, holy books quoted, any differences in expectations by age or gender, and how the experience compares to UU worship.

Logistics. Since not all religions worship on Sunday, some engagements might happen outside your regular workshop meeting times. Some engagements might replace meeting times. Keep this in mind when planning your calendar for the year. Other logistics to plan include parental permission forms to take youth offsite, transportation arrangements, chaperones, times and places for pre- and post-engagement discussions, and thank you cards for hosts. Let youth help with logistics and planning as much as possible. Parents can also help, as can other congregants with an interest in world religions. The religious educator will be a useful resource in your planning.

BEFORE YOU START

Before beginning the program, meet with the religious educator to learn of any special needs of participants and to coordinate this program with the goals and resources of the RE program. Learning about the faith identities of the youth's families is recommended. For some religions, family members can be a resource and could make good visitors.

An alternate activity in the closing workshop (Workshop 22) suggests coordinating a worship service. Decide early if you wish to do this so you can talk with the minister and/or worship committee about getting on the worship calendar. Many congregations set their calendar at the beginning of the liturgical year.

RESOURCES

A few books that might be useful are:

Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=706) by Tracey L. Hurd (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005)

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

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2005)

The World's Religions (New York: HarperOne, 1991) or

The Illustrated World's Religions (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), both by Huston Smith

[Religion Facts](http://www.religionfacts.com/) (at www.religionfacts.com/) and [Religious Tolerance](http://www.religioustolerance.org/) (at www.religioustolerance.org/) are both reliable resources that work hard to be unbiased.

[Sacred Texts](http://www.sacred-texts.com/) (at www.sacred-texts.com/) is a comprehensive online source for holy texts in English. If you would like to have simple and inexpensive reference books on hand, look at a few series, such as

the Complete Idiot's Guides (Alpha Books, an imprint of Penguin Group, Inc.), the [For Dummies guides](http://www.dummies.com/store/Religion-Inspiration.html) (at www.dummies.com/store/Religion-Inspiration.html), or the Teach Yourself guides (McGraw Hill).

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

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

Faith Development Office
Ministries and Faith Development
Unitarian Universalist Association
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210-1409
religiouseducation@uua.org

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

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

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

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

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

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

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Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

WORKSHOP 1: TREASURE EVERYWHERE

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Why not let people differ about their answers to the great mysteries of the Universe? Let each seek one's own way to the highest, to one's own sense of supreme loyalty in life, one's ideal of life. Let each philosophy, each world-view bring forth its truth and beauty to a larger perspective, that people may grow in vision, stature and dedication.
— Algernon Black (1932-1972), leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture

This workshop introduces participants to the program, and to a consideration of why religions, including Unitarian Universalism, exist—that is, the essential human needs religions serve.

In future workshops, the youth experience many faiths, seeking insight into and connections with the beliefs and the lived expression of each. Being connected to something, however, does not make it ours. This first workshop prepares youth to approach the beliefs, practices, histories, and gifts of all faiths with openness, reflection, and respect. Encourage youth to approach the study of a new faith in the manner of thoughtful, gracious guests at a formal banquet.

Activity 3, What Do You Know? invites participants to help choose the religions the group will explore and engage. You can build group buy-in by letting the youth help make these choices. See Implementation in the program's Introduction for more guidance.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Demonstrate that religions are created by people in response to fundamental needs for meaning, and ask whether religion is a human requirement
- Assess participants' religious literacy
- Explore reasons to study world religions
- Invite participants to name religions they want to explore in the program
- Demonstrate that Building Bridges will be thought provoking and enjoyable.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become acquainted with the program, leaders, and co-participants
- Identify the purposes of religion
- Understand that human history provides the context for all religions
- Articulate knowledge of world religions
- Express interest in particular religions and contribute to decisions about future workshops.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	20
Activity 1: Story – The Dream	15
Activity 2: What Is Religion For?	15
Activity 3: What Do You Know?	25
Activity 4: Time Line	5
Faith in Action: Appreciate the Faith Around You	20
Closing	10
Alternate Activity 1: Date That Faith	15
Alternate Activity 2: Beliefnet.com	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

This program helps youth develop keen, compassionate discernment about benefits faiths may offer, and why people follow them. Before this first workshop, assess your open-mindedness to the world's variety of faiths. Acknowledge ways leading this program may be a growth experience for you, too.

Think about what you have learned from different faiths, from direct experience or from study. Practice opening your mind by focusing first on positives. For example, identify people of particular faiths whom you have admired; doctrines, world views, or practices that have

appealed to you; life- and community-affirming messages that resonate with you.

Now reflect on your broad experience with religion. This program posits that religions exist, and some persist, because they meet human needs. Consider your deepest needs for spiritual, ethical, and moral direction and your need to belong in community. Consider your need for a faith identity and your ultimate questions about life's meaning. At different times in your life, what have you sought from religion? What have you found? What have you observed that other people seem to seek in religion?

If negative thoughts about a particular faith or about religion in general arise for you, examine these now to ensure you can introduce every faith fairly to youth. It may help to recognize that all faiths develop to meet specific needs in a particular context. Faiths survive

that continue to meet some level of human need. Allow that a religion which does not meet your needs may indeed meet the needs of others and be sacred for them. Remember that every faith has multiple aspects, including its tenets, the institutions it has generated, people who call themselves adherents, and usually a great variety of world views and religious practices. Was your negative experience based on the tenets of a religion? The actions of people who were living the religion according to their understanding of it? Religions serve to connect us to a source greater than ourselves. Yet, they are of and in the world. They are practiced by people, and people are imperfect. Center yourself in empathy with the human needs religion can serve and realism about the fallibility inherent in a human pursuit of the sacred.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Color markers and materials to decorate name tags (e.g., feathers, glitter pens, stickers, tape, and glue)

Preparation for Activity

- Using the newsprint, make a sign: "Make a name tag! Decorate it. Make it look like who you are!"
- Set name tags and materials for decorating them at a work table, and post the sign nearby.
- Make and decorate your name tag, according to the instructions offered below.

Description of Activity

As participants enter, welcome them warmly and invite them to make a name tag. Direct them to the instructions to decorate the name tag so it looks like them. If they ask for more guidance, tell them to make the name tag look like their personality or show what is important to them. Illustrate by explaining why you put certain decorations on your name tag.

OPENING (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, chalice cloth, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Blank name tags and bold markers
- Optional: Name tags participants made in Welcoming and Entering
- Optional: Music, and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Create a worship or centering table—a peaceful, sacred space for the chalice. Place the chalice cloth and then set the chalice/lighter on it.
- Optional: Choose a short piece of meditative music to play.

Description of Activity

The Opening invites the group to become calm and focused in preparation for thoughtful participation in the workshop. Include these elements:

- Chalice-lighting with a reading and/or song
- A specific, focused check-in or sharing
- Introduction to the workshop.

Invite participants who have made name tags in Welcoming and Entering to put them on. Gather the group in a semi-circle around the chalice.

Tell participants they will have a chance to introduce themselves in just a moment. Explain that you will begin each workshop by lighting a chalice, having a reading (and/or listening to music, if that is your plan), quietly relaxing in a period of silence, then sharing a brief, guided check-in.

Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Play music, if you have brought a musical selection. Allow the circle to sit in silence for 15 to 20 seconds. Then say "Let us go around the circle now and have everybody introduce themselves." Invite each participant to say their name and their age or grade, and, if they have made name tags, explain what their name tag decorations mean. In what way does the name tag look like them or show what is most important to them?

Introduce the program with these words, or your own:

Our program this year is Building Bridges. It is a program to build bridges of understanding and connection among people. We will seek to build bridges among all of us who are here, among people in our congregation and our Unitarian Universalist faith, and between ourselves and people in our wider world. We undertake this in a manner that is in keeping with our shared Unitarian Universalist values: by a dedicated, respectful exploration of many of the world's religions. We will learn about many practices and beliefs. We will have opportunities to engage with other religious people: attend their worship services, meet with their religious leaders, and talk to youth about what they treasure about their religion.

The word "religion" is commonly thought to derive from the Latin word *religare* (ray-lih-GAR-ay), meaning to

fasten, tie, or bind. In other words, religion connects. Religion can be seen as connecting people to each other, and, more profoundly, religion connects people to something beyond themselves—to the sacred, to the inexplicable, to a force of spirit people may call God, the Divine, Spirit, Mystery, Love, Oneness, or another name.

Ask:

Did you know that religion is present in every human society ever documented? What else does a human society always have?

Allow participants to offer ideas. Receive all ideas respectfully; respond encouragingly to sincere ideas.

Point out that human societies in every place and time have had language, music, a social order with rules for how to live and behave, and religion. Why?

Tell them that in this workshop they will consider why every human society has religion. Say:

Today we will start exploring why human societies seem to need religion. There is no simple answer. As we look into a variety of religions in future workshops, we will keep that question close at hand.

Another way to ask "Why do all societies have religion?" is to ask "What human needs are met by religion?" About each religion we study, we will ask, "How does this religion meet human needs?"

Including All Participants

Arrange the space or seating around the chalice to accommodate all participants.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – THE DREAM (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Dream](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "The Dream" so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Youth hear and discuss a story about finding treasure at home.

Read or tell the story. Process it with these questions:

- What did the woman learn during her travels?
- Why is it significant that the treasure is in the oven?
- Why do you think the story does not specify the treasure she found? What do you think the treasure was?
- Is there a moral? What do you think it is?
- Why do you think we are telling this story in a program about world religions?
- If our group is like the woman, how is our journey similar to hers? What is our oven? What is our treasure?

After participants have shared, suggest that one way to interpret the story is that the "treasure" represents Truth. Was the woman looking for Truth, when she already had it? The story could be saying, "Why seek out other religions to help you discern what is true? You have all the tools you need already, within your own faith tradition." How do participants feel about this point of view?

Another way to look at the story is this: It is true that the woman found what she wanted right under her nose. However, before, the dream, not only was she not aware it was there, she did not even know she desired it. Before her journey to seek the treasure ("truth") elsewhere, she could not "see" the truth she already possessed. What does the group think about this interpretation?

Ask:

- Are there other ways to look at this story?
- Do you think it is important to study world religions? Why or why not? What is to be gained? What is to be lost?

Say, in your own words:

Right here, in our community, there is a wealth of treasure—religions from all over the world, many times, many places. We may find treasure—wisdom, truth, beauty—in unexpected places. Including, right here, in our own faith home. No matter how far we roam in our studies, we will always come back to ourselves ask ourselves the question, "How does the knowledge of this faith add to my understanding of religion, my Unitarian Universalist faith, and my own spirituality and beliefs?"

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT IS RELIGION FOR? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write "What is religion for?" as the heading on a sheet of newsprint, and post.
- Post a sheet of blank newsprint below the first sheet to extend your note-taking space.
- Optional: Gather markers in a variety of bold colors, to give visual interest to the newsprint notes you take.

Description of Activity

Participants explore why religion exists.

Gather the group where all can see the question you have posted. Ask:

Do you think most people feel the need to connect with something divine, such as a god or goddess, or something greater than or beyond themselves, such as Nature or human destiny? Is this need for connection a need religion fills?

Listen to responses. Write, "Connecting with something bigger than ourselves" under "What is religion for?"

Then ask:

When do people feel that urge or need? Why do you suppose they feel that?

Encourage discussion. Follow-up questions might include:

- Do people feel they *need* God when the crops are good? When the crops are poor?
- Do people feel they *need* Goddess when everybody's healthy?
- What do people call on a God or Goddess for?

Point out that many rituals are geared toward moments of change or transition. Change can be cause for celebration, or concern, or sometimes both. There is always risk at times of change: birth, becoming an adult, marriage, death. Ask the group:

- Why do you think so many people involve religion in major life transitions like these?
- How do you think marking a transition in a religious way might help an individual? Do you think celebrating a transition, such as birth of a new baby, in a religious community might strengthen a sense of belonging? [On newsprint, write "Establishing a sense of belonging."]
- How might religion help a group of people—a society—mark their important changes?

Say, in your own words:

If we had a religion with many goddesses and gods, we might have deities to cover specific areas of life, so

there would be some deity watching over everything that was important to people. For ourselves and our times, what deities do you suppose such a religion might have?

Write youth's responses and ideas on newsprint.

Prompt discussion with these questions:

- Do you suppose we would have a deity for agriculture—for growing crops? Would that be an important deity or a minor one? Why? If we lived two hundred years ago, would your answer be the same? Why, or why not?
- What about a deity of war? Again, important or minor? Why?
- What about pottery?
- What other deities would we have? [Suggest: medicine, technology, sports, cell phones, politics, music]

Conclude discussion when it becomes appropriate to say:

So, the deity becomes more or less important based on how important that area of life is, and how much risk or uncertainty that area holds. It sounds like we are saying the more danger there is in a certain area, the more people are likely to feel a need for support in that area and the more people may want an explanation when things go so terribly wrong.

Religion exists because human beings are meaning makers. We have a drive to understand the world around us and for our presence here to mean something. [Add to the list on newsprint, "Finding meaning and purpose in life."]

Religion springs from the human heart. When the earliest human beings felt a longing to know why they were here, where they came from and what happened when they died, what life meant and what their lives meant, religion was born. [Add "Answering big questions."]

Ask: Are there any other needs that religions fill? If no one mentions that religions can teach right from wrong, help the group discover the answer, "Helping us distinguish right from wrong;" you might ask if anyone has ever asked themselves if an act they were about to commit is something a good Unitarian Universalist should do.

Add to the newsprint "Knowing right from wrong" and any other suggestions from the group. If possible, keep the newsprint posted for the duration of the program.

To conclude this activity, say in these words or your own:

Religion does, indeed, bind together: It binds meaning to events; it binds a community to a sense of purpose, which makes us each feel we belong. It binds us to something bigger than just ourselves.

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT DO YOU KNOW? (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [Religious Literacy Quiz](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 1, [Answers to Quiz](#) (included in this document)
- Pens or pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the handout for all participants.
- Read the answers so you will be prepared to lead the activity.
- Devise a way, such as voting by a show of hands, for youth to rank the religions they are interested in. Decide how you will use the group's input to set priorities for the program.
- Plan how you will organize communication related to engagement experiences as the program goes forward. Identify roles individual youth can take. At the close of this activity, you may wish to collect networking leads from youth who are connected to other faith communities. A youth might volunteer to create a list of email addresses. You may be ready to assign planning roles.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Youth take a religious literacy quiz and express opinions about which religions the group will explore.

Distribute Handout 1, Religious Literacy Quiz and pens/pencils. Ask participants to take the quiz individually. Give them ten minutes. After everyone has completed the quiz, either give the group the answers or ask for volunteers to answer questions.

Ask:

- Which questions were hardest?
- Are there particular religions you do not know much about? [List these on newsprint.]

- Which of these would you like to learn about in this program? [Mark on the newsprint list.]
- Are there any others? [List these, too.]

Tell participants that they will engage with some of the religions they learn about. Explain that engagement might include worshipping with adherents, meeting with a youth group, or interviewing religious professionals from another faith, or talking with members of our congregation who belong or have belonged to other faith traditions. Invite youth to suggest other ways to engage.

Direct the group's attention to the religions listed on newsprint. Which are participants most interested in engaging? Are any not yet on the list? Add these.

If you will not be able to engage as many communities as youth want, honestly tell them. Invite the youth to rank the religions they have named as priorities for the program and explain how you will use the group's input as you plan future workshops. Share with youth the opportunities and limitations you have already discovered for engagement.

Ask the youth if they or their families have connections to any faith communities with which the group wants to engage. Some may have relatives who are leaders in other faith communities, friends who have invited them to bar or bat mitzvahs, or neighbors who attend a local mosque. Some youth may have belonged or may currently belong to another faith community. Discuss how their experiences could inform the workshops. Consider inviting youth to co-facilitate workshops that explore religions they claim. Commit to ways you will follow up with youth and their families to pursue these leads.

Open additional opportunities for youth leadership. One or two youth could be in charge of notifying the whole group about engagement details. Someone might set up a Facebook page or maintain a contact list.

Communicate any logistical needs or information you already know for planned engagement experiences. For example, you may need to gather family contact information; you may have a tentative calendar to share with the group.

ACTIVITY 4: TIME LINE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line
- Globe or world map
- Tape, thumbtacks or other approved material to affix time line and map to wall/surface

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare the time line you will use throughout the program (see Program Introduction, Materials). I will be blank, with no data, except a title and dates.

Description of Activity

Participants are introduced to the Religions Time Line and the world map.

Ask volunteers to help you post the time line and, if you have one, the map. Make these points:

1. As the year proceeds, the group will explore many faiths. Some of them emerged so long ago their origins are lost to antiquity; there is no way to know when they began (indicate far left of time line). We will look at faiths that emerged through recorded history, coming all the way (move along time line toward present day) to religions that were born within the lifetimes of your parents and grandparents.
2. Faiths have emerged at various places in the world (point to Asia, Europe, Oceania, North America), and we will be look at that, too.
3. Remember we talked about religion growing out of human experience to fulfill human need? We may explore 16 or more religions this year. How would you expect their origins to be distributed along this time line? Would they be evenly distributed across human history, or spread out? How else could they be distributed? [Reflect youth's answers verbally and by indicating on the time line.] How would you expect the religions' origins to be distributed on the world map? [Reflect their answers verbally and by indicating on the map.] This will be exciting to watch unfold as we go through the year, and to discover together. We will be able to see religion emerging in response to human need, on the map and on the time line. When there is enormous change happening in the world, there is movement in religion, too.

CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle

- Large sheet of poster board, and color markers
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home.
- Create a poster with the closing words (see Description of Activity). If you wish the youth to decorate the poster, leave room for them to do so without covering the text.
- Choose a spot to display the poster or, arrange for co-facilitators to retrieve and display it at each meeting.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Tell participants they may use these ideas to continue exploring today's themes. If parents/caregivers will receive Taking It Home electronically, let participants know.

Indicate the poster with the closing words. Say:

We will use the same Closing words each week. Let us take a few minutes to decorate the poster.

Distribute the markers. They might draw religious symbols or write words that spring to mind when they think about religion. You might suggest the artwork include participants' names.

With several minutes left, invite participants to form a circle and join hands. If needed, relight the chalice.

Say:

Please join me in reading the closing words from the poster. Then we will all lean in and blow out the chalice together.

Lead the closing:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

Including All Participants

Fully include all participants in the circle and the extinguishing of the chalice. If any participant would be unable to move forward with the group to extinguish the chalice flame, invite a volunteer to extinguish the chalice.

FAITH IN ACTION: APPRECIATE THE FAITH AROUND YOU (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pads of sticky notes and pens/pencils
- Poster board

Description of Activity

Participants observe the diversity of religious symbols and imagery in their congregation.

Say, in your own words:

We are surrounded by people of faith and Unitarian Universalist congregations are largely made up of people from other faith traditions, or no faith tradition. We do not require people to reject their prior faith in order to join ours. In fact, we celebrate and welcome this diversity. Many people wear visible signs of their faith: Sikh turbans, Jewish yarmulkes, Christian crosses, the Yin/Yang, our own flaming chalice, and many more. Sometimes these are only decorative, but more often they represent a connection with a faith from which they draw strength. Take notice of these talismans of faith. Appreciate the faith identities and the devotion that may be indicated by their display.

Invite participants to venture into the congregation now and look for signs of faith. Instruct youth to write on a sticky note any object or symbol they see—for example, a cross, a chalice, a yin/yang symbol, a Buddhist wheel, a crescent and star—and the faith it is associated with, if they know what that is. Suggest they pay attention to items or garments people are wearing which might be signs of faith. Remind them to note posters and artwork on the walls, and printed material, too. Remind them they are part of a community, so they have a responsibility to be quiet and respectful during this time.

Tell everyone when you want them to return to the meeting space.

When all have returned, invite participants to put their sticky notes on the poster board, creating groupings. Then, look at the poster together and discuss the findings. Ask questions like:

- What faiths were most represented?
- What faiths were least represented?
- How many faiths were represented?
- What objects or symbols did you observe which you thought could be signs of faith, but you were not sure what faith?

- What faiths were not represented at all? Why do you suppose that is? (Note that some faith talismans may be worn out of plain sight; some faith symbols are less noticeable or recognizable as such; some faiths may not have symbols that can be worn; some faiths are not represented in our congregation.)
- Which signs of faith did you notice quickly?
- How did it feel to you, to find visible representations of faith in your congregation? What does the variety of symbols you found tell you about our congregation? About Unitarian Universalism?

Ask participants, as they go about their daily lives, to keep noticing the different faiths they see demonstrated in people's clothing, jewelry, or even body art, such as tattoos. Invite them, too, to look for signs of faith displayed in places; for example, how many houses of worship will they see as they travel home from your meeting today? Which faiths are represented? Invite them to recognize that these houses of worship are sacred gathering places where people come together to seek answers to some of their most important questions about life and its meaning.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

This is your first workshop. Discuss anything that did not go according to plan. Will you need to modify activities or adjust times because the group is very small or very large? Did youth take turns talking? Was everyone engaged?

Have you established communication with parents and families? Have you given youth ideas to explore workshop topics further, by providing the Taking It Home section?

Use the results from Activity 3, What Do You Know? to finalize which workshops you will offer in the program and plan the group's engagement activities. If youth volunteered for leadership roles, follow through. Youth will need support to fulfill their roles.

If you plan to do Workshop 2, Alternate Activity 2, My Unitarian Universalism, begin collecting mementos.

TAKING IT HOME

Why not let people differ about their answers to the great mysteries of the Universe? Let each seek one's own way to the highest, to one's own sense of supreme loyalty in life, one's ideal of life. Let each philosophy, each worldview bring forth its truth and beauty to a

larger perspective, that people may grow in vision, stature and dedication.
— Algernon Black, (1932-1972), leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we explored the purpose of religion in people's lives and were introduced to the goals and structure of Building Bridges. We discussed which faith communities we hope to engage with this year and started planning these activities.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- What religions are represented in your immediate family?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- If friends or family members belong to a faith you know little about, start a conversation with them about it. If you are respectful and enthusiastic about learning about their religion, they are likely to be friendly and responsive right back. Some good questions: What is your favorite time of the religious year? How does your faith help you the most? How do you practice your faith at home? Ask other questions that seem interesting to you!
- Do an online search for "origin of religion" or "growth of religion" and see what you find. Some website creators wish to promote certain beliefs or have an axe to grind, meaning they are angry or resentful about something and use the website to push a specific agenda. Can you identify when this is the case? Look at several sites. What do they say in common about the origin of religion?
- You probably already know a great deal about different religions from other religious education experiences, your studies at your school, and your peers. This program will give you opportunities to share your knowledge. If speaking up in a group is not easy for you, write down what you might say and practice saying it with friends. Everyone sharing and learning together will make Building Bridges a better experience. You may be surprised by how much you already know!
- Are you on Facebook? Search for UU groups you find interesting.
- The website [42explore](http://42explore.com/) (at 42explore.com/) has activities for all ages on more than 200 themes, including [world religions](http://www.42explore2.com/religion.htm) (at www.42explore2.com/religion.htm).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: DATE THAT FAITH (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Chart of Religions](#) (included in this document)
- Wide masking tape and a marker

Preparation for Activity

- Make two copies of Leader Resource 2, Chart of Religions. Set aside one copy (your answer key). Use the other copy to cut out the names of each religion so each is on a separate slip of paper.
- Create a time line on the floor with masking tape. Mark one end "pre-history" and the other with the current year.

Description of Activity

An active game tests participants' knowledge of religions and graphically represents a chronology of world religions on a time line.

Hand out slips of paper so each participant holds the name of a religion. Ask the youth to line themselves up in the order they think the religions came into being. Point out that the time line begins before documented time and ends at today.

Once the line has stabilized, read the dates from Leader Resource 2 of the formation of each religion, and let the youth reorient themselves.

Ask participants what surprises them.

Including All Participants

Make sure there is plenty of open space around the time line so it is accessible to all participants. Partner a youth with mobility limitations with a peer or a co-facilitator who can assist them.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: BELIEFNET.COM (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- You will need at least one computer for this activity; more would be better. Test Internet access and locate the [BeliefNet questionnaire](http://www.beliefnet.com/Entertainment/Quizzes/BeliefOMatic.aspx) (at www.beliefnet.com/Entertainment/Quizzes/BeliefOMatic.aspx) online.

Description of Activity

Youth use an online survey to assess their religious beliefs' confluence with the beliefs of a variety of religions.

Ask if participants are familiar with the Beliefnet website. Then ask if anyone has taken the Belief-O-Matic questionnaire. Some may have visited the site. If any have taken the questionnaire, ask if they remember their results.

Explain, in these words or your own:

Beliefnet.com is a nondenominational website which provides information resources and inspiration from many faiths, including Unitarian Universalism, to help all people find and actively live a spiritual path that will serve them best. The website offers prayer language, articles about different faiths' approaches to nearly every aspect of life, and a popular questionnaire that people can complete to see how closely their individual beliefs match the beliefs of many different faiths. The results specify the percentage of the individual's answers that matches the tenets of a given faith. For example, one person's responses might show a 93% match with Unitarian Universalism, an 85% match with the Quaker faith, and a 68% match with Buddhism.

Ask those who are familiar with the Beliefnet questionnaire to refrain from answering this question, then ask:

- How many questions do you think it would take to determine by what percentage, down to a single percentage point, your beliefs match the world's most populous religions?

Allow some answers. Then tell them the Belief-O-Matic makes this determination in only 20 questions. Are youth surprised that with 20 questions, the computer program can capture the fundamental beliefs of many of the world's religions? Point out that this demonstrates the relatively small number of topics on which people expect their religions to guide them—just the very most important ones.

Let youth take turns completing the questionnaire and seeing their results on the computer(s). Youth waiting to use a computer can discuss:

- What are some questions you expect to be asked?
- What religions do you think the test will identify for you?
- What other religions have you experienced or belonged to? Were they a good "fit" for you? Why or why not?

When everyone is finished, ask volunteers to share. How accurate do they think their results were? What surprised them? How do they feel about the questions asked?

Remind youth that their personal religious beliefs are more detailed and complex than any multiple choice questionnaire can capture, and that they can expect some of their beliefs to change over time. For these reasons, they should not take their Belief-o-Matic results too seriously. If the questionnaire sparks their curiosity about a religion and leads them to find out more, that is useful.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 1: STORY: THE DREAM

Based on a European Jewish folk tale.

Once there was a woman who lived in a simple village. She had a simple life, with few needs. One night, she had a dream. She dreamed a treasure was buried under a bridge far away, in the capital city. The dream did not feel like a dream at all. It felt as though it was really happening to her. Have you ever had a dream like that? She saw herself approaching the city, digging under the bridge, and discovering a beautiful box full of the best treasures. The dream filled her with desire for something she previously did not even know she lacked.

The next night, the woman had the same dream. It was just as before. She was even wearing the same clothes and her gray coat.

On the third night, she wondered if she would dream again. She did and all the details were the same. She was now convinced that there was indeed treasure to

be found under the capital bridge. She asked her neighbors to watch her house, put on her gray coat, and set off for the long trip to the capital.

After a few days, she arrived. When she approached the capital bridge, she was surprised to see a guard. Thinking that the guard would surely not let her dig under the bridge, she waited. But she could not gain access to the bridge; when one guard went off duty, another came on. Finally, she could stand it no longer. She approached the guard and confessed that she had dreamed she would come to the capital bridge, dig in the earth, and find a rare treasure.

"That is funny," said the guard. "For the past few nights, I have had a most vivid dream, too. I dreamed of a woman, looking just like you, who lived in a simple house in a simple village, far, far away. But the strangest part of the dream was that in the oven of the woman's house was hidden a rare, beautiful treasure."

Upon hearing this, the woman hurried back home. Sure enough, there was a treasure hidden in her oven. It had been right where she could possess it all along.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 1:

HANDOUT 1: RELIGIOUS LITERACY QUIZ

1. Which is the third largest religion (in number of adherents) in the world?
 - a. Atheism/Agnosticism
 - b. Judaism
 - c. Hinduism
 - d. Buddhism
2. True or False: Unitarian Universalism resulted from the merger of two religions—Unitarianism and Universalism—that were each more than 200 years old.
3. Abraham is considered the founder of which religion?
 - a. Judaism
 - b. Christianity
 - c. Islam
 - d. All of the above
4. Which of these is NOT one of the Ten Commandments?
 - a. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
 - b. Do not use the name of the Lord in vain.
 - c. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
 - d. Honor thy mother and father.
5. What famous act did David commit?
 - a. Killing Goliath with a slingshot
 - b. Killing Goliath with his bare hands
 - c. Starting a democracy in ancient Judea
 - d. Possessing a coat of many colors
6. Jesus had how many disciples?
 - a. 10
 - b. 40
 - c. 6
 - d. 12
7. True or False: Catholics are Christians.
8. Which of these is NOT one of the Five Pillars of Islam?
 - a. Make a pilgrimage to Mecca.
 - b. Pray five times a day.
 - c. Marry only another Muslim.
 - d. Give to the poor.
9. Which is true about the Buddha?
 - a. He was born human but became a god.

- b. He was born royalty.
 - c. He was born in Japan.
 - d. He was born from a virgin.
10. True or False: You can be a humanist and be religious.
11. What do Hindus worship?
- a. Cows
 - b. The Ganges River
 - c. The god, Brahman, in all its manifestations
 - d. All of the above
12. True or False: Jehovah's Witnesses believe humans can become gods.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 1: LEADER RESOURCE 1: ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Which is the third largest religion (in number of adherents) in the world? a. Atheism/Agnosticism
2. True. Unitarian Universalism resulted from the merger of two religions—Unitarianism and Universalism—that were each more than 200 years old.
3. Abraham is considered the founder of which religion? d. All of the above
4. Which of these is NOT one of the Ten Commandments? c. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
5. What famous act did David commit? a. Killing Goliath with a slingshot
6. Jesus had how many disciples? d. 12
7. True. Catholics are Christians.
8. Which of these is NOT one of the Five Pillars of Islam? c. Marry only another Muslim.
9. Which is true about the Buddha? b. He was born royalty.
10. True. You can be a humanist and be religious. There are religious humanists and secular humanists.
11. What do Hindus worship? c. The god, Brahman, in all its manifestations
12. False. Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe humans can become gods. However, Mormons (Latter Day Saints) do believe that humans can become resurrected, immortal, and glorified after their physical death.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 1: LEADER RESOURCE 2: CHART OF RELIGIONS

Numbers of adherents come from the [Adherents.com website](http://Adherents.com) compiled and managed by Preston Hunter; updated 2007. See [Adherents.com's FAQ page](http://Adherents.com's%20FAQ%20page) for more information about the website and its sources of demographic data.

Faith Tradition	Adherents worldwide	Date of origin
Atheism and Agnosticism	1.1B	unknown
Indigenous religions worldwide	300M	unknown
Hinduism, indigenous to India	900M	unknown
Shintoism, indigenous to Japan	4M	unknown
Judaism	14M	1300 BCE
Jainism	4.2M	1300 BCE or older
Zoroastrianism	2.6M	1000 BCE
Taoism	20M (conservative estimate)	550 BCE
Buddhism	376M	520 BCE
Confucianism	6M (conservative estimate)	500 BCE
Christianity (all)	2.1B	30 CE
Roman Catholicism	1B (also included in "Christianity" above)	30 CE; emerged from the religion spread by apostles of Jesus
Islam	1.5B (940 Sunni)	622 CE
Eastern Orthodox Christianity	350M	schism with Church of Rome, 1054 CE; emerged earlier in local areas to the east of Europe
Sikhism	23M	1500 CE
Protestantism (the Reformation)	NA	1517 CE
Quakers	300K	1650 CE
Unitarianism	NA	emerged out of Anglican and Protestant religions in 18th century; theology is much older
Universalism	NA	emerged out of Protestantism in 18th century; theology is much older
Mormonism	13M	1830 CE
Baha'i	7M	1863 CE
Seventh Day Adventists	10M	1863 CE
Christian Science	150-400K	1879 CE

Jehovah's Witnesses	6.5M	1879 CE
Humanism	unknown	Ancient roots: organizations in 20th century
Unitarian Universalism	800K	UUA organized in 1961 CE
Wicca	1-3M	1900 CE

FIND OUT MORE

Quiz to Enjoy

Stephen Prothero's best-selling book, *Religious Literacy* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), contains a religious literacy quiz.

Talking about World Religions with Youth

[The Center for Youth Studies' World Religion pages](http://centerforyouth.org/news__facts/world_religion_facts) (at centerforyouth.org/news__facts/world_religion_facts) offer information and critical thinking guidance, geared toward youth. Pages dedicated to 12 faiths provide details about each faith's beliefs and practices and links for further exploration.

On the website 42explore, find links to multiple resources on a variety of [world religion topics](#) (at www.42explore2.com/religion.htm).

Postmodern Children's Ministry by Ivy Beckwith (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) offers insight into how today's youth and their world outlook differ from generations past.

World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained, by John Bowker (New York: DK Publishing, 2006), looks at many of the religions included in this program and includes a time line.

The World's Religions, by Huston Smith, has provided a comprehensive, clear, and non-judgmental exploration of major faiths since its first publication in 1958.

WORKSHOP 2: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM: THE JOURNEY STARTS AT HOME

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

We need not think alike to love alike. — Francis David
May your life preach more loudly than your lips. — William Ellery Channing

Unitarianism and Universalism are two faiths that emerged in the United States in the 18th century. Their theological roots are much older. The Opening summarizes the journey that brought these movements together as the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1961. Perhaps you are familiar with "As Tranquil Streams," Hymn 145 in Singing the Living Tradition, which was written to celebrate the merger. The lyrics speak to the strength and prophetic power of our faith.

Youth who have experienced Coming of Age will arrive with grounding in both Unitarian Universalism and their personal faith. A history of participation in a UU religious education program is also valuable preparation. Building Bridges clarifies and strengthens participants' faith while increasing their understanding of others'.

Unitarian Universalists are, as one bumper sticker says, "Different People, Different Beliefs, One Faith." We draw wisdom from Unitarian Universalism, which in turn draws wisdom from many sources, including world religions, secular sources, reason, and our own experiences. However, it is important that young people understand that although we hold different ideas about God or what is holy, we do not "believe anything we want." We share ethical and moral values, and a commitment to try to live them in our families, communities, and world. One expression of shared values is the seven Principles covenanted by the congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association. After Activity 3, post our Principles in the meeting space so you can refer to them during group discussions.

Unitarian Universalists also believe:

- "Deeds not creeds." What we do in love is more important than what beliefs we hold.
- This life matters. Whatever happens after death, this life is the one we know now, the one we are responsible for.
- We expect our religious beliefs and understandings to change throughout our lives;

we look to our faith communities to support our evolving faith.

- Religions are cultural creations of the societies in which they develop. While all religions address the same, basic human need for making meaning of life, they offer different answers, and those differences matter.

Youth know that many religions do have a creed and a concept of the divine that adherents share. They also know that some adherents in many religions claim theirs is the only true faith. In this workshop, some youth may express that they find our theological freedom superior to any theological doctrine; others may seem to yearn for the clarity and reassurance of a set creed. Help youth feel gratitude for our faith which offers Principles to guide us while calling us to appreciate the faith of others. There is neither room nor basis for assertions of religious superiority. Point out that when participants bring their own Unitarian Universalist values, beliefs, and Principles to this program, they bring minds and hearts open to understanding and respect for people of many faiths.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce fundamental concepts of Unitarian Universalism
- Offer a brief history of Unitarian Universalism and its source religions
- Tell the story of dynamic Unitarian Lydia Maria Child
- Reinforce knowledge of the seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism
- Connect participants to one another and their faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become familiar with and able to discuss aspects of Unitarian Universalist history
- Explore several aspects of Unitarian Universalism, including our Principles, our Sources, and our commitment to social justice
- Reflect how their faith influences their daily lives
- Articulate some differences between historical Unitarianism and historical Universalism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story — Lydia Maria Child, Voice for the Oppressed	15
Activity 2: Our Origins	15
Activity 3: The UU Principles	25
Activity 4: What Are Our Sacred Texts?	15
Activity 5: Fact Sheet	5
Activity 6: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Native American Justice	30
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Chalice, Chalice, Burning Bright	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

As Unitarian Universalists talking about our own faith, we have a special task. Our denomination is tiny compared with the wide world, yet still significant. It is important that our youth know their Unitarian Universalist faith is worthwhile, regardless of our numbers.

Here is a spiritual preparation that brings you to both a joyful appreciation for this life-affirming faith and a humble recognition of all we have yet to learn and do in the world: Read and meditate on Khalil Gibran's essay "On Religion" from *The Prophet* (full text available in English on many websites, including the [Habib website](http://www.habeeb.com/khalil.gibran.the.prophet.html#Religion) (at www.habeeb.com/khalil.gibran.the.prophet.html#Religion)). Consider the men and women in our Unitarian Universalist history whose words and deeds comforted, uplifted, and saved lives. Think of the primary purpose of religion to nourish human beings in the sacred quest for meaning. Be ready to share with the youth your understanding of ways Unitarian Universalism exemplifies what is desirable and possible in faith.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Famous Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists](#) (included in this document)
- Pens/pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants recognize and discover famous Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists.

As participants enter, invite them to take a copy of Handout 1 and a pencil. Instruct them to circle the names they knew were UUs, underline those they thought might be UUs but were not sure about, and mark with an exclamation point to mark the names which were a total surprise. Invite participants to compare lists. Encourage them to take the handout home and research people whose names they do not recognize.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or an LED/battery-operated candle
- Name tags
- Optional: Additional items to decorate the worship or centering table
- Optional: Centering music and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Create a worship space or centering table for the chalice.
- Optional: If you will include music in the centering time, have the music player ready to play.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions you could not answer from the last workshop.

Invite participants to gather around the chalice. Have volunteers light the chalice and read the chalice lighting words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their name and the religions represented in their immediate family.

After everyone has checked in, announce that the group will start their investigations of world religions by talking about Unitarian Universalism. Acknowledge that though you are in a UU congregation, some members of the group might not yet identify as UU and this is okay.

Referring to the check-in, note that UUism has been described as a "multi-faith" religion because Unitarian Universalists come from so many religious backgrounds. Ask if this is true of the families of this group.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — LYDIA MARIA CHILD, VOICE FOR THE OPPRESSED (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Lydia Maria Child, Voice for the Oppressed](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the inspiring story of a 19th-century Unitarian, Lydia Maria Child.

Ask participants if they have ever heard of Lydia Maria Child. Ask if they have ever heard the song "Over the River and Through the Woods." Did they know the writer was a Unitarian?

Tell or read the story.

Ask the group if they can name some of the groups Child advocated for that were named in the story. (African Americans, women, children, Native Americans) Do they see any connection among these groups?

Continue the discussion, along the following lines:

- Child lost money (book sales and jobs) and popularity in some circles by choosing to advocate for African Americans. Why did she make this choice? What Unitarian values did she draw on?
- Is working toward a more just world a UU value? How do you know (for example, from the message in our worship and sermons, from stories told in RE, from marches and campaigns our congregation has done)?

- How does it make you feel when you hear about Unitarians, Universalists, or Unitarian Universalists who do good works in the world?
- Have you ever taken an unpopular stand because you felt it was the just thing to do? Did your faith help you take this stand? If so, in what way?

Conclude that Lydia Maria Child was an active force for justice at a critical time in American history. Her passion lives on in the activism of Unitarian Universalists today.

Variation

Share the two quotations that begin this workshop and ask how they apply to Lydia Maria Child's life and faith.

ACTIVITY 2: OUR ORIGINS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Unitarian Universalist Background](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Source Religions of Unitarian Universalism](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 2 for all participants.
- Read Leader Resource 1, Unitarian Universalist Background so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Online, browse the website of the [International Council of Unitarians and Universalists](#) (at www.icuu.net/). Gather information to share with the group about the presence of our faith outside of the United States.

Description of Activity

Participants hear a brief history and introduction to Unitarian Universalism.

Distribute Handout 2. Invite the youth to examine the religions from which Unitarian Universalism emerged.

Ask participants if they know what "Unitarian" and "Universalism" mean. If no one gives an appropriate answer, explain that historically a Unitarian was someone who believed in the unity of God, rather than the Trinity (God in three parts, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Historically, a Universalist was someone who believed in universal salvation, that no one will be condemned to hell.

Give a short history of Unitarian Universalism using the information in Leader Resource 1. Then lead a discussion with these questions:

- Over time, Universalists and Unitarians often worked together on matters of justice, such as civil rights for African Americans, equal rights

for women, and objection to war. They realized they held many beliefs in common and decided to merge. Did you know our religion resulted from the merging of two, much older religions, both of which were originally Christian? Does it surprise you?

- What else from the history stood out to you?
- Is it important to know our religion's history? Why or why not?
- Unitarian Universalism is strongest in the United States where it developed into its present organization, but there are Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists in other countries. What do you know about expressions of our faith in other parts of the world?

ACTIVITY 3: THE UU PRINCIPLES (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [The Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3 for all participants. Set the copies aside, face down.
- Write one Principle in large lettering on each of seven sheets of newsprint, and set aside.
- Identify places to hang the seven sheets of newsprint so that more than one person can write on each sheet at the same time.
- Post blank newsprint.
- Optional: Review the [Nicene Creed](#) (at www.bookofconcord.org/creeds.php).

Description of Activity

Participants discuss the seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Read the beginning of the statement of the Principles: "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association covenant to affirm and promote..." Ask the youth what that phrase means. Explain that while the Principles are written as a covenant between individual congregations and the UUA, many Unitarian Universalist see them as guidelines for living.

Ask participants to name the seven Principles. Paraphrasing is allowed. Write their answers on newsprint. Acknowledge how many the group can recall.

Distribute Handout 3 and review the Principles. Share that many UUs, including adults, cannot name all seven. Ask the youth why they think this is so.

Point out that in many religions, people are asked to memorize the most important beliefs or understandings. Examples from Christianity include The Lord's Prayer and the Nicene Creed, a statement of faith used in both Catholic and Protestant churches. Ask:

- Is there value in requiring some things to be memorized? What would be the benefit?
- Would it strengthen Unitarian Universalism if all UUs knew the seven Principles by heart?

Continue discussion by asking youth whether they feel they live the Principles:

- Do you believe in all the Principles?
- Which ones are you living most fully? Which do you pay little or no attention to?
- Is there a relationship between the ones you remembered and the ones you live?
- Can we live them if we do not know what they are?

In Their Lives

Post the seven newsprint sheets with one Principle on each. Invite the youth go to each sheet, in any order, and write ways that Principle is expressed or could be expressed in their lives.

When participants are finished, invite them to share their ideas.

Then, ask:

- Do most UUs agree with the values expressed in the Principles?
- Do UUs agree about whether or not there is a God?
- Do UUs agree on what happens after you die?

Point out that most of the religions they will explore have shared beliefs on theological issues such as these. UUs do not. Ask, "What keeps us together?" If youth say it is a common set of values to guide us through life, affirm this answer.

Ask, "Have those beliefs been the same since the beginning of Universalism and Unitarianism?" Point out: UUs believe our beliefs and faith change as we grow, and that is a good thing.

ACTIVITY 4: WHAT ARE OUR SACRED TEXTS? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A variety of sacred texts, including the Bible, Qur'an, Bhagavad Gita, Dhammapada, Tao Te Ching
- UUA resources such as the hymnbooks *Singing the Living Tradition* and its supplement, *Singing the Journey*; the book *A Chosen Faith* and

Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide, and the pamphlet "Meet the UUs"

- A selection of secular books that might inspire, such as the Dr. Seuss book *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*, *The Little Prince*, *The Prophet*, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*; include science books and books of paintings or photographs
- Optional: A poster of the Principles and Sources

Preparation for Activity

- Write the six Sources of Unitarian Universalism on newsprint, and post. Or, display a poster that names the Sources:
 - Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
 - Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
 - Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
 - Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
 - Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
 - Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.
- Optional: Read a variety of Unitarian Universalist statements about revelation and from whence it can come. Two UUA pamphlets available online are:
 - "[Our Unitarian Universalist Faith: Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/introductions/151250.shtml) (at www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/introductions/151250.shtml)," by the Rev. Alice Blair Wesley
 - "[Unitarian Universalist Views of the Bible](http://www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/theologicalperspectives/151245.shtml) (at www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/theologicalperspectives/151245.shtml)," edited by the Rev. Tom Goldsmith.

Description of Activity

Participants examine sources that bring them inspiration and meaning, and understand that UUs do not have one wisdom source, but many.

Tell the youth an essay by the Rev. Alice Blair Wesley, "[Our Unitarian Universalist Faith: Frequently Asked Questions](#)" (at www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/introductions/151250.shtml), " talks about the texts from which Unitarian Universalists draw inspiration. The Bible is specified as one source. However, Rev. Wesley continues:

We do not, however, hold the Bible—or any other account of human experience—to be either an infallible guide or the exclusive source of truth. Much biblical material is mythical or legendary. Not that it should be discarded for that reason! Rather, it should be treasured for what it is. We believe that we should read the Bible as we read other books—with imagination and a critical eye. We also respect the sacred literature of other religions. Contemporary works of science, art, and social commentary are valued as well. We hold, in the words of an old liberal formulation, that "revelation is not sealed." Unitarian Universalists aspire to truth as wide as the world—we look to find truth anywhere, universally.

Ask the youth how these ideas resonate with them. Do they feel they can find truth anywhere?

Lay out the sacred texts you have collected. Tell them these are all texts that are sacred to one or more major world faiths. Which do they recognize? Do they know which text goes with which faith(s)? Which have they read?

Now lay out the UUA resources and the secular resources you have collected.

Ask:

- What has inspired you? Have you read something that inspired you or brought insight about yourself or the world?
- Did you ever have a "eureka" experience from a surprising source? From a joke? From an advertisement? From a mistake? From a comic book? A magazine? A painful experience? What about a children's book? Does this make that source sacred? Why, or why not?
- What books were most important to you when you were little? What was important about them? What message did they convey?

Refer to the poster or newsprint list of the Sources. Have a volunteer read each Source aloud. Invite youth to share examples for each of the Sources and stories

of times they found the Sources meaningful in understanding their world, or helpful to answer life's tough questions.

Summarize:

In the life-giving tradition of our liberal faith, we keep our minds and our hearts open, ready to recognize truth from whatever source it may come.

ACTIVITY 5: FACT SHEET (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 4, [Unitarian Universalism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 4, Unitarian Universalism Fact Sheet for all participants.

Description of Activity

Tenets of Unitarian Universalism are summarized and reviewed in a handout.

Distribute the fact sheet. Answer any remaining questions about Unitarian Universalism or, if you cannot answer immediately, commit to seeking an answer you can share in the next workshop.

ACTIVITY 6: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Display the time line where all participants will be able to see it.
- Prepare three sticky notes that say "Unitarianism," "Universalism," and "Unitarian Universalism."

Description of Activity

The Religions Time Line is updated to add Unitarian Universalism.

Ask participants if they remember when Unitarianism started. When Universalism started? The date the Unitarian Universalist Association was created by merger? After youth respond, affirm these dates: Unitarianism, late 1700s; Universalism, 1700s; UUA merger 1961. Add the three sticky notes to the time line.

Invite a volunteer to locate the United States on the globe or map. Point out other places Unitarianism is

practiced: Transylvania, Canada, India, Europe, and the Philippines.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite the group to form a circle, join hands, and say together:

This is our Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: NATIVE AMERICAN JUSTICE (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 5, [Unitarians Worked to "Save" Ute Indians](#) (included in this document)
- Books by Native American authors, such as *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich (New York: Hyperion, 1991), *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1993), *Rain Is Not MY Indian Name* by Cynthia Leitich Smith (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), *Skeleton Man* by Joseph Bruchac (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), and *As Long As The Rivers Flow: The Stories of Nine Native Americans* by Paula Gunn Allen (New York: Scholastic, 1996)
- Books and other resources about local Native American tribes, in history and today

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 5 for all participants. Familiarize yourself with the story so you will be able to process it with the group.

- Learn about the presence and experiences of Native Americans in your local area, now and historically. Gather books and/or online resources to share with the youth.
- Identify people in the congregation with knowledge about local Native American cultures and history; invite them to serve as resource people for the group.
- The group may include youth with Native American heritage, so, take care with the word "we." If you say "we, as Unitarian Universalists" when that is what you mean, you can remain fully inclusive of youth who may be UU as well as Native American. If you know a youth has Native American heritage, do not look to them for a Native American perspective; however, if they volunteer one, make sure to allow it.
- Be mindful of the language you use when encouraging the group to work for Native American justice: Make sure you urge participants to work with and not for Native people.

Description of Activity

Participants discuss social justice issues affecting Native American peoples and consider ways to support the efforts of local Native American groups.

Remind the youth that Lydia Maria Child made advocating for Native Americans a priority in her later life. Explain, in these words or your own:

Now, more than a hundred years later, Native Americans are still marginalized in American society. As a group, Native Americans suffer high levels of poverty, illness, addictions, poor education, and reduced life expectancy. Efforts to solve these problems have had limited success. For many years the efforts were focused on making American Indians as much like white people as possible, encouraging or even forcing them to reject their native cultures, languages, and religions. Since about the 1970s, there has been a higher level of consciousness about respecting the identity and rights of self-determination of the many Native American tribes in the United States. This positive development grew out of the successes of the African American Civil Rights Movement and the civil rights efforts of Native Americans themselves, such as the work of the American Indian Movement. The current plight of Native American

cultures results largely from the abuses of white people (European settlers and their migration westward across the continent) and the actions and policies of the United States government in its efforts to annihilate or assimilate (absorb) Native Americans.

Distribute Handout 5, Unitarians Worked to "Save" Ute Indians. Have participants read the story. Then, lead a discussion:

- How does this article make you feel?
- Do you think we, as Unitarian Universalists, owe a debt to the Ute tribe? Why or why not?
- What is our responsibility, as Unitarian Universalists, to the Utes today?

Lead the group to brainstorm actions they could take to help. Suggest that educating ourselves is a first step, and educating others could be the next— perhaps by sharing the history in Handout 5 with the congregation. Challenge the youth to think of a creative way to share this story. Commit to arranging with congregational leaders for the youth to present the story as part of a worship service or at another multigenerational gathering.

Encourage the group to learn the history of Native people in your own area. Could the youth work with others in the congregation to support a local Native community's justice-seeking efforts?

Share the books and other resources you have gathered. Invite youth to jot down titles they find interesting, so they can find the books at the local library. Point them to the Internet for more information.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

This workshop seeks to celebrate Unitarian Universalist heritage and accomplishments while retaining a sense of constructive humility. How well do you think this was accomplished with participants? Holding the ideal of recognizing accomplishment without being self-congratulatory will be beneficial throughout this program.

Consider the timing of the workshop. Did your group take more, or less, time than scheduled for activities? Consider specific adaptations that might be indicated for your group or space in the future.

TAKING IT HOME

We need not think alike to love alike. — Francis David

May your life preach more loudly than your lips. — William Ellery Channing

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we discussed Unitarian Universalism. We reviewed our Principles, shared some of our sources for inspiration, and identified famous UUs.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How has my relationship with Unitarian Universalism changed over time?
- Where do I hope my faith will take me?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

- Understanding how people came to their chosen faith can help you learn about how that faith works in the world. Ask a parent or another adult you know in our congregation about their history with Unitarian Universalism. If they came from another faith, how did they learn about Unitarian Universalism? What attracted them to it? If they grew up UU, have they ever considered changing their affiliation? How do they feel Unitarian Universalism has accompanied them on their spiritual journey?
- Engage your UU friends— what do you, and they, value about your congregation? How does it support your spiritual path? What do you wish were different? What can you do as you get older to create those things you want in your faith? What can you do now?

Evangelize!

While many outspoken Christian groups use this term, a growing number of religious liberals, including Unitarian Universalists, now say they are "evangelizing" when they work to share the important things their faiths have to offer. If you are enthusiastic and want to share with people how you believe your faith can make their lives better, you are an evangelist.

- Do you have an "elevator speech," that is, two or three short sentences, that briefly describe what you believe? Create an "elevator evangelism speech," a few sentences you can use to tell someone what is life-giving about your faith.
- Share it! Try it on friends who are not UUs. Tell them you have been thinking about your faith and have come up with a short way to say why it is important to you, then share your elevator evangelism. See how they respond. Then, be brave! Consider sharing it with people you have just met. See if you can insert it naturally into the conversation, and observe the effect on the listener. What do they respond to in your message? How do they respond?

Involvement in the UU World

- Look up [Church of the Larger Fellowship](http://clf.uua.org/) (at clf.uua.org/) (CLF) online. CLF is a Unitarian Universalist congregation with no physical meeting place. It provides resources, spiritual support, and virtual community to people who are geographically dispersed. Consider joining CLF to support their important work for and with Unitarian Universalists worldwide.
- Do you show signs of faith in your life, such as wearing chalice jewelry, displaying a chalice in your home, or keeping copies of UU World on a table? Do you know someone who has a chalice tattoo? Consider showing your faith symbolically; you can browse and purchase chalice jewelry, artwork, and chalices themselves online at [Chalice Art](http://chaliceart.com/) (at chaliceart.com/), [Flaming Chalice](http://www.flaming-chalice.com/) (at www.flaming-chalice.com/), [UniUniques](http://www.uniuniques.com/) (at www.uniuniques.com), and [CafePress](http://www.cafepress.com/) (at www.cafepress.com).
- One way we demonstrate that we value something is by taking care of it. This is called stewardship. Are you a steward of the Unitarian Universalist faith? If not, become one by volunteering to help at the congregation. You might help with a clean-up, assist in a RE class, or serve as a junior board member. Help provide for the congregation financially, too. If you do not have a job, you could give a portion of your allowance. If you do not receive an allowance, consider holding a fundraiser or participating in a congregation-sponsored fundraiser. If your congregation holds a service auction, consider what service you can donate. Yard work? Cooking? Making a mix CD?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CHALICE, CHALICE, BURNING BRIGHT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [UUA Chalice Symbol](#) (included in this document)
- Many different images of flaming chalices

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2, UUA Chalice Symbol.
- Gather images of flaming chalices. You can find many on the UUA website's [chalice slideshow](http://www.uua.org/slideshows/48720.shtml) (at www.uua.org/slideshows/48720.shtml). If your congregation uses a particular symbol, include it.

Description of Activity

Participants locate symbols of Unitarian Universalism in their congregational home.

Share:

The flaming chalice's history as a symbol of Unitarianism, and subsequently Unitarian Universalism, goes back to World War II. Austrian artist Hans Deutsch worked with the Unitarian Service Committee, and created the flaming chalice as a symbol of the Unitarian Service Committee (USC, now called UUSC) by joining existing symbols of the chalice and the flame. To Deutsch, the new symbol meant sacrifice and love. Unitarian Universalists attribute many meanings to the flaming chalice: the search for truth, the power emerging from community, the burning passion of commitment, and many more.

Show the group the UUA Flaming Chalice (Leader Resource 2). Say:

The official flaming chalice symbol of the Unitarian Universalist Association was recently changed. The flame was centered and the radiating lines were added to represent a dynamic, modern faith. The UUA is happy for congregations and individuals to use the Association's flaming chalice logo, but we are not required to use this specific one. Individuals and congregations typically use the chalice they find most beautiful or that they feel best represents their faith.

Ask if participants have seen chalices or images of chalices in the congregation. On bookcases or tables? Displayed outside, or on walls? On orders of service? As pins, necklaces, rings, or earrings? Form small groups so a facilitator will accompany all participants, and invite the youth to explore the building and grounds to see what chalices they find—how many, where they are, and what they look like. Remind them of their responsibility to the congregational community to be respectful (quiet, staying together) and tell them when to return.

When all have returned, ask the youth to share their findings. How many chalices and chalice images did they see? What variety?

If the congregation has chalice art it always uses, display it now. Did participants find this chalice symbol

during their search? If you know who designed the symbol the congregation uses, tell participants about the artist. Continue discussion with questions such as:

- What purposes are served by having chalices and chalice images around?
- How do the chalices make people feel?
- What do they make people think about? Anything?
- Do you have any chalices at home? Do you own any chalice jewelry or clothing? Why or why not?
- Does the chalice image inspire a feeling of pride in you? Does it affirm your feeling of connection to Unitarian Universalists everywhere?

Observe the workshop space: One chalice is used in the workshop. Are there other chalices or chalice images? Would the group like for there to be more? Would it feel good to have additional reminders of their connection to the larger whole?

Including All Participants

If your congregation's site is not fully accessible, assign each small group to a specific area and send youth with mobility limitations to an area they can fully explore.

Give a youth with vision impairment a partner who can guide them to tactile representations of chalice art, and encourage the pair to observe chalice shape and design with their fingers. You may wish to scout the congregational space before this activity. Look for three-dimensional chalice art, actual chalices, and stationery or business cards that have an embossed chalice symbol.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Credo statements and any other material created in a Coming of Age program
- Photographs of youth taken at congregational events
- Other mementos from congregational programs involving this group of youth
- Tape

Preparation for Activity

- Locate records of participation by the youth in the group in past congregational events, for example, photographs from social events and justice actions, videos of youth worship services, and credos written in Coming of Age programs. Seek permission, as needed, to share these materials with the group. Start by

asking your religious educator for material. You can also contact the participants' families. If any youth are new to the congregation, ask families for mementos of the youth from an earlier faith home.

- If you do not think you can obtain enough material on most youth, skip this activity.

Description of Activity

Youth reminisce about congregational experiences.

Display the material you collected. If you have credos to share, tell the group the original meaning of "credo," which is "set one's heart to." Your credo is what you set your heart to, not just what you believe or do not believe at this point.

If everyone agrees, create a game by posting credos and old photographs (of the youth as children) and asking participants to guess who wrote which credos and whose photos are posted. Let youth talk about their memories. Guide discussion with these prompts:

- How does looking at these mementos make you feel about the congregation?
- Do you have other mementos at home?
- How have you and your faith changed since you took these pictures or wrote these credos?
- If you are new to the congregation and do not see yourself reflected in these materials, can you imagine and share with the group the ways you hope to interact with the congregation?
- Can you share a word or two that conveys what Unitarian Universalism means to you personally?

Take a group photograph. Plan to display it in a prominent place as a memento for each of the youth of their life in the congregation.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: STORY: LYDIA MARIA CHILD — VOICE FOR THE OPPRESSED

Lydia Maria Child is not as famous now as she was when she lived— famous as a radical and reformer, a brilliant thinker and author, and a tireless advocate for oppressed members of society, specifically Native Americans, children, Africans and African Americans held in slavery, and women.

Lydia Maria Child was born in 1802 in Hartford, Connecticut. She chose the name Maria herself as a young woman when she joined the Unitarian Church. She felt that joining the church was a transformative event, and wanted a new name to go with this new phase of her life. Afterward, she always preferred to be called Maria.

Her unusual courage and vision was apparent early. At the age of 22, she published a novel called *Hobomok*, the first historical novel published in the United States. *Hobomok* was remarkable in that it involved interracial marriage between a white woman and a Native American, a controversial, almost taboo, subject at the time. This book launched Child's career as a best-selling author; it also foretold her commitment to social justice and antiracism, specifically her interest in the rights of Native Americans.

Child continued as a writer of popular books on homemaking and parenting (although she never had any children). She worked for women's rights, and gradually became deeply involved in the abolitionist movement, working to end slavery in the United States. Child changed the course of her life when she was 31 by publishing *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, which became the most influential anti-slavery non-fiction book ever written. It inspired and galvanized abolitionists all over the country. Child, however, lost writing jobs because people thought she was too controversial a figure to write for children. But she never regretted her choice.

When she was 37, Maria Child made people angry again when she accepted appointment to the executive committee of the Anti-Slavery Society together with the Quaker Lucretia Mott and the Unitarian Mary Weston Chapman. Some men in the society were so furious they said, "To put a woman on the committee with men is contrary to the usages of civilized society," and left to form their own organization— one that excluded women. This did not trouble Maria Child.

At 43, she wrote *The History of the Condition of Women in Various Ages and Nations*, a tremendously respected work. Nine years later, she published an enormous, scholarly, three-volume collection, with her commentary, of religious wisdom from many of the world's faiths. The religious world hailed this as a remarkable, groundbreaking work. Indeed, Theodore Parker, one of the most powerful and beloved voices in Unitarianism and a contemporary of Child's, called it "The book of the age."

Child continued her anti-oppression work. She turned her attention to Native American advocacy, and worked tirelessly for the rights of native people to have good education, to speak their native languages, and practice their own religions. She passionately opposed the American government's policy to forcibly drive the Cherokee people from their tribal lands. At the age of 66, she wrote *An Appeal for the Indians*, again sparking controversy, in which she called on government officials and religious leaders to bring justice to American Indians. Her writing inspired other advocates, and led to the founding of the U.S. Board of Indian Commissioners and the creation of the Peace Policy during the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant. Tragically, this policy was ultimately not honored by the U.S. government.

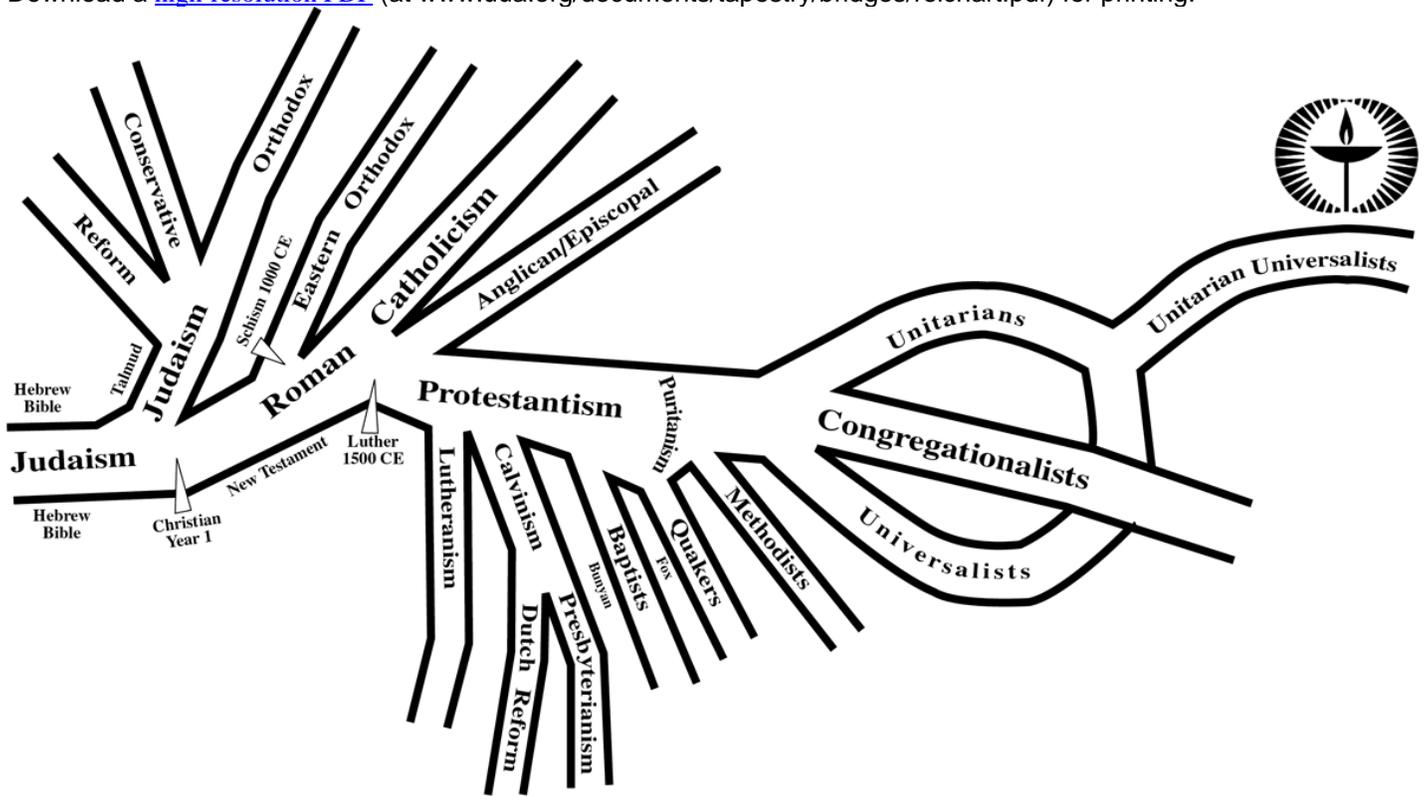
Today, Lydia Maria Child is most often remembered for having written the holiday song *Over the River and Through the Woods*, a fact that is fascinating, but so small a part of her impressive lifetime of achievement. We can remember this powerful, committed woman as one who helped end slavery, gave voice to those denied a voice, and bravely reminded those in power of their moral responsibility toward the oppressed.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: HANDOUT 1: FAMOUS UNITARIANS, UNIVERSALISTS, AND UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

James Luther Adams, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Margot Adler, Amos Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, Horatio Alger, Jr., Steve Allen, Susan B. Anthony, Arius (256-336 CE), Roger Nash Baldwin, Adin Ballou, Hosea Ballou, P.T. Barnum, Bela Bartok, Clara Barton, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Bergh, Tim Berners-Lee, Ray Bradbury, Andre Braugher, Antoinette Brown (Blackwell), Olympia Brown, Diahann Carroll, Alice Cary, Phoebe Cary, William Ellery Channing, Lydia Maria Child, e e cummings, Nathaniel Currier, Charles Darwin, George de Benneville, Charles Dickens, Dorothea Dix, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sophia Fahs, Fannie Farmer, Millard Fillmore, Robert Fulghum, Buckminster Fuller, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Gaskell, Horace Greeley, Edvard Grieg, Nina Grieg, Henry Hampton, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Samuel Hoar, Edith Holden, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., Julia Ward Howe, Thomas Starr King, Lewis Howard Latimer, Viola Liuzzo, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Horace Mann, Herman Melville, Maria Mitchell, Samuel F. B. Morse, John Murray, Isaac Newton, Florence Nightingale, Keith Olbermann, Theodore Parker, Linus Pauling, Beatrix Potter, Joseph Priestley, Christopher Reeve, Paul Revere, Malvina Reynolds, Ram Mohun Roy, Benjamin Rush, Albert Schweitzer, Pete Seeger, Michael Servetus, Rod Serling, Adlai Stevenson II, Lucy Stone, Emily Stowe, William Howard Taft, Henry David Thoreau, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Mary Augusta Ward, Josiah Wedgwood, Mary Wollstonecraft, Frank Lloyd Wright, N.C. Wyeth, Whitney M. Young, Jr.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: HANDOUT 2: SOURCE RELIGIONS OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/relchart.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/relchart.pdf) for printing.



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: HANDOUT 3: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

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

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

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: HANDOUT 4: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM FACT SHEET

Actions matter far more than belief. As Unitarian Thomas Jefferson said, "... it is in our lives and not from our words that our religion must be judged."

Founded/Created: Two Christian denominations with religious traditions dating back 2,000 years to early Christianity consolidated in 1961 to form the Unitarian Universalist Association.

In the United States, Unitarian thought arose within established churches in the late 1700s; the American Unitarian Association founded in 1825. Universalist thought arose in opposition to Calvinism in the 1700s; a regional group (the New England convention) organized and adopted a profession of beliefs in 1803.

Adherents: 800,000 worldwide

Ranking: Approximately 20th

Sources of Religious Authority: There are six named Sources of religious authority: personal experience; words and deeds of prophetic people; wisdom from the world's religions; teachings from Jewish and Christian scripture; reason and the teachings of science; the natural world.

Prophets: Many Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists have contributed their prophetic voices to the shaping of their faith tradition and to issues facing the broader community and world.

Symbol: Flaming chalice

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

Human beings

Every human being has worth and dignity. All people are deserving of love and compassion.

God

Unitarian Universalists have many different ideas about God. Some believe in God and others do not. Some use words like Nature, Love, Humanity, or Spirit of Life to name a force greater than themselves.

Truth

Truth is revealed in many different ways and there is always more truth to be found. Every person is responsible for seeking truth and meaning in life and for tending to their own spiritual journey.

Community

We are all connected to one another. Unitarian Universalists strive to build beloved communities of peace and justice in congregations and in the world.

Nature

We are part of the natural world. Our actions and choices should support the well being of all life that shares the interdependent web of life on earth.

Action

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: HANDOUT 5: UNITARIANS WORKED TO "SAVE" UTE INDIANS

By Sonja A. Cohen, originally published in UU World magazine, Winter, 2009 and available [online](#).

In 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant invited Protestant denominations to take over the management of American Indian reservations and agencies. His hope was that this move would cut down on reported government corruption while simultaneously helping to "civilize" the Indians. The American Unitarian Association (AUA) accepted charge of the district covering the Colorado reservation occupied by various tribes of the Ute, consisting of about 8,000 people—a fact that had been almost entirely forgotten until recently.

At the UUA's 2007 General Assembly delegates called for the Association and its member organizations to research their history and "uncover our links and complicity with the genocide of native peoples; with slavery and the slave-based economy; and with all types of racial, ethnic, and cultural oppression, past and present, toward the goal of accountability through acknowledgment, apology, repair, and reconciliation."

The Rev. David Pettee, the UUA's director of ministerial credentialing, was thinking about the resolution and the General Assembly to be held in Utah in 2009 when he recalled a brief reference to the AUA/Ute history in George Willis Cooke's *Unitarianism in America*. Pettee and Ted Fetter, board president of the UUA's Metropolitan New York District, began extensive research into the history.

They found that four Unitarian ministers— John S. Littlefield, J. Nelson Trask, Edward H. Danforth, and Henry F. Bond— were assigned to work with the Utes on two agencies in the reservation, one at White River in the north and one at Los Pinos in the south. Their primary mission, as reported in the American Unitarian Association's 1877 Yearbook, was to maintain a "strictly honest administration of government affairs" and "to meet the Indians in a humane, Christian spirit, saving them from trickery, robbery, intemperance, and other vices of frontier life; and to present to them the better phases of a Christian civilization."

The Unitarians were, as Fetter described them during a 2009 GA workshop, "largely failures" in their effort to bring the Utes into the dominant culture. Their actions were well intentioned, but ultimately unwelcome and unproductive. "They were ineffective," said Fetter. "They didn't begin to understand the culture of the

people they were working with." A succession of agents failed, he said, both in terms of government policy at the time and by participating in what we see in hindsight as cultural imperialism.

But the serious trouble really started, Fetter said, when Danforth was replaced by Agent Nathan Meeker (not a Unitarian) who came to the White River Agency in 1878 with "a Utopian vision of turning the Indians into farmers." Despite documented evidence of poor farming conditions in the area, Meeker kept pushing the Utes to embrace agriculture. Initially the Utes tolerated Meeker, but tensions eventually erupted and the military was sent out to handle the situation. A battle ensued, a number of people on both sides died, and Meeker was murdered. In response, Congress passed the Ute Removal Act, which in 1881 forcibly relocated the Utes to an Eastern Utah reservation, far from the land with which they had felt spiritually connected.

"It's a sad story," Fetter said, "and I believe the Unitarians had a part in it. Not as bad people but as people who didn't know what to do to represent the interests of the Utes."

During the opening worship service of GA 2009, UUA President William G. Sinkford offered a formal apology to the Utes on behalf of the Association for past crimes against their people. "We participated, however ineptly, in a process that stole your land and forced a foreign way of life on you," he said. "We ask for your forgiveness, and we promise to stand with you as you chart your way forward." Forrest Cuch, a member of the Ute Indian Tribe and executive director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, and Ute elder Clifford Duncan attended the worship service. Cuch accepted Sinkford's apology and welcomed the General Assembly to Utah, and Duncan offered a prayer in the Ute language.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: LEADER RESOURCE 1: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM BACKGROUND

In the three hundred or so years after Jesus lived and died, Christianity changed from a form of Judaism into a separate faith. During this time, people who lived in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea held many different ideas about the nature of Jesus, God, and humanity. We now recognize some of those ideas as early versions of Unitarianism and Universalism. Origen of Alexandria in Egypt, who is responsible for much of the Christian scripture, wrote in the third century that God loves everyone and all return to God after death, an early universalist position. In the fourth century, Arius, also of Alexandria, preached that God is one and Jesus was a holy man, an early Unitarian position.

Debates among Christians were fierce, and sometimes violent. In 325 CE, the Roman Emperor Constantine brought church leaders together at Nicea, in Turkey, where they agreed on a single creed, or set of beliefs, to unify the empire. The Nicene Creed held that God was a trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Both unitarianism and universalism were declared heresies, punishable by excommunication and even death.

The heresies that are at the root of our contemporary Unitarian Universalism did not go away, but they did go underground for many centuries. In 1568, King John Sigismund of Transylvania became a Unitarian and made religious tolerance the law in his land. Unitarianism continues to thrive in this region to day. Unitarian ideas cropped up in a number of places in Europe after the Protestant Reformation.

In the British colonies in America (later the United States) unitarian and universalist ideas about God and humanity developed and spread during the eighteenth century. Unitarian ideas developed within other Protestant congregations, as ministers and lay people turned away from the Calvinist notion that humans are depraved and dependent upon God for salvation to embrace the idea that the way we behave on earth determines whether we go to heaven or hell. These liberal thinkers were called "Unitarian," which was intended to be insulting.

In 1819, William Ellery Channing embraced the label "Unitarian" in a famous sermon. Between 1825 and 1835, many New England congregations split, often with the Trinitarians withdrawing to start new congregations and leaving the buildings to the Unitarians. Within a decade, the Transcendentalists, a new group that included Ralph Waldo Emerson, criticized the Unitarian churches for being too "cold"

and too orthodox. The Transcendentalists preferred a spirituality that nurtured a connection with the natural world.

Universalist ideas were also a rejection of Calvinism, but universalism developed outside of established congregations. Missionaries spread the universalist message. Christian churches sprang up with the message that God's love is for everyone, no exceptions. Universalists rejected the idea that God would condemn some people to hell.

George de Benneville and John Murray were early Universalists, both coming to America from Europe in the 1700s. De Benneville spread the Universalist faith in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, while Murray preached primarily in New England. In 1805, itinerant preacher Hosea Ballou published *A Treatise on Atonement*, which explained Universalist ideas. The faith grew rapidly, especially where people's lives were difficult. Its news was joyful and hopeful, offering God's unconditional love to everyone.

In the 19th century, Unitarians and Universalists created structures to organize their respective denominations. Their statements of faith or belief emphasized different purposes and beliefs, and the two groups saw themselves as quite different from one another. But they shared important values, which made it possible for them to merge several generations later. Both Unitarians and Universalists believed in the freedom to think for oneself and valued individual conscience over a shared creed. Many ministers from both groups embraced Darwin's theory of evolution after it was published in 1860 and moved away from believing the Bible to be literally true in every word. Many Unitarians and Universalists believed in creating the Kingdom of God on earth, working to provide help for poor people, immigrants, mentally ill people, and others on the margins, as well as working tirelessly for the abolition of slavery, and then for women's suffrage. In both religions, women were especially active in providing help and working for a better society; Universalism was the first Christian faith in the U.S. to ordain women as ministers. By 1933, many Unitarians and Universalists had embraced the idea of humanism. They signed the Humanist Manifesto, which said that human beings, and not God, have the responsibility and the challenge to make the world a better place. Unitarian congregations in particular became home to both liberal Christians and those who called themselves religious humanists. Universalism remained largely a liberal Christian movement in the first half of the 20th century.

But something was stirring in the children's programs in both denominations. New discoveries in progressive education and an embrace of the teachings of science

and reason alongside traditional Christian teachings led to a new way of teaching children. Angus MacLean, a Universalist, advocated for active, hands-on learning about the world in religious education classes. Sophia Lyon Fahs, a Unitarian, oversaw the development of new Sunday school materials that embraced stories from all over the world as well as understandings from science. Universalists began using the Unitarian materials in their religious education classrooms, and a generation of Unitarians and Universalists grew up learning about their faith the same way and hearing the same stories. By the late 1950s, the two denominations

began to talk about merger. In 1961, the Unitarian Universalist Association was born from a consolidation of the two. Over the next few years, the Principles and Sources were adopted. By the late 1980s, the flaming chalice, originally the symbol of the Unitarian Service Committee, came into wide use in our congregations as a symbol of our faith. In 2011, the Unitarian Universalist Association celebrated the 50th anniversary of consolidation by remembering the deep and long heritage from both of its parent traditions and by reflecting on the shared journey of its first fifty years.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 2: LEADER RESOURCE 2: UUA CHALICE SYMBOL

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/uua_logo.pdf) (at www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/uua_logo.pdf) for printing.



FIND OUT MORE

Unitarian Universalism — History and Beliefs

Find extensive resources on the [Unitarian Universalist Association website](#) (at www.uua.org/), including:

- "[Unitarian Universalist Origins: Our Historic Faith](#) (at www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/introductions/151249.shtml)" (pamphlet)
- "[Flaming chalice: Symbol of Our Faith](#) (at www.uua.org/beliefs/6901.shtml)" (article)
- [UU Beliefs](#) (at www.uua.org/beliefs/index.shtml) (links to topical web pages on the UUA website)
- In the Tapestry of Faith adult curriculum, The New UU:
 - [Common Views Among Unitarian Universalists](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/newuu/workshop1/workshopplan/leaderresources/160230.shtml) (Workshop 1, Leader Resource)
 - [Themes in North American Unitarian Universalist History](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/newuu/workshop2/workshopplan/stories/160263.shtml) (Workshop 2, Story)
 - [Cathedral of the World](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/newuu/workshop1/workshopplan/stories/160219.shtml) (Workshop 1, Story), an excerpt from [Cathedral of the World: A Universalist Theology](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1297) by Forrest Church (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009).

- The Tapestry of Faith youth curriculum [A Place of Wholeness](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/wholeness/index.shtml) guides UU youth to examine their faith journeys in the context of Unitarian Universalism.

Books include *Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History* (Chicago: Meadville-Lombard Press, 2001); find many more titles in the "[history](#)" section (at www.uuabookstore.org/showproducts.cfm?FullCat=31) of the online UUA Bookstore. Another source for Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist history is the [Religious Tolerance](#) (at www.religioustolerance.org/u-u1.htm) website. Universalist theology in a number of denominations is the subject of an article on the website [Believe: Religious Information Source](#) (at mb-soft.com/believe/txc/universa.htm). A mid-19th-century article, "Brief History of Universalism" by Rev. J.M. Austin, appears in full on the website of [Auburn University](#) (at www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/briefhist.html).

Lydia Maria Child

- Short [Biography](#) (at www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/lydiamariachild.html) in the Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography
- Biographical story, background, and suggested activities and discussion questions in [Stirring the Nation's Heart: Eighteen Stories of Prophetic Unitarians and Universalists of the Nineteenth Century](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1292) by Polly Peterson (Boston: Skinner House, 2010)
- Full length biography, *Crusader for Freedom: A Life of Lydia Maria Child* by Deborah Pickman Clifford (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

WORKSHOP 3: INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS—THE EARTH SPEAKS

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

... everything on the Earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence. — Mourning Dove (Christine Quintasket) (1888-1936), Native American (Salish) novelist

The earliest human beings developed the four aspects of human societies: language, music, a social order, and religion. Religion has been practiced in some form for over three million years. Archeological evidence suggests there were followers of indigenous faiths millions of years ago, in the earliest places on earth we know human beings lived: the southernmost tip of Africa, Southeast Asia, Japan, China, and Australia.

This workshop introduces indigenous religions, which are sometimes called native, tribal, or primitive religions. While differing in many outward respects from what we in the West envision when we think of "religion," these faiths serve people's needs in the same fundamental ways all religions do. Today, more than 400 million people worldwide are adherents of indigenous faiths.

Though these religions are ancient, it does not mean their modern interpretations have not evolved. Throughout this workshop (and the program, as a whole) remind youth that religions are organic entities, emerging—when conditions are right—perfectly suited to a place, time, and segment of a population. When a religion no longer serves its people or suits their culture, it changes or dies. Help youth embrace the idea that religion can serve the same essential purposes in many different forms.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce participants to universal traits of indigenous religions worldwide
- Explore in greater depth some characteristics of indigenous religions
- Invite youth to consider the benefits of an oral tradition.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Deepen their understanding of the purposes of religion
- Become familiar with and able to discuss universal features of indigenous religions
- Hear and discuss an aboriginal Australian Dreamtime story
- Experience some strengths of oral tradition through sharing personal accounts
- Build appreciation for world views different from their own.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story — Sun Mother Walks the Earth	20
Activity 2: Oral Tradition	25
Activity 3: Leaving a Record	15
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	10
Activity 5: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Kids vs. Global Warming	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	0
Alternate Activity 2: Goddesses	20
Alternate Activity 3: Honoring Our Ancestors	15
Alternate Activity 4: Canning and Drying Food	0

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Indigenous religions are close to the sources of life and permeate the lives of followers; their stories give meaning to everything adherents see, touch, and do in their daily lives, and their rituals have sacred significance as well as practical value.

Ready yourself to talk about faiths that originate from the earth by getting in touch with the earth. Go outside, if weather permits. Quietly watch the movement of a tree or a bird. Breathe the scent of a plant. Allow the

sensations to flow all the way into you and through you. Feel them become part of you and fill you with a sense of belonging to this sacred giver of life, our earth.

WORKSHOP PLAN

- Post blank newsprint.

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Cave Drawings](#) (included in this document)
- Newspaper or drop cloth
- Modeling clay
- Large sheets of drawing paper
- Charcoal drawing sticks
- Tape

Preparation for Activity

- Print several copies of Leader Resource 1, Cave Drawings.
- Mold a small clay figurine of a human and place it near the materials.
- Cover one or more work tables with newspaper or drop cloth to protect the surface. Then, set out the clay figurine you have made, modeling clay, drawing paper, and drawing sticks. Place copies of Leader Resource 1 around the work area.

Description of Activity

Participants create simple, human- and nature-oriented art work.

As participants enter, invite them sit in the work area and mold a very simple image with clay or create cave-style drawings. Suggest they draw things they think would be important in the life of a person living in a very simple, close-to-the-earth culture. As participants finish, tape their drawings to walls around the room and display their figures on work tables.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- World map or globe
- Leader Resource 2, [Indigenous Religions Background](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 2, Indigenous Religions Background so you will be comfortable presenting the information it provides.
- Be sure you can locate, on the map or globe: Australia and New Zealand; Ireland; South Africa; the "horn" of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia today); Southeast Asia, Japan, and China.

Description of Activity

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Answer any questions you were unable to answer from the last workshop.

Then, light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly describing a place in nature they have been where they felt the presence of the sacred or where they were filled with awe or wonder.

Read or share, in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 2, Indigenous Religions Background. Write important terms on newsprint. Indicate on the map or globe the areas where the earliest humans lived.

Then say, in your own words:

Think for a moment about what it would be like to live in a very early society. There are probably only ten or twenty of you. All of you have to work hard, to hunt or collect enough food for everybody, to keep the fire going, to protect yourselves from predators and bad weather, and find or build adequate shelters. You have no knowledge of any part of the world other than the miles you can range on foot. Your religion is likely to fit your environment and would offer answers to the big questions: how the world works, how it came to be, how it all fits together, why things are as they are. You have no writing. How would your religion be transmitted from generation to generation? (Allow youth to answer.) What would your religion deal with? (Allow youth to answer.) Would you feel strongly about your part in the natural order? (Allow youth to answer.) The faith that would speak to you would also reflect the seamless oneness of all life, the interconnectedness of all things that

live, plants, animals, humans, everyone.

Discuss the ideas presented in Leader Resource 2, Indigenous Religions Background, using questions such as:

- If you were in a group and there was so little food that some surely would starve, would you be more likely to make sure all the males got food, or all the females? Why?
- Sometimes indigenous faiths are called "religions" and sometimes "mythologies." Why do you think this is so? Who gets to decide if a religion is a "mythology?" Do you think people a thousand years from now will call our religion a mythology?

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — SUN MOTHER WALKS THE EARTH (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Sun Mother Walks the Earth](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss an Australian Aboriginal Dreamtime story.

Tell or read the story "Sun Mother Walks the Earth." Then, invite participants' responses. Prompt with questions such as:

- What big question or questions does the story answer?
- What is the meaning of the scene where she lets the animals choose ways to change their appearance?
- If you had been told this story from the time you were tiny child and it was part of your group's lore, how would it influence the way you experience your world? Imagine hearing this, believing it, and walking into the field, where the story says that Sun Mother walked and made everything bloom. How would that feel? She created the streams and rivers, without which life would be impossible. How would you feel when you went to dip water from the stream?
- If this were your group's story, how do you think you would feel about your relationship with Sun Mother? With the divine?

- Do you think all Australian Aboriginal people today believe this story is the literal truth? If not, do you think they might still value the story? Why? What may it mean to modern Aboriginal people? Remember that for people who live in an indigenous culture, as for all people, beliefs can change, over time.
- What, if anything, do you take from this story that relates to your own faith or spirituality? If you do not have aboriginal roots, how could the story's meaning be different for you than for aboriginal people? Point out that when we use stories from other faiths or cultures, we need to acknowledge that the meaning we find may be different from meanings the stories' owners extract; remembering this helps us respectfully share with cultures not our own. (Be aware, the group might include youth with aboriginal ancestry; some may claim this story as part of their cultural heritage.)
- Earlier, we discussed some of the human needs religion fills: answers to big questions, connecting with something bigger than ourselves, giving meaning and purpose to life, creating a sense of belonging, and helping us know right from wrong. How might this story support humans in meeting any of these needs?

ACTIVITY 2: ORAL TRADITION (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Small chime, gong, or bell
- Timepiece (minutes)

Preparation for Activity

- Think of a story that was told to you that has been important in your life.

Description of Activity

Participants discuss the power of storytelling in their lives and share their own stories.

Tell participants many indigenous religions practice an oral tradition. Suggest that learning from another person is a learning experience different from learning from a book or on online source. Ask participants if they can remember someone teaching them something—for example, how to tie their shoes, use a computer program, or play basketball.

Say, in your own words:

All of us have experienced someone telling us a story that left a strong impression: Maybe a parent once comforted us with a story of their own

failure, loss, or disappointment or shared a story about an eccentric aunt that helped us understand her better. Maybe we have heard a grandparent's story about their childhood or a story about an ancestor who died before we were born. Family stories told through the generations can take on an almost mythic quality.

Mythic qualities also appear in many fairy tales and wisdom tales. All cultures have stories with morals that are told generation after generation. It is fascinating that often the same story shows up in many different cultures in different times and places, with slight variations. An example is the story of Cinderella. Fairy tales, wisdom tales, and fables can transmit values that are important for cultures to retain. Along with family stories, they can help us understand the culture we are part of, and through it, ourselves.

Ask participants to think for a few minutes about stories people have told them that have made a difference in their lives. Allow several minutes. Then, sound a tone to end the reflection time. Ask the youth if they remembered some stories that were important to them and invite volunteers to share with the group. Remind the youth that people's stories are important to them and everyone's stories must be respected.

If no one volunteers, offer to go first. Stand in front of the group and briefly tell the story that influenced you. If participants still are uncomfortable with this level of sharing, ask them to tell a story about the funniest thing that has happened to them.

If participants tell about an event in their own lives, respectfully ask why it was memorable. Did they ever tell other people about it? Why or why not? If they told others, how did it feel to tell the story? Which aspects of the story were important for them to convey?

Also ask:

- Have you taken a family story that was told to you and repeated it to others in your family? What was that like? Did it make you feel more connected to the story or the family member the story involved? How did your family react?
- Have you ever told a child a fairy tale or fable? Did you tell it for amusement only, or to teach a moral?
- One of the basic human needs religions serve is our need for a sense of belonging. How does a religion with a strong oral tradition accomplish

this? (The stories you hear connect you not only to the people in the story, but the people who have told and will tell the story. Knowing the stories of a group helps you feel you belong. Sharing the stories gives you a purpose, a responsibility to fill that helps the group thrive and survive.)

ACTIVITY 3: LEAVING A RECORD (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Large sheets of cardboard, at least 11x17 inches
- A variety of art materials, such as water color paints and brushes, pens, and markers
- Leader Resource 1, [Cave Drawings](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- If needed, make several copies of Leader Resource 1.
- Set out cardboard sheets and art materials on work tables.

Description of Activity

Tell the group:

Although the stories of indigenous religions are passed orally from generation to generation, often there is also physical evidence of the stories and the basic tenets of these religions. These stories were so important to that group that its artists felt the stories should be recorded, to ensure many generations would know of them.

Ask the youth to each choose a tale from their lives they think is worth several future generations knowing about. Tell them the tale can belong to their shared culture, their local community, or even their congregation.

Indicate the cave paintings (copies of Leader Resource 1). Tell the group these are prehistoric cave paintings. Altamira is from a cave in Spain. It could be as old as 19,000 years ago. The Lascaux painting, from France, is estimated to be about 17,000 years old. What do youth see in the paintings? (Animals, mostly herds of bison.) Why do they think someone took the time and trouble to make these paintings?

Explain that the most common images in cave paintings around the world are large animals. Some cave paintings show hunting of these animals. Rarely, human figures are included. Later art depicted more of a story than these earliest drawings. Invite participants

to use the art materials to make their own pictorial record of the story they want to tell.

Variations

Have the group choose and then represent one story together. Lead the youth to agree on a single tale that merits documenting for future generations—for example, a remarkable event in local politics, or the story of how an important person came to be part of your community. You may wish to show the story comic-book style, as a sequence of drawings, so each participant can work on a panel of the same tale.

Instead of a real story, you might invite the group to create a story that might have felt important to a group among the earliest humans—for example, the story of a successful hunt, or a story that explains how flowers were created or why "river" is a sacred part of everyone's lives. Create the story together as you go.

When everyone is finished, talk about why that story would be important for many many generations to understand the people who recorded it. Have each participant review their own contribution, and how their picture tells the story.

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Indigenous Religions Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)
- A poster of the Unitarian Universalist Principles

Description of Activity

Summarize the basic tenets of some indigenous faiths.

Distribute Handout 1, Indigenous Religions Fact Sheet. Review the handout and explain any unfamiliar concepts or terms. Ask youth to compare the fact sheet with the poster of the Principles. Have them identify themes, values, and traditions of indigenous faiths that might hold meaning for Unitarian Universalists. Invite the youth to share their questions about indigenous religions and answer any questions you can. Note remaining questions to research before the next workshop.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Religions Time Line.

- Write a sticky note saying "Indigenous Religions, 3 million BCE" and add a left-pointing arrow.

Description of Activity

The Religions Time Line is updated to add Indigenous Religions.

Ask participants if they remember when humanity began practicing religion. Tell them it was three million years ago, according to archaeological and anthropological evidence. Explain that our time line does not go back nearly that far, but that the arrow indicates the early origins of indigenous religions. Ask if participants remember where the largest groups of people belonging to indigenous religions live. As they call out the locations, identify them on the map. (China, eastern and southern Africa, Southeast Asia, Japan, Australia, Mexico, Central America, Ireland, United States)

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newspaper, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newspaper and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: KIDS VS. GLOBAL WARMING

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Visit the [Kids vs. Global Warming website](http://kids-vs-global-warming.com/Home.html) (at kids-vs-global-warming.com/Home.html). If the meeting space has Internet access, plan to have participants use a computer to visit the website. Or, visit the website before the workshop and print relevant pages to show to the group.

Description of Activity

Participants learn about Kids vs. Global Warming and practice an earth-friendly activity.

Explain, in your own words:

Kids vs. Global Warming is an organization created and headed by teenager Alec Loors. Alec had applied to be a presenter for Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth project but was turned away for being too young. He was disappointed, but decided he would create his own organization, which is now globally recognized. Alec's experience reminds us that if we want to do something important, we must keep trying. There's always another—and often better—way to accomplish something if our first idea does not pan out.

The mission of Kids vs. Global Warming is "to educate youth about the science of global warming, and empower them to take action." The organization does presentations, creates Global Warming Action Teams of youth working for environmental change, supports community activism, and provides training sessions for youth who want to become involved.

Kids vs. Global Warming thinks the starting point is to green things up in your own back yard. Their website says,

We encourage all new teams to plant trees at their school to make their commitment to fighting global warming something concrete and real. Imagine how awesome that would be if every school in our country planted ten trees.

Kids vs. Global Warming is also creating "Activist in a Box" kits for other young people who want to get involved to combat global warming.

Invite the youth to peruse the Kids vs. Global Warming website. Or, share materials you have printed from the website.

Lead a discussion. Suggest these ways the youth might get involved:

- Partner with other youth at school to order an "Activist in a Box" kit from Kids vs. Global Warming.
- Request a presentation from Kids vs. Global Warming.
- Create an organization or club to work for environmental sustainability.
- Organize with friends a tree planting at a local school or park. Be sure to plan follow-up care for the trees. They need regular tending to survive their first year, and that's part of your gift to the earth, too.

Encourage the group to follow through on plans that interest them. Assign the next action steps and plan a follow-up meeting.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

This was the first workshop to explore a faith outside Unitarian Universalism. Review today's workshop with your co-leader:

- Did participants engage the subject with respect?
- Do they seem open to learning from the ways other faiths serve their followers?
- Did they seem to understand the deeper concepts introduced about indigenous religions?
- Which activities worked well with your group? Which were less successful?
- How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

Plan who will seek answers to questions about indigenous faiths that arose in the workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

... everything on the Earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence. — Mourning Dove (Christine Quintasket) (1888-1936), Native American (Salish) novelist

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we discussed indigenous religions and some of the characteristics they share, including the importance of an oral tradition.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- In what ways is it beneficial to be aware of our connection with the natural world?
- Can we recreate some of the feeling of belonging that defined indigenous cultures by fostering an oral tradition in our own families?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- The earliest humans did not have air conditioning or heating. Consequently, they keenly felt the changes of the seasons. What if you were to keep your home a little warmer in the summer, a little cooler in winter, and open the windows when you can? See if these small changes affect how connected you feel to nature. It will save electricity, too—another way to help the world.
- Without water, there is no life. This is why ancient cultures centered around lakes, rivers, and other sources of fresh water. Where do people get water in your community? Start conversations with friends, asking about the water their families drink. Do they drink tap water? Bottled water? Do they have a filtration system? Why? Some communities have very good tap water, and some not so good. In communities with a poor municipal water supply, well-off families can afford to buy water. What about families who cannot afford special water? Do you or your friends know about the quality of your municipal water supply? Do some research and find out. [The Environmental Protection Agency](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/) (at www.epa.gov/safewater/) website posts information on the quality of drinking water in major communities.
- Family stories handed down through the generations can give people both roots and wings—a firm foundation in their family's history and a springboard for moving forward into their own lives and creating more stories to add to the legacy. Start an oral history project in your family. Use your computer, a video recorder, or a tape recorder to record the stories your family tells. Older family members can be an especially rich source. Ask individuals of all ages to share their stories. If you are in a blended family or a mixed ethnicity family, have gay or lesbian parents, have three or more adults sharing parenting, are being raised by grandparents or other relatives, and/or are a child of adoption, you may discover stories that are fascinating and deeply important, maybe some which have never been told before. Create CDs of the collected stories and share them with your entire family.
- A good [list of current indigenous religions](http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/list-of-religions/indigenous-religions.html) (at www.spiritus-temporis.com/list-of-religions/indigenous-religions.html) and short explanations about their beliefs can be found at Spiritus Temporis website.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT

Preparation for Activity

- Find an indigenous faith community with which to engage. Research local Native American tribes to see if outsiders are allowed to attend religious ceremonies. The [NativeGatherings](http://www.nativegatherings.com/) (at www.nativegatherings.com/) website maintains a comprehensive list of events, but do not assume all events are open to the general public; contact event organizers for more information. [The American Indian Council of Mariposa County, California](http://www.visitmariposa.net/powwow/index.html) (at www.visitmariposa.net/powwow/index.html) has a website with useful background information on pow-wows, or Native American gatherings. It includes the protocol guidelines for participants.
- Seek a representative from a Native American religious group to host your group at a gathering. Invite the representative to speak with your group before the engagement.

Description of Activity

Participants engage with a community that embraces its indigenous religion.

Prior to the engagement, give youth information about the community and the religion you will engage with. If at all possible, have a host member of the community you will visit come to your congregation in person to prepare the youth; before that person comes, help the youth brainstorm questions to ask them—if needed, prompt the youth to ask how to be a respectful guest, including what to wear, how to behave, and anything else that will be expected of them.

After the engagement, process the experience. Ask participants:

- What did you see? Was there an altar? Ceremonial decoration? Was special clothing worn?
- Were languages spoken besides English? Was there music? What instruments were used?
- Did the genders participate differently? How?
- Were there different ways for different ages to participate? What did you observe?
- Was there a sermon? Were there readings? Would the topics have been appropriate for a UU congregation?
- Did anything surprise you? What did you not understand? Was there anything that spoke to you and your Unitarian Universalist beliefs?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: GODDESSES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.
- Optional: Preview a video clip on YouTube and plan to show it to the group: [Oshun Festival in New York](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B38PxCHY3A) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B38PxCHY3A).

Description of Activity

Youth explore the role of goddesses in indigenous religions.

Invite participants to brainstorm the names of goddesses. Have a volunteer list the names on newsprint.

When the group runs out of goddess names, contribute these (or, add your favorite goddesses):

- Aphrodite/Venus — Greek/Roman goddess of love and beauty
- Artemis/Diana — Greek/Roman goddess of the moon and the hunt; protector of wild places and animals
- Athena/Minerva -- Greek/Roman goddess of wisdom, courage, intelligence and just war
- Bast — Egyptian lion or cat goddess of pleasure, music, and dancing
- Brigid (also pronounced "BREED") — Celtic goddess of inspiration, poetry, springs, and blacksmithery. Primary goddess of Wales and Ireland. Imbolc is a festival in her honor celebrated by modern-day pagans and Wiccans, parallel in modern Ireland with Saint Brigid's Day (after a Catholic saint)
- Demeter/Ceres — Greek/Roman goddess of agriculture
- Freya — Celtic goddess of spring, fertility, and love
- Hecate ("HEH-cah-tay") — Greek goddess of transformation, crossroads, childbirth, the moon and the spirit world; only goddess strong enough to travel across three worlds: heaven, earth, and underworld
- Ishtar — [Assyrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyria) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyria) and [Babylonian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonia) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonia) goddess of fertility, love, war, and sex
- Isis — Egyptian goddess of motherhood, magic, nature, and fertility

- Ixcacao — Mayan goddess of chocolate and agriculture
- Ixtab — Mayan goddess of death
- Mama Cocha — Incan goddess of the sea
- Mbaba Mwana Waresa — Zulu goddess of Southern Africa who oversees rain, agriculture, and the harvest. She gave beer to the people. Her symbol is the rainbow, a link between heaven and earth.
- Mudu — Aztec goddess of death
- Nut — Egyptian goddess of the night sky
- Oshun/Oxum — Nigerian river goddess of fertility, love, beauty, diplomacy, fresh water, harmony, and healing for the Yoruba people. During the time of slavery, her worship spread to Cuba, Brazil, and other countries where Santeria is found. Oshun is one of the few native African goddesses whose name is recognized in the West
- Sun Woman/Mother — Many names for sun goddesses exist among different people of Australia, including Alinga, Gnowee, and Yhi, to name a few
- Waramurungundi — The first woman, according to the Gunwinggu people of Australia. The all-creating mother of Australia, she gave birth to the earth and then fashioned all its living creatures. She taught her creations to talk and divided each language group from the next
- White Buffalo Woman — Brought sacred rituals to the Plains Indians, including the sacred pipe
- Xochiquetzal (shok-a-KAY-tsal) — Aztec goddess of the earth, flowers, plants, games, dance, and love. Every eight years, a festival was held in her honor and people wore animal masks or flower masks

Acknowledge that the list is incomplete. Discuss, using these questions:

- What common traits do you see among the goddesses?
- How is the female portrayed as divine in modern religions? (Mention the Virgin Mary, who is venerated in many Catholic countries almost as much as Jesus, and Catholic saints. Tell participants that Tibetan Buddhism recognizes 21 female Taras ("tara" means "one who saves"); Kuan Yin is a Buddhist deity revered particularly in China (see Workshop 10, Activity 3 for more information); and female images of the divine are common in Sufi Muslim poetry.)
- Though female divinity is represented in modern religion, it is not represented nearly to the

extent as female goddesses in indigenous religions. Why do you think this is so?

- How do Unitarian Universalists honor the feminine in divinity?

Tell participants that some of the goddesses of indigenous faiths are still worshipped. If you have Internet access and a computer, watch this video on YouTube: [Oshun Festival in New York](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B38PxCHY3A) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B38PxCHY3A).

Suggest to youth that if they are interested in goddesses, they can find a great deal of information on the Internet and in books.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: HONORING OUR ANCESTORS (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Review the activity description so you will be comfortable presenting information about Shinto. Note: The Faith in Action activity in Workshop 7, Eastern Religions, offers further exploration of Shinto.

Description of Activity

Participants become familiar with Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan, and explore the importance of ancestors and forebears in their own lives.

Say, in your own words:

Shinto is the indigenous faith of Japan, with an estimated 4 million to 100 million current followers. Believers respect animals as messengers of the gods, recognize nature as sacred, revere geographic locations such as mountains and springs, and practice cleanliness as a religious rite.

Followers of Shinto aspire to have makoto—or, sincerity—brightness, and purity of heart. Another feature of Shinto is the worship of ancestors.

Tell participants Shinto adherents greatly honor their elderly and revere their ancestors who have died. Explain that to a follower of Shinto, the thought of all their dead ancestors watching over them is profoundly comforting, giving their life meaning and depth. Ask participants what they think of that idea. Lead a discussion about attitudes toward elders and ancestors with questions such as these:

- Who are the most elderly members of your extended family: grandparents, uncles or aunts, elderly cousins?

- Are these family members given any special level of respect?
- What about relatives who have died? Do family members talk about those who have passed with a different kind of respect than they give the living?
- How is the family wisdom passed down? Do elders in the family have a special role?
- Do your older family members, including your parents, refer to their parents, grandparents, or other relatives when they give you advice or talk about the choices they, themselves, made when they were younger?
- Does it seem a strength for Shinto families to feel such attachment to all their family, living and dead? Why?

Ask participants to imagine a ritual that could express the way their family honors ancestors. Suggest they either think of ways to enrich an existing family practice or envision a totally new ritual.

Give them a moment to reflect. Then, ask them to pair up and share their ideas with their partners. Reconvene the large group and ask a few volunteers to share their ideas.

Tell participants Shintoism is not the only faith with a belief that our ancestors are looking out for us. Many indigenous faiths and other religions share this belief. Many also share the Shinto belief in other spirits, such as the animal spirits of Native American religions.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: CANNING AND DRYING FOOD

Materials for Activity

- For drying fruit: Apricots, peaches, apples, berries, and more; a knife for pitting or coring; water and (a) ascorbic acid (2 tablespoons) or vitamin C tablets (five one-gram tablets), or, (for peaches, apples, bananas) 1 quart pineapple juice and 1/4 cup bottled lemon juice; a big, dry open pan or pot; (for sun drying) a clean screen; (for oven drying) 100 percent cotton sheet or cheesecloth
- For canning tomatoes: Sound, ripe, high-acid tomatoes (6-8 per jar, depending on jar and tomato size); food storage "Bell" or "Mason" jars with fitted lids and rubber rings; a wire basket, or a small sieve with a long-handled, wooden spoon; a jar lifter or tongs; salt and measuring spoons; a basin for cool water; a

large pot for boiling and a wire rack that fits in the bottom of the pot; and water

Preparation for Activity

- Decide which method(s) of food preparation for storage you will use. Arrange where you can do this activity. You will need plenty of work space, access to a water source and, if you are canning, a stove.
- Find out about any food allergies in the group, then choose which foods to work with.
- Obtain the ingredients and supplies.

Description of Activity

Participants prepare and store food so they may share the earth's bounty with others.

Drying and canning instructions are adapted from the [Seasonal Chef](#) (at www.seasonalchef.com/preserves21.htm) website and an E-How (TM) online article, "[How to Make Freeze Dried Fruit Snacks](#)" (at www.ehow.com/how_7827832_make-freeze-dried-fruit-snacks.html)."

Share with the group:

Food storage has long been a practice of all sorts of cultures out of basic necessity. These days many people are unfamiliar with methods of food storage, because it is not something they have to worry about very often. But harvest time was a deeply sacred act in many indigenous cultures, with strong ties to the deities they believed in. Food storage was a matter of life or death. In Western European cultures, these stored foods were often brought to the winter festivals to be traded, or as gifts for families who perhaps had run out of one or another kind of staple. Some families had more meat perhaps than another family. Some may have stored honey, or a fruit preserve, but not enough grain. These families would come together during times of celebration, and share their bounty with one another.

Invite youth to can and dry food to share with others as a way to honor the bounty of their lives.

Drying Fruit: Apricots, Peaches, Apples, Berries, and More

As always when working with food, be more cautious than you think you should be. All work surfaces should be freshly sanitized. Wash your hands each time you

go from one task to another, and wash fruit or vegetables with soap and water very carefully.

Drying is a simple, natural method to prepare food for storage.

1. Use only blemish-free fruits that are fully ripe but not overly ripe.
2. Wash, pit, and slice the fruit. Make the pieces as uniform in size as possible, so they'll dry in the same time. The smaller the pieces, the faster they will dry.

3. To preserve the color of the fruit, blanch or dip the fruit slices before you dry them. Dilute 2 tbsp. ascorbic acid or 5 one-gram crushed vitamin C tablets in 1 quart water. For peaches, apples, and bananas you can instead mix 1 quart pineapple juice, 1 quart lukewarm water, and 1/4 cup bottled lemon juice.

Sun Drying. In very warm climates with 100 degree heat and low humidity, you can dry fruit outside in the sun. Spread the slices on a clean screen for two to four days, turning slices over halfway through the drying process. A screen over the fruit will keep most bugs away. Bring the screen inside at night to keep dew from re-moisturizing on the fruit.

Oven Drying. Preheat oven to 145 degrees. Prop open the oven door, to let steam escape.

Spread a 100 percent cotton sheet or a sheet of cheesecloth over the oven racks. Set the fruit slices on the cloth. Allow from 4 up to 12 hours to dry the fruit, then let it cool. Food will be dry but pliable when cool.

After Drying. Keep drying the fruit in a big, dry open pan or pot in a dry, warm, airy location. Stir once or twice a day for 10 days to two weeks.

If you want to store the dried fruit for any great length of time, it is best to pasteurize the slices to destroy any insect eggs. When drying is complete, freeze the fruit for several days at zero degrees in a deep freeze (the freezer compartment of a refrigerator will not work), or heat in a 175 degree oven for 10-15 minutes.

Store dried fruit in airtight zip-up bags or glass containers, kept inside paper bags to protect from light. Store in a cool, dry place.

Canning: Tomatoes and Many Other Foods

Canning is a way to store chemical-free, delectable fruits, vegetables, nutmeats, pickles, preserves, jams, and jellies, as well as meats and fish, already cooked and tender, just waiting for a meal.

Jars do not have to be purchased new. Tell congregants, neighbors, and friends that you are going to be canning and need jars. A note tacked up on a bulletin board or placed in your local advertiser paper will also work wonders. You can use any jar that is chip- and crack-free with a jar lid and ring that fit. Note:

Rubber lids need to be bought new; they are usually only good for one-time use. Food will spoil in an improperly sealed jar.

As always when working with food, be more cautious than you think you should be. All work surfaces should be freshly sanitized, wash your hands each time you go from one task to another, and wash fruit or vegetables with soap and water very carefully.

To can tomatoes: Fill a large pot with water up to 3/4 full. Place the wire rack inside and put the pot on to boil.

Wash the jars in warm soapy water and rinse. Check each one for minute cracks and nicks in the rim, run your fingers carefully over each to make sure. Leave the jars in hot water until needed. Separate the lids and place them in a separate pot of water. Bring the lids to a boil, and then leave them in there until you need them.

Prepare a large basin of cold water for tomatoes to cool in. Wash the tomatoes and dip them in the boiling water of your large pot, using a wire basket, or a small sieve with a long handle, for about a minute or until the skins crack. Then place the tomatoes in cold water. This allows the skins to slip off easily. Once cooled a bit, core and stem each tomato; you can cut them up or leave them whole, depending on size and preference. Pack into jars and either mash down, so the juice covers them, or cover with hot water leaving a half inch of space between the product and the jar rim.

You can add salt for taste, half a teaspoon to each pint or a teaspoon to each quart. Poke a large, clean wooden spoon into the product to dislodge any large air bubbles. Wipe off the jar rim with damp cloth, place the ring on, and screw the lid down firmly. Place the jars into boiling water bath, carefully using a jar holder or tongs. Boil pints for 40 minutes and quarts for 45 minutes, counting from when the water returns to a full rolling boil. Note: These times are for use at sea level. Adjust your processing time according to altitude: at 1,000 to 3,000 feet, add five minutes; at 3,001 to 6,000 feet, add ten minutes; at 6,001 to 8,000 feet, add fifteen minutes.

Remove the jars carefully and place them on dry folded towels until cooling (and sealing) is complete. Jar lids will make a "popping" noise as their seals set. This is caused by the vacuum of cooling. If lids do not "pop" in, the seal is not correct.

Follow-up

After everything is prepared, engage youth to make a plan for when and where to share the food they have stored. One idea might be your congregation's coffee hour. Another is a local food pantry. Ask,

- How does it feel to share food you helped preserve? How does it feel to know the food can last a long time?
- Did preparing the preserves help you feel closer to the earth and its life-giving properties? What other activities help you feel connected to nature? What does feeling connected to nature have to do with religion?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 3: STORY: SUN MOTHER WALKS THE EARTH

Based on a story of indigenous people of Australia/New Zealand.

There was a time when everything was still. All the spirits of the Earth were asleep—or almost all. The great Sun Mother was awake, and as she opened her eyes a warm ray of light spread out toward the sleeping Earth.

"Ah!" the Sun Mother said, "I have work to do! I must go to the Earth, awaken the sleeping spirits, and give them forms."

The Sun Mother glided down to Earth, which was bare. She began to walk in all directions and everywhere she walked plants grew. After returning to the field where she had begun her work, the Sun Mother rested, well pleased with herself. When she was rested, the Sun Mother went forth again.

This time she ventured into the dark caves on the mountainsides. The bright light that radiated from her awoke the spirits, and after she left the caves, insects of all kinds flew out into the sunlight. The Sun Mother sat down and watched the glorious sight of her insects mingling with her flowers. Once again, however, she did not rest for long.

The Sun Mother ventured into a very deep cave, spreading her light around her. Her heat melted the ice, and the rivers and streams of the world were created. Then she created fish and small snakes, lizards, and frogs. Next she awoke the spirits of the birds and animals and they burst into the sunshine in a glorious array of colors. Seeing this, the Sun Mother was pleased with her work.

She called all her creatures to her and instructed them to enjoy the wealth of the Earth and to live peacefully with one another. Then she rose into the sky and became the Sun.

The living creatures watched in awe as the Sun Mother crept across the sky toward the West. However, when she finally sunk beneath the horizon they were panic-stricken, thinking she had deserted them. All night they stood frozen in their places, thinking that the end of time had come. After what seemed to them a lifetime, the Sun Mother peeked above the horizon in the East. The Earth's children were so relieved they danced for joy. Soon they learned to expect her coming and going and were no longer afraid.

At first, the children lived together peacefully, but eventually envy crept into their hearts. They began to

argue. The Sun Mother was forced to come down from her home in the sky to mediate their bickering. She gave each creature the power to change its form to whatever it chose. However, she was not pleased with the end result. The rats she had made had changed into bats; there were giant lizards and fish with blue tongues and feet. However, the oddest of the new animals had a bill like a duck, teeth for chewing, a tail like a beaver's, and the ability to lay eggs! It was called the platypus.

The Sun Mother looked down upon the Earth and decided that she must create new creatures, wiser than these. She gave birth to two children, a god and a goddess. The god was the Morning Star and the goddess was the Moon. Two children were born to them, and these, her grandchildren, she sent to live on Earth. They became our ancestors. The Sun Mother was satisfied. They were superior to the animals because they had part of her mind, and would never want to change their shape.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 3: HANDOUT 1: INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS FACT SHEET

Emergenced: As early as three million years ago in China, Japan, Australia, various regions in Africa, and Southeast Asia (Hinduism is explored in Workshop 4.)

Adherents: 420 million (not including Hinduism)

Ranking: Fifth, behind Christianity, Islam, Atheism/Agnosticism, and Hinduism

Prophets: There are legendary, mythical figures in each, but no prophets

Texts: None; oral tradition

Symbols: Vary by faith, but all are tied to the natural world: feathers, bones, stones, mountains

Imagery: Vary by faith, but all are tied to the natural world: animals, birth, fire, water, religious ceremonies

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

Oral traditions. Indigenous religions begin in societies without written language.

Not patriarchal. Indigenous religions honor all life equally, and give homage to the creative force that brought them into being, which force they characterize as female.

Close to the earth. Indigenous religions recognize their interconnectedness with all of nature, live with the natural rhythms of nature.

Ideal is the source. Unlike some later religions which look ahead to the perfection of humanity, aboriginal religions see the time of creation as being perfect and their task to recreate that time of innocence and perfection. Humans have a lesser level of understanding than animals because they arrived later and are therefore farther from the source.

Spirits imbue all living things ...including all animals and plants. The reason the paper is never cut in traditional origami (Japanese paper folding) is to honor the spirit of the tree that gave its life for the paper.

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- Recognition of the interconnectedness of all life
- Value for the natural world
- Concept that the force that gives life is shared among living things
- Commitment to being nonsexist and valuing everyone's qualities and contributions.

In *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), Readings 481, 495, 518, 520, 526, 551, 614, and 682 and Hymn 366 come from Native American traditions.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 3: LEADER RESOURCE 1: CAVE DRAWINGS

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/cavepaintings.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/cavepaintings.pdf) for printing.

The first painting is Lascaux, from France. The second painting is Altamira, from Spain.





BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 3: LEADER RESOURCE 2: INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS BACKGROUND

The earliest human beings developed the four aspects of human societies: language, music, a social order, and religion. For more than three million years, human beings have practiced religion.

Some of the earliest places we know human beings have lived are the southernmost tip of Africa (South Africa today), the northeastern "horn" of Africa (Ethiopia today), Southeast Asia, Japan, China, and Australia. In these places, a locally born religion has been practiced for over three million years. Today large numbers of people still follow a form of an indigenous faith.

As humans spread across the earth, indigenous religions did, too. Native Americans were in North America as early as 15,000 BCE. The Mayans can be traced to Mexico and Central America as early as 2,000 BCE. Historical records place the Druids in western Europe by the first century CE, the same time frame when Greeks and Romans worshipped the gods known from stories we often call "mythology." Remember, these "mythologies" were very real religions for the people of the time.

These are just the indigenous faiths that have been documented. Some religions surely died, taking all their history with them. Often indigenous religions mixed with other, more modern religions to form people's core beliefs and common practices. For example, many African people today practice Islam or Christianity. Yet, they may still hold beliefs and practice rituals of an indigenous religion. They meld the two religions into a belief system that makes sense to them.

All indigenous faiths are:

- Orally transmitted
- Embedded in the specific places where the adherents live
- Tied to natural events and rhythms
- Bound to a strong sense of the interrelationship of living things.

Indigenous faiths do not have the preoccupation with the distant future that later religions developed (heaven or hell, reincarnation, enlightenment). The present is the time that is important.

The earliest-born faiths celebrate the female as the source of life. They often consider the earth itself as female since it gives life to us all. Early societies greatly

valued women because of their childbearing capabilities and the primal, creative energy which these societies recognized as female. Patriarchal societies came later, essentially as a luxury afforded by stability and prosperity.

Taken together, indigenous religions rank fifth worldwide in terms of number of adherents. Some religions that have been considered indigenous include Native American religions, the religion of the Aztec, Shinto, Sumerian Babylonian and Sumerian, Greek and Roman, Egyptian, and the religions of the Zulu, Ibo, and Yoruba people of West Africa.

FIND OUT MORE

Explore the world's largest indigenous faiths.

- Information about the history, practices, and contemporary expressions of [Shinto](#) (at www.religioustolerance.org/shinto.htm) is posted on the Religious Tolerance website. The [Japan-Guide travel website](#) (at www.japan-guide.com/e/e2056.html) offers information about Shinto and links to explore Shinto sites in Japan and art forms.
 - The Australian Broadcasting Corporation website offers an article, "[Indigenous Traditions — Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders](#)" (at www.abc.net.au/religion/stories/s790117.htm). The Gradebook website of educational resources has extensive information on the Aboriginal peoples of [Australia and New Zealand](#) (at www.gradebook.org/Australian%20History.htm).
 - The [African Traditional Religion](#) (at www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/) website published by Chidi Denis Isizoh presents information about religions indigenous to different regions in Africa and offers many topical articles describing practices, beliefs, and interactions with Islam, Catholicism, Protestant religions, and Western cultures.
 - The [Internet Sacred Text Archive](#) (at www.sacred-texts.com/afr/index.htm) has a page focused on South African, Bantu, and West/Central African indigenous faiths and their interaction with and "export" into Western cultures.
- The Heart O'Scotland website presents information about [Celtic mythology and religion](#) (at www.heartscotland.com/Categories/CelticMythology.htm). [The Religion of the Celts](#) (at www.ardue.org.uk/library/book5/religion.html), posted by T.W. Rolleston, gives historical context for the Celtic faith and describes what, and how, we know about its ancient beliefs and practices.
 - The Religious Tolerance website offers a section on [Native American Spirituality](#) (at www.religioustolerance.org/nataspir.htm). More detailed information is posted on the website [American Indian Spirituality and Sacred Rites](#) (at impurplehawk.com/naspirit.html). On the University of Minnesota website for the project "Voices from the Gaps," learn about [Mourning Dove \(Christine Quintasket\)](#) (at voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/quintasket_christine.php), the early 20th-century Native American writer whose quotation opens this workshop. Find some guidance that may help you present Native American indigenous religions to youth in the essay "[Native American Religion in Early America](#)" (at nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/natrel.htm)" by Christine Leigh Heyrman, on the [National Humanities Center](#) (at nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/natrel.htm) website.

WORKSHOP 4: HINDUISM—ONE GOD, A THOUSAND FACES

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Everyone who wills can hear the inner voice. It is within everyone. — Mohandas Gandhi

This workshop introduces Hinduism, an ancient faith birthed in India in a time beyond memory and still practiced by more than 900 million people around the globe. Hinduism is frequently associated with Buddhism, which is logical, since Buddhism grew from Hinduism: The man who became the Buddha was born Hindu. However, Hinduism is distinct, and more ancient. The almost infinite paths to God supported in Hinduism are the result of its unique approach to the human spiritual quest.

Hinduism is an indigenous religion, yet its complexities and staggering variety of practices can make it seem more foreign to modern, Western youth than earth-based indigenous religions with which they are familiar. Also, the youth may know some followers of earth-centered faiths in their congregation but may not have encountered Hindus. Like Eastern religions in other workshops, Hinduism is based on philosophies that can seem very different from the Western way of looking at the world.

If your congregation includes people who are Hindu or who have a Hindu background, consider replacing an activity with a guest visit and discussion. It is important for participants to see a form of contemporary Hinduism.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce some fundamental aspects of Hinduism
- Acquaint participants with some of the most important figures in the Hindu pantheon and the birth story of Krishna
- Familiarize participants with some parallels between Hinduism and Unitarian Universalism
- Explore the four yogas, or paths to God, of Hinduism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Deepen their understanding of the many forms religions can take to meet the same goal
- Become familiar with and be able to discuss important aspects and concepts of Hinduism
- Increase their knowledge of their spiritual lineage by learning how the teachings of nonviolence traveled from Thoreau to Gandhi to King
- Think more deeply about how their own spiritual growth takes place and what aspects of their own lives serve their spiritual growth.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	25
Activity 1: Story — The Birth of Krishna	15
Activity 2: The Thoreau-Gandhi-King Connection	15
Activity 3: Four Paths to the Ultimate	20
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	7
Activity 5: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Nonviolent Social Change	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: The Bhagavad Gita	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Since open-mindedness is at the heart of this program, and because Hinduism is so frequently misunderstood, take some time to seek a serenely open-minded attitude before leading this workshop.

Here is a two-part meditation to help you:

First, envision a prism. See in your mind's eye a clear light shining on the prism and the light dividing into streams of different colors. The colors all come from the same source—they are all true expressions of the original, full-spectrum light. While they may look very

different, none is better or worse than any other, and when following any one of them back to the point of origin, you arrive at the same pure source.

Allow yourself to see a parade of images from Hinduism: elephant-headed and many-armed deities; long-haired yogis; extravagant, unfamiliar architecture. Allow them to contrast in your mind's eye with more familiar images, from your own faith. If your emotional response to the less-familiar images is one of unease, simply recognize this and see it for what it is.

With these images playing through your head, allow yourself to see that the prism is an apt analogy for religion. Just as the colors emanating from the prism flow from the same light, these wildly varying images

originate from the same source: the human search for truth. Just as following any color of light back to the prism leads to the original light, these emanations we call religion can be followed, in all their variety, back to ultimate truth, whatever that may be. And further, that ultimate truth, though we may not know what it is, is the same for all. In adhering to a given religion, people are following the color of light that is most beautiful to them.

On the day of the workshop, take a few moments to connect with your co-leader beforehand. Share any concerns you may have, and decide how you can help each other during the workshop. Knowing that you are there for each other will help you maintain the serenity and open-mindedness you are seeking.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Photographs of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Post enough newsprint so several participants can write at once.
- Print Leader Resource 1 and cut apart the photographs.
- Write across the top of the newsprint in large letters: "What Does Martin Luther King Jr. Have to Do with Hinduism?" Add the photograph of King from Leader Resource 1, Photographs of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King.
- Optional: On another sheet of newsprint, write this quote from King's 1964 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, and post:
Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.
- Optional: If you have a computer and Internet access, go to [MLKOnline](http://www.mlkonline.net/) (at www.mlkonline.net/). Prepare to show video or audio of one of Rev. King's speeches.

Description of Activity

Participants share their thoughts on connections between Martin Luther King Jr. and Hinduism.

As participants enter, invite them to write their thoughts on newsprint. If they ask questions about Hinduism or answer the question posted on the newsprint, say they will discuss both during the workshop.

OPENING (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Pillows or cushions, meditation pillows, or *seiza* benches (a bench specially designed for kneeling during mediation) for sitting on the floor

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Hinduism Background](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 3, [Images of Hindu Gods](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 2, Hinduism Background, so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Cut apart the images in Leader Resource 3, Images of Hindu Gods.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions you could not answer from the last workshop.

Invite youth to sit on the floor or kneel on a pillow or *seiza* bench. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and to build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly sharing something they know or have heard about Hinduism (an image, concept, or person). Ask what questions they have about Hinduism, and write their questions on newsprint. Answer the ones you can. Tell the group that during this workshop, many of their other questions will be answered. After the workshop, you will seek answers to any remaining questions, which you will share at their next meeting.

Read, or share with youth in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 2, Hinduism Background, as you pass around images from Leader Resource 3, Images of Hindu Gods. Ask participants to identify some of the important terms from Leader Resource 2, and list them on newsprint.

Including All Participants

A participant with physical limitations regarding sitting on the floor can be accommodated in a chair. If you feel this will bring an uncomfortable amount of attention to this participant, invite all youth to sit in chairs.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Birth of Krishna](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 4, [Image of Krishna](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Copy the story for all participants.
- Decide whether you will have participants act out the story after they hear it. If so, prepare a list of the roles in the story. Assign roles to volunteers and give them copies of the story ahead of time.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the Hindu legend of Krishna's birth.

Tell or read the story "The Birth of Krishna." Pass around Leader Resource 4, Image of Krishna. Ask participants for initial reactions. What did they think of the story?

Prompt further discussion by posing questions, such as:

- Krishna was the eighth reincarnation of Vishnu. Many stories exist about gods taking human form to help people in times of great need. What impression do you get of Vishnu/Krishna from this story? What values do he and those who protect him (like his parents) exhibit? What behaviors and values do Kansa and his supporters exhibit?
- How does the violence in this story affect you? What is the purpose of the violence in the myth? (To establish the low character of Kansa and the need for Krishna as protector and liberator.)
- This story is told to children. Human societies throughout time have told children scary stories. The original Grimm's Fairy Tales, for example, such as Little Red Riding Hood, are very violent, filled with danger and scary imagery. Is there a benefit in telling such stories to children? If so, what is it?
- Krishna is described as a mischievous child, and there are many stories of his pranks on family and friends. What purpose is there to describing Krishna in this way? Does it make a deity seem more accessible, more understandable, to have recognizably human qualities?

- Were you scared for the baby girl who was exchanged for Krishna? How were you affected by the twist in the story—when Kansa tried to kill her but she flew into the air? What purpose is served by this element of the story?
- Does it make you feel differently toward the god Krishna that he was born just as human babies are born and grew up with human parents?
- How do you feel about the god Vishnu, who chose multiple times to be reborn on Earth to help humankind? Does this remind you of any stories from other religions?

ACTIVITY 2: THE THOREAU-GANDHI-KING CONNECTION (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Photographs of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Ball of attractive ribbon or yarn
- Optional: Newsprint from the Welcoming and Entering activity on which participants wrote their ideas about Rev. King's connection to Hinduism

Preparation for Activity

- Cut apart the photographs of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King from Leader Resource 1.
- On a sheet of newsprint, draw a straight line that will become a time line. Write "1800" on the far left and the current year on the far right. Post the time line so that all participants will be able to see it.

Description of Activity

By acknowledging the connection between Thoreau, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr., participants identify nonviolent social change as a value that Unitarian Universalism shares with Hinduism.

Display the photograph of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. On the blank time line, add marks at 1921 and 1968, approximately, and bracket them with the word "King." Let the youth know that these brackets represent King's lifetime.

If you did the Welcoming and Entering activity, review the newsprint sheet(s) of questions with the youth. If the group is too big for everyone to look on, read the written comments aloud.

If anyone guessed or knew that Martin Luther King Jr. was inspired by Mohandas Gandhi, take special note of that. If no one did, ask the group if they know or have an impression of what religion Mohandas Gandhi,

popularly called Mahatma Gandhi, followed. Mention that "mahatma" means "great teacher."

Display the photograph of Gandhi. Tell the group: Gandhi, who was Hindu, was indisputably one of India's strongest religious leaders. He transformed Indian society, leading the movement to gain India's independence from British rule.

On the time line, add marks at 1869 and 1948 and bracket them with the word "Gandhi." Tell the youth that Gandhi was born in 1869 and died in 1948. Explain that Gandhi used and taught *nonviolent resistance* to create social change. Write "Nonviolence" on the time line.

Say: Some people called his work "passive resistance," but Gandhi strongly objected to the word "passive." The work he taught and led was active; it required thought, commitment, and bravery.

Ask the youth if they have heard the term "nonviolent resistance" before. Ask if they have heard it used to describe the tactics of Martin Luther King Jr. during the 20th-century Civil Rights Movement. Share that Martin Luther King Jr. used nonviolent resistance to powerfully combat prejudice, violence, and segregation in the United States.

Share, in these words or your own: It is through nonviolent resistance and Gandhi that Dr. King, a Baptist minister, is connected with Hinduism. King admired Gandhi's work very much; he thought Gandhi was a brilliant and inspiring leader. Dr. King studied Gandhi's theories, methods, and training of volunteers, and then—which was very unusual at the time—actually traveled to India in 1959 to visit where Gandhi lived. As you can see by the time line, Gandhi had already died by 1959, but Dr. King believed that there was still much to learn from the people Gandhi had worked with and from seeing the places Gandhi had lived and worked. In a sad parallel, Gandhi had been assassinated, as Dr. King would be in 1968. Both of them knew the risks of the work they were doing, but both believed that it was important enough to die for.

So Dr. King was inspired by Mohandas Gandhi, a connection not everybody knows about. But there is another connection—a Unitarian Universalist connection. Gandhi inspired King, and a famous Unitarian inspired Gandhi.

Invite the youth to guess who you mean. Ask: Which famous Unitarian lived in Massachusetts in the 19th century and was jailed for civil disobedience? Who wrote a famous essay titled "Civil Disobedience" in 1849, 20 years before Gandhi was born? Tell them the person was Henry David Thoreau if no one gives the correct response.

Display the photo of Thoreau. Add marks to the time line at 1817 and 1862, and bracket them with the word "Thoreau." Share, in these words or your own:

Thoreau was committed to nonviolence. He went to jail for the principle of nonviolence when he refused to pay taxes because his tax money would be used to fight a war—the war between the United States and Mexico. One of his friends paid his tax bill for him, but Thoreau never would have.

Ask for three volunteers to stand as Thoreau, Gandhi, and King. Give them the pictures to hold to represent "their" person and ask the three to stand at different locations, far apart in the room. One leader should stand a few feet from "Thoreau," holding the ball of ribbon or yarn.

Tell participants: Thoreau was not the first person in history to be committed to nonviolence or to act on his convictions. Hindus have believed in radical nonviolence for millennia.

The leader holding the ball of yarn should pass it to "Thoreau," keeping hold of one end.

But Thoreau wrote his thoughts so clearly and took such decisive action that he was seen as a model by a Hindu leader clear across the ocean, Gandhi, who used the strategy of nonviolence to change the lives of millions of people.

Ask "Thoreau" to hold onto the yarn and toss or pass the ball to "Gandhi."

Then another spiritual leader, back across the ocean, was so inspired by the work of Gandhi that he also took up the work of nonviolent social change.

That was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who also changed the lives of millions of people.

Indicate to "Gandhi" to hold the yarn and toss or pass the ball to "King."

Dr. King inspired many people and is still inspiring us today.

This is a spiritual lineage—the passing of sacred teachings from one inspired leader to another. Just as the gurus—the spiritual teachers—in Hinduism pass their spiritual knowledge from one generation to the next, knowledge about the power of loving, nonviolent action for social change passed from the Unitarian Thoreau to the Hindu Gandhi to the Baptist King. Who is next? Perhaps it will be you.

Have "King" toss or pass the ball of ribbon to another youth. Invite everyone to wrap a piece around their wrist before passing the ball, as a reminder of our legacy of nonviolent social change and one way Hindu beliefs can deepen our Unitarian Universalist faith.

ACTIVITY 3: FOUR PATHS TO THE ULTIMATE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 5, [Children's Chalice Lighting with Gestures](#) (included in this document)
- Old, respectable-looking book, preferably with no title on the front cover
- Pair of work gloves
- Rose, red paper heart, or other symbol of love
- A polished stone
- Lined paper and pens or pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Look over Leader Resource 5, to familiarize yourself with the words and gestures.

Description of Activity

Participants learn about the four yogas, or paths to enlightenment, of Hinduism.

Share with participants, in these words or your own:

Absolutely fundamental to Hinduism is its recognition that people are different. Like Unitarian Universalism, Hinduism recognizes that people see the divine differently (hence, the many gods and goddesses), they think and act differently, and they respond to different things. Also like UUs, Hindus believe there is no one single path to

understanding God: that the roads to enlightenment will differ as much as people do and that no one road is more legitimate than the next. There is only the one that is right for you. This is directly acknowledged in the four yogas of Hinduism.

In the United States, the word "yoga" typically brings to mind a type of physical exercise with a spiritual component. However, in Hinduism, the meaning is more significant. The word "yoga" comes from the Sanskrit word for union or joining. The four yogas are four different approaches to reuniting or rejoining with the divine.

Ask the youth if any of them have been Unitarian Universalists for a few years. Remind those who were UUs as children that they probably learned a simple chalice lighting that can help them remember the four yogas. Ask any youth who remember the words and gestures to recite it along with you (refer to Leader Resource 5, *Children's Chalice Lighting with Gestures*, as needed):

We light this chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism. This is the church of the open mind. This is the church of the helping hands. This is the church of the loving heart. Together we care for our earth and work for friendship and peace in our world.

Share with the group that the first three yogas will be easy to remember from this chalice lighting: They are the yoga of thought or the mind (do the open mind gesture), the yoga of work or the hands (do the gesture), and the yoga of devotion or the heart (do the gesture). The fourth yoga is more abstract; it is the yoga of contemplation. So, the four paths to enlightenment are through knowledge, through good works, through devotion, and through spiritual contemplation.

The first two paths, "knowledge" and "good works," are self-explanatory. The third path, "devotion," does not mean just to love God; it also implies carrying out actions to demonstrate your reverence, such as worship and prayer. "Spiritual contemplation," the fourth path, is frequently achieved through meditation, but it can include physical action, such as the practice of yoga.

Every path is valid—all lead to God or the Ultimate Reality and are therefore equal—but all require steady, energetic effort. To transcend the delusions of the

spiritual world and to fully understand the divine is no small task!

Also, the four paths are not always separate and distinct. For example, to demonstrate devotion to the gods, you might give to a charity—which is also a good work. To increase your ability to contemplate, you might take classes from a yoga instructor, in which you learn that mindfulness is part of the practice of yoga; learning yoga would be a good way to address both the first and fourth paths.

Ask the youth which of the four paths they suppose most Hindus follow—which do they think would appeal to the most people? Tell them that more Hindus follow the path of the heart, often called the path of Love or Devotion, than any other. This does not mean, though, that they neglect the other paths. Most Hindus would say that one should practice all four.

Ask which path each youth feels most drawn to. Which of these makes them feel most in touch with awe and wonder, most connected with something bigger than themselves?

- Thinking through an intellectual problem
- Feeling love or devotion to something or someone
- Doing work
- Meditating, or opening their minds to inspiration.

Lay out the book, the gloves, the symbol of love, and the polished stone. Explain that these are intended to stimulate ideas related to the four yogas. Distribute paper and writing instruments. Invite the youth to write why they feel drawn to a particular path or their observations about the four yogas of Hinduism. If they feel drawn to more than one path, they can write what appeals to them personally about several or all of the yogas. Their writing could take the form of a paragraph or a poem. If they express their thoughts better in pictures, youth can draw instead of write.

When the youth have completed writing or drawing, ask if any are willing to share with the group. Listen respectfully and thank participants who read or showed their work.

Thank the youth for their thoughtful participation and willingness to share with the group.

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Hinduism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint with youth's questions about Hinduism (from Opening)

Preparation for Activity

- Post the newsprint sheet of questions where all participants will be able to see it.

Description of Activity

Participants discuss a fact sheet on Hinduism.

Distribute Handout 1, Hinduism Fact Sheet, and review it with the group. Ask:

- Can you identify aspects of Hinduism that engage with the basic human needs met by religion? For example:
 - Answers to big questions
 - A connection to something larger than ourselves
 - Knowing right from wrong
 - Giving one's life meaning and a sense of purpose
 - Creating a feeling of belonging
- What beliefs do Unitarian Universalists and Hindus share?
- How does knowing about Hinduism influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

Acknowledge that in Hinduism, as in all religions or philosophies, beliefs are not necessarily uniform from one participant to another. What participants discussed today are some of the Hinduism's most universal tenets. As in other religions, much diversity exists among believers, so an individual's faith cannot be predicted simply by saying, "They are Hindu." Additionally, we know that religion is not static—religions change and grow as human needs change.

Revisit the questions generated in the Opening. Point out the answers that have emerged so far during this workshop. Note the questions that remain unanswered, and tell the group you will do your best to find answers before their next meeting.

If you will be engaging with a Hindu community (Alternate Activity 1), give participants any information they need.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Display the time line where all participants will be able to see it.
- Write a sticky note saying "Hinduism, Indigenous, 3000 BCE, if not earlier."

Description of Activity

The Religions Time Line is updated to add Hinduism.

Ask participants if they remember when humans began practicing religion, as best as possible from archaeological findings. If they do not recall, tell them it was about 3 million years ago. Do they recall the age of Hinduism? Hinduism is also an indigenous faith; however, we have indications it had become remarkably diverse and sophisticated as long ago as 3000 BCE. This is now the earliest date on our time line. Place the sticky note on the time line.

Ask if participants remember where on the earth Hinduism emerged. Point out India on the map or globe. Ask where Hinduism is practiced today. (Primarily in India, but practicing Hindus can be found everywhere in the world.)

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Visit [The King Center](http://www.thekingcenter.org/) (at www.thekingcenter.org/) website and decide which sections would be useful to share with the youth.
- If you do not have access to a computer with Internet access, print pages from the website to share with the group.

Description of Activity

Participants identify avenues of service through The King Center.

One of the strong parallels between Hinduism and Unitarian Universalism is a commitment to nonviolent social reform. Sometimes this means nonviolent resistance of unjust laws—*not* doing something can be an action, too—as when Henry David Thoreau refused to pay taxes that would support the violence and killing of war. Sometimes nonviolent social reform involves taking action—as when Unitarian Universalist minister James Reeb marched with Martin Luther King Jr. and was beaten to death by segregationists. Nonviolent social reform is not always dangerous; it can involve raising public awareness, lobbying lawmakers to change unjust laws, or engaging in programs that directly help individuals in need.

The King Center, located in Atlanta, Georgia, was created by Dr. King's widow, Coretta Scott King, to carry forward the work of nonviolent social change. One excellent support The King Center provides is a Web-based matching service to help individuals or groups connect with programs near their homes. On the site, you can request information about organizations and volunteer opportunities in your area. You can even subscribe to a notification service that will e-mail you about new organizations or upcoming local events that need volunteers.

Talk to other Unitarian Universalist youth, friends, and/or family members about engaging in work for nonviolent social change together. Go to The King Center website and, for yourself or for your group, request information about organizations or volunteer opportunities in your area. Share the information with your group, and choose one or several opportunities to sign up for—and then go for it! You will be engaging in the continuation of a noble line of service and courageous work for social justice.

Edmund Burke said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." What you are able to do may be small, but it will make a difference. Do not fail to do what you can.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

This was the first workshop to explore a worldwide religion that is practiced by as many as one-seventh of the earth's population. Review today's workshop with your co-leader:

- Did participants engage the subject with respect?
- Did the examination of another religion spark their interest?
- Did they seem to understand the deeper concepts introduced in Hinduism?
- Which activities worked well with your group? Which were less successful?
- How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

Plan who will seek answers to the remaining questions about Hinduism that arose in the workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

Everyone who wills can hear the inner voice. It is within everyone. —
Mohandas Gandhi

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we examined some of the fundamental concepts of the ancient faith of Hinduism. We discussed the four yogas or paths to enlightenment, Hindus' monotheism (belief in a single God), and some concepts that Unitarian Universalism shares with Hinduism.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is your natural inclination for spiritual growth: through the mind, the feelings, work, or a spiritual practice, such as meditation?
- Do you currently have a spiritual practice? If not, do you think you would benefit from a regular spiritual practice, in some form? What form would best help you on your path?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- The Hindu greeting of "namaste" (NAHM-uh-stey) is accompanied by placing the palms together in front of the heart and slightly bowing the head. The word "namaste" translates as, "The divine within me honors the divine within you." This has the affirming effect of reminding us that every single person carries a divine spark. Discuss with your family this practice. You may not want to give up your customary "Hi!" but you could incorporate something into your greeting that reminds you of the other person's connection with the holy. Brainstorm what form this could take—a simple gesture, perhaps, such as a hand over the heart. How

can you constantly remind yourselves of the sacred nature of every other person?

- Ayurvedic medicine is the traditional, natural healing practice of Hinduism. Many practices of homeopathy and natural medicine that are now popular in the West originated as Ayurvedic medicine and techniques. You can read more about it on the website for [The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine](http://TheNationalCenterforComplementaryandAlternativeMedicine.nccam.nih.gov/health/ayurveda/introduction.htm) (at nccam.nih.gov/health/ayurveda/introduction.htm), but the basic idea behind it is to create balance, and to not treat symptoms in isolation, but rather take into account all aspects of a person's life that contribute to their health. Ayurvedic medicine encourages us toward consistency in different areas of our lives. You might have Ayurvedic products in your home. Try Ayurvedic aromatherapy products in your bath or with a massage.
- Examine the lives of your family and friends—and yourself—in light of the Ayurvedic principles of balance. Use these questions to begin a family discussion: Are you concerned about sustainable living but buy food in little packages that generate lots of waste? Are you concerned about air pollution but leave lights on all over the house? Are you concerned about the deteriorating health of the nation's youth but never exercise yourself? Discuss what changes you could make, starting now. Even a small change, if you stick with it, can make a big difference.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- See general suggestions on Engagement in the program Introduction, under Implementation.
- Contact a local temple and arrange a visit for a service. [Hindu Mandir US](http://HinduMandirUS.com) (at www.hindumandir.us/index1.html) is a good website for locating temples in the United States. Arrange, if possible, for a leader or the temple's youth group to meet and talk with your youth following the service.
- If possible, invite one or two members of Hindu heritage from your congregation to talk to the group before and/or after the temple visit. If before, ask them to tell youth what to expect during the visit and what behavior is appropriate. They may also wish to share personal experiences that illustrate what their Hindu heritage means to them and how it relates to their Unitarian Universalist identity.

- Find out the guidelines for appropriate clothing (for example, if shoes are removed, should socks be worn?) and behavior from your host at the temple, or consult *How to Be a Perfect Stranger*, 4th edition, edited by Stuart M. Matlins and Arthur J. Magida (Woodstock, Vermont: Skylight Paths, 2006). Ask your Hindu host about other ways to prepare for the visit.
- Compile these guidelines as a handout and give it to participants before the day of the visit. For example:
 - Participants should dress conservatively and modestly. This includes tops with sleeves and no shorts. They will be asked to remove their shoes in the temple, so they should wear clean socks with no holes. Women might be asked to cover their heads. As a sign of respect, they should avoid wearing leather or other products made from dead animals.
 - At the temple, languages other than English may be spoken. Again, participants should be respectful.
- Optional: Provide a handout with questions to guide participants' observations during the visit, for example:
 - What can you tell about connections between the members' faith and their daily lives? For example, what classes or services are offered to the congregation? What notices and announcements are posted?
 - What level of familiarity is expected of members? For example, are explanations or instructions offered during the service? Does the entire congregation seem to know the order of service, the words spoken, the tunes sung? Are directions written or spoken in English and/or another language? If another language, which language?
 - What are the signs that the members respect the service, its leaders, and the space in which it is held? How can you tell which spaces, objects, or moments are most sacred and least sacred for this congregation?
 - What is the role of children in the service? How well-behaved are the children or youth attending the service? Do congregants practice communal parenting; in other words, do adults correct other congregants' children?

Description of Activity

Participants visit a Hindu temple and/or interact with a speaker.

Visiting a Hindu Temple

Before leaving, remind participants that they will be visitors in other people's sacred home. They come not as observers, but as people of faith worshipping with other people of faith. They should be prepared to converse with people in the temple. Remind them it is okay to tell people that this is their first visit and to ask forgiveness for any mistakes they may make. People will be understanding, just as they themselves are welcoming and understanding with visitors to their own congregation. Some things will be unfamiliar and surprising; they should save their startled or amused observations for discussion later. This is a learning opportunity and a privilege.

Provide guidance for the observations you expect youth to make during the visit. If you have prepared one, distribute the handout of questions to guide participants' observations during their visit. Ask them to write their observation notes after, not during, the worship service.

Attend service at a temple. If possible, meet afterward with someone knowledgeable in Hinduism or with the temple's youth group for discussion.

After the visit, follow up with participants on the observations you suggested. To prompt further discussion, ask:

- Was the speaker like what they expected? How so? In what ways were they different?
- Did the speaker say anything that surprised them? What? Why was it surprising?
- Typically, Hindu swamis exude tranquility. Did this speaker have that quality? If so, how did youth respond to that tone?
- Most Western students of all ages are accustomed to flashy, energetic presentations. As a general rule, does teaching have to be energetic and varied to hold the youth's interest? Is it a weakness of our society if, in fact, things have to be flashy to hold our attention? Could regular spiritual study be a way to offset this tendency?
- What did the youth notice about the appearance of the temple? Most are beautiful inside, even if the outside is plain. This expresses respect for God and thankfulness for the beauties of creation. What effect do you think this ornamentation might have on a spiritual seeker? Would it be helpful—a reminder or an inspiration—or a distraction? Was there an altar?

- Was there music? What instruments, if any, were used? Was the music recorded? Was there singing? Was there other art?
- Did anyone wear special clothing? If so, what was its purpose?
- Were people treated differently because of their gender or age?
- There are many shared values between Unitarian Universalism and Hinduism. What familiar elements or themes were in the sermon, if any? Could the sermon have been delivered from a Unitarian Universalist pulpit?
- What message did the sermon deliver? Did it seek action from the congregants? Did it suggest thought? Did it address any of the themes discussed in this workshop, such as the four yogas?

Thank the youth for their participation.

Inviting a Speaker from a Hindu Temple

To adapt this activity for a visitor in your space, deduct the travel time and restate the questions about the temple as questions for your visitor, for example:

- What role does the arrangement and decoration of the space play in the spiritual purpose of your temple?
- Which spaces, objects, or moments in the service are most sacred and least sacred for your congregation?
- What is the role of children in the service?
- What role does music play in your service?
- Do members wear special clothing? If so, for what purpose?
- (If the speaker is a UU) What elements or themes in a Hindu sermon would we find familiar, if any? Could a Hindu sermon be delivered from a Unitarian Universalist pulpit?

Including All Participants

Visit the temple ahead of time to determine what, if any, accommodations are needed for youth with disabilities.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THE BHAGAVAD GITA (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Excerpts from The Bhagavad Gita - The Song of God](#) (included in this document)
- Small selection of delicious and beautiful edibles that nobody's allergic to, such as pretty fruit, little decorated chocolates, or a tray of brightly colored cut-up vegetables

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare food. Arrange for it to be delivered to the group if possible; otherwise, keep it covered and out of sight.

Description of Activity

Participants read an excerpt from the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Hindu text, and deepen their understanding of the concept of nonattachment.

Distribute Handout 2. Suggest that the group take a few minutes to read the excerpt to themselves.

Ask for initial reactions. What does the story mean to participants? What did they think of the setting for the story—the archer and charioteer wrestling with issues of spiritual life and death in the midst of the charging armies, frozen in time? Ask if they would like any words or passages explained.

Read aloud this quote from the excerpt:

Simply do your duty to the best of your ability without becoming discouraged by the thought of the outcome.

Ask the youth if they recognize what central concept of Hinduism this illustrates. Explain that it illustrates nonattachment. The Gita includes a story where Arjuna cares deeply about the outcome for a number of reasons: He is fighting for the side whom he thinks are the rightful heirs; whichever side wins, people he loves will die; and if the fighting is long, many people he loves will die. Yet Krishna does not counsel him to not care about those things. Rather, Krishna instructs Arjuna to use his judgment, make his best choice, and work hard toward the outcome he thinks is best. But, and here is the important thing: He must not tie his happiness to whatever the end result might be, whether it is the result he wanted or not.

Point out that Western youth can easily understand wanting something badly and being miserable if they do not get it. That is normal. Can they conceive of wanting something badly but remaining calm and equally happy whether they get it or not?

Note that Krishna further illustrates the point by saying:

Fear of failure, from being emotionally attached to the fruit of work, is the greatest impediment to success because it disturbs the equanimity of the mind.

Do the youth find this to be true for themselves? Do they find that their own fear of failure gets in the way of succeeding? Can they envision themselves wanting to do something and jumping in to work on it, without either fear of failure or hope for success? Can they see any benefit in that?

Acknowledge that this is a rather foreign idea in our society. Nevertheless, can the youth see that enormous energy is spent on hoping and worrying? What if this concept of nonattachment to results could really be achieved? Could it have the effect of freeing all that energy for the work itself?

Tell them you will now illustrate the concept of attachment to results. Bring out or uncover the food. This should spark enormous interest on the part of the youth, particularly if it is a food they really like, and they will want to eat it immediately. Allow them to gather around the food, but do not allow them to eat. If they exclaim and complain, respond calmly:

Oh, you like this?

When they say "Yeah!" continue speaking in a calm tone:

Isn't it nice we have provided something you like!

(Expect accelerated complaining.) Say:

Well, here it is. Why are you complaining?

Their responses will likely be along the lines of, "What do you mean? You're not letting us eat it—we want to eat it!" Say:

Oh! So it is not just its existence that pleases you? There's some result you want?

When they say, "Yeah—we're hungry!" or some variation on this, say:

So, think about this for a moment. The second you laid eyes on this food, you pinned your hopes on eating it. It was not enough to see it, or smell it, or know it was there. It was a specific result you wanted, and you instantly connected your happiness to it.

Casually select a piece of the food and eat it. Expect great consternation. Say:

Oh, now you are more upset! Do you see that you are connecting your happiness directly to whether you get this food?

You do not get the food; you are disappointed. That is attachment. Does that make sense?

"Sure, sure," the youth will likely say. "Now, when can we eat?"

Before letting them eat, ask the youth to identify moments in their own lives that illustrate attachment. Prompt them with some examples, if necessary: They were mad when the hot water ran out. Happy their

favorite gum is in stock. Disappointed when a friend forgot to call. Thrilled they got the job. Explain that every time our feelings soar or sink because of some result, there is attachment. Have the youth imagine that the food suddenly disappeared! How would they feel? Greatly disappointed, probably. Now ask them to imagine the food disappeared, but, while they would have liked some of it, they are not upset; instead, they remain just as happy as they were before the food disappeared. Now ask them to imagine the food has reappeared, and while they are glad it is there, they remain just as happy as when the food was not there.

This is the nonattachment—the equanimity—that Hindus seek. It is incredibly empowering. It is also incredibly difficult. It is just as hard for Hindus as it is for us. That is why you can work for many lifetimes trying to achieve it.

Invite the youth to eat now. As they eat, prompt them to continue the discussion by posing some questions:

- What if you have a fight with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Can you work to fix it but remain as fundamentally happy as before?
- What about getting the grade in class you want? Can you be glad without letting it unsettle your feelings?

Point out that many Westerners have difficulty seeing the value of such equanimity. What do the youth think? Can they see any value in nonattachment? Is it worth all the effort it would take to achieve?

Save time for all participants to clean up at the conclusion of the activity.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4: STORY: THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

Mother Earth, unable to bear the burden of the sins committed by evil kings and rulers, appealed to Brahma, the Creator, for help. Brahma prayed to Supreme Lord Vishnu, who assured Brahma that Vishnu himself would soon be born on earth to annihilate tyrannical forces.

One such evil force was Kansa, the ruler of Mathura (a city in the northern India state of Uttar Pradesh). Kansa's people were utterly terrified of him. On the day that Kansa's sister Devaki was married off to Vasudeva, a voice from the sky was heard prophesying that Devaki's eighth son would be the destroyer of Kansa. The frightened Kansa immediately unsheathed his sword to kill his sister, but Vasudeva intervened. Vasudeva implored Kansa to spare his beloved Devaki, and promised to hand over every one of their newborn children to him. Kansa relented but imprisoned both Devaki and her husband, Vasudeva.

When Devaki gave birth to her first child, Kansa came to the prison cell and slaughtered the newborn. In the same way, he killed Devaki's next six children. Even before her eighth child was born, Devaki and Vasudeva started lamenting its fate and theirs. Suddenly, Lord Vishnu appeared before them and said that he himself would be born to them and would rescue them and the people of Mathura. Vishnu asked Vasudeva to carry him right after his birth to the house of Vasudeva's friend, the chief cowherd Nanda in Gokula. There, Nanda's wife Yashoda had given birth to a daughter. Vasudeva was to exchange his boy and bring Yashoda's baby daughter back to the prison. Vishnu assured them, "Nothing shall bar your path."

At midnight, the divine baby was born in Kansa's prison. Following Lord Vishnu's instructions, Vasudeva clasped the child to his bosom and started for Gokula, but he found that his legs were in chains. He jerked his legs and was unfettered! The massive, iron-barred doors unlocked and opened by themselves.

While crossing the River Yamuna, Vasudeva held the baby high over his head. The rain fell in torrents, and the river was flooded. But the water parted for Vasudeva, and miraculously a five-mouthed snake followed him from behind and provided shelter over the baby.

When Vasudeva reached Gokula, he found the door of Nanda's house open. He exchanged the babies and hurried back to Kansa's prison with the baby girl. As Vasudeva entered, the doors of the prison closed and barred themselves behind him.

When Kansa heard about the birth of the baby girl, he rushed inside the prison and tried to kill the infant. But this time the baby slipped from his hands and flew into the air, reaching toward the sky. The baby was transformed into the goddess Yogamaya, who spoke to Kansa: "O foolish one! The one who was born to kill you still lives and is elsewhere!" Then she disappeared.

Krishna grew to be a very mischievous child, who constantly annoyed his adoptive mother, Devaki, and his nanny with jokes and miraculous tricks. Demons frequently tried to kill him and his adoptive family, but even as a baby he vanquished them all.

As a young adult, Krishna killed the tyrannical ruler Kansa, along with all his cruel associates. Krishna then at long last liberated his parents from prison and reinstated Ugrasen, the true King of Mathura.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4:

HANDOUT 1: HINDUISM FACT SHEET

Emerged: Indigenous faith of India.

Adherents: 900 million.

Ranking: Fourth, behind Christianity, Islam, and Atheism/Agnosticism.

Prophets: None, although there are numerous lineages of revered gurus and saints. Famous Hindu religious leaders include Mohandas Gandhi and Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of the Self-Realization Fellowship.

Texts: The Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas (including the Upanishads), Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas, the Tantras. Of these, the Vedas are the most important and are considered basic truths.

Clergy: Religious authority is transmitted personally through an established lineage of gurus. There is no administrative structure or person as a final authority in Hinduism.

Symbols: There are many symbols of Hinduism, as varied as the faces of God. Each god and goddess (i.e., each facet of the divine) has a symbol or symbols. Here are three important symbols:

- Aum or om: This symbol represents the primal sound of the universe. The syllable "aum" or "om" is sometimes chanted in meditation, and the symbol usually appears at the beginning of written sacred texts, prayers, and rituals.
- Lotus: This flower, which is rooted in mud but floats on water without becoming muddy, represents the many facets of God and the unfolding of Self-Realization.
- Elephant: The elephant represents the solidity and weightiness of the material world.

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

- Brahman: God, the Ultimate Reality, formless, without gender, cannot be described. As the formless enormity of Brahman can be difficult to grasp, other gods and goddesses are offered as aspects of the divine to provide seekers with a more comprehensible path to reach Brahman.
- Nonattachment to results: The concept of retaining equanimity regardless of the results of one's actions.
- Ahimsa: Nonviolence—to do no harm. This is an ideal of Hindus and a vow of Hindu spiritual leaders.
- Nonviolent resistance: The activist expression of ahimsa. A harmful law should not be followed and should be changed, but never by hurting another person.

- Four Yogas, or Four Paths to Realization (God): Yoga of Knowledge, Yoga of Devotion, Yoga of Work, and Yoga of Spiritual Contemplation. This precept recognizes that different people will find fulfillment in different approaches to their spiritual quest.
- Karma: The concept of behavior having a cumulative effect into the future, including future lifetimes. Living well in one lifetime will have positive results on one's rebirth. Once the weight of all bad karma is removed, the karmic wheel of reincarnation ceases to turn, and the seeker is reunited with Brahman.
- Vegetarianism: Most forms of Hinduism include the practice of vegetarianism, for spiritual, ecological, and medical reasons. The primary reason is the practice of ahimsa (nonviolence), which forbids violent actions against animals.

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- A commitment to nonviolence and nonviolent social reform
- Recognition of differences among individuals
- Support for a wide variety of spiritual quests
- The idea that the divine can be seen in infinite forms
- Many songs and readings—for example, in *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), Readings 419, 511, 519, 529, 540, 577, 593, 611, and 612 and Hymns 176, 178, 185, and 197 are from the Hindu tradition

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4: HANDOUT 2: EXCERPTS FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA – THE SONG OF GOD

A sacred text of Hinduism.

Introduction

Circa 3000 BCE, cousins went to war over who would inherit a kingdom. Because the dispute was within a large, ancient family, the opposing armies comprised relatives, teachers, leaders, and friends. Arjuna was a master archer and renowned warrior—he was the one who would lead his side to war. His childhood friend Lord Krishna agreed to be Arjuna's charioteer. As Arjuna charged into battle, he became greatly dismayed, seeing so many people he loved on both sides of the valley. In an act of compassion, Lord Krishna froze time. There, in the chariot on the battlefield, with the armies before and behind them, the instruction of the Bhagavad Gita takes place, in the form of an open discussion between Arjuna and the great god Krishna.

Said Arjuna:

I do not wish to kill my relatives, spiritual leaders, and friends, even though they stand ready to kill me. I desire neither victory, nor pleasure, nor kingdom. For what is the use of a kingdom, or enjoyment, or even life when all those for whom we desire kingdom, enjoyment, and pleasure are here in this battle, ready to give up their lives?

Lord Krishna replied:

The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. There was never a time you or I did not exist, nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future. The Spirit is neither born nor does it die; it is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. After the death of the body, the Spirit is reborn in a new body until Self-Realization is attained. Death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is certain for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable but pray for Self-Realization that you may be at peace. Simply do your duty to the best of your ability without becoming discouraged by the thought of the outcome, which may be success or failure, loss or

victory. You have control over your actions, but no control or claim over the result. Fear of failure, from being emotionally attached to the fruit of work, is the greatest impediment to success because it disturbs the equanimity of the mind. A farmer is responsible for working his land, yet has no control over the harvest. But if he does not work his land, he cannot expect a harvest! By doing your duty, you will not incur Karmic bondage. Seek this knowledge, this discipline, Arjuna. There are many paths to Me, to enlightenment and freedom . . .

One is truly enlightened who:

— Does all work as an offering to God, abandoning attachment to the result

— Enjoys sensual pleasure with mind and senses under control

— Sees one and the same Spirit in all beings, looks at a learned person, an outcast, or an animal, with equal eye, and can feel the pain and pleasure of others as one's own

— Neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant, nor grieves on obtaining the unpleasant, and is tranquil and equanimous in pleasure and pain, in fulfillment and disappointment, in honor and disgrace

— Finds happiness in the Supreme Being, rejoices the Supreme Being within, is illuminated by Self-Knowledge and remains ever steadfast with the Supreme Self

— Acts beyond personal selfish motives

— Has neither attachment nor aversion for anything

— Has discovered the joy of spiritual knowledge, and whose mind is in union with God.

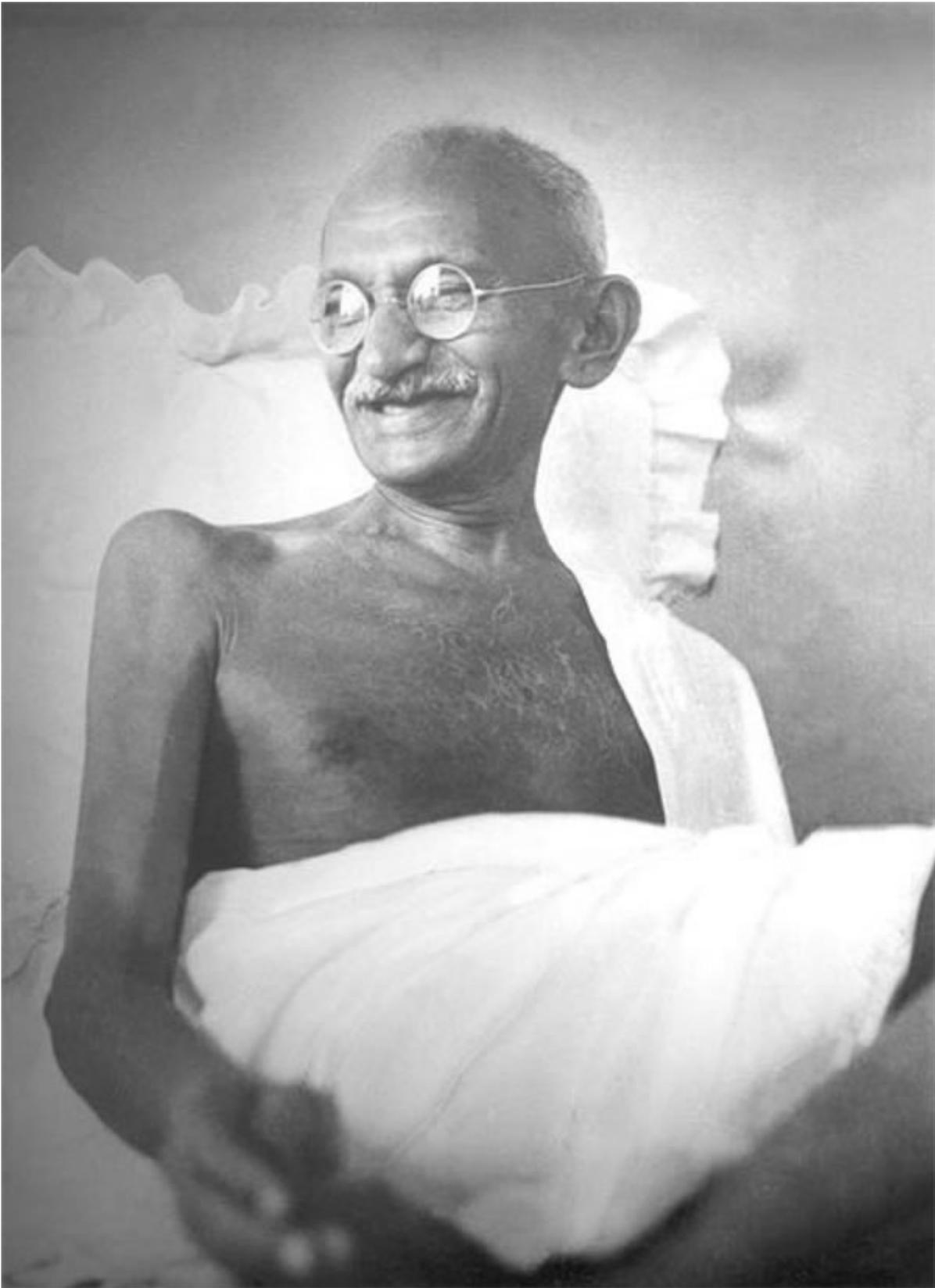
Such a person is not bound by Karma though engaged in work, maintains equanimity whatever occurs, and attains eternal bliss.

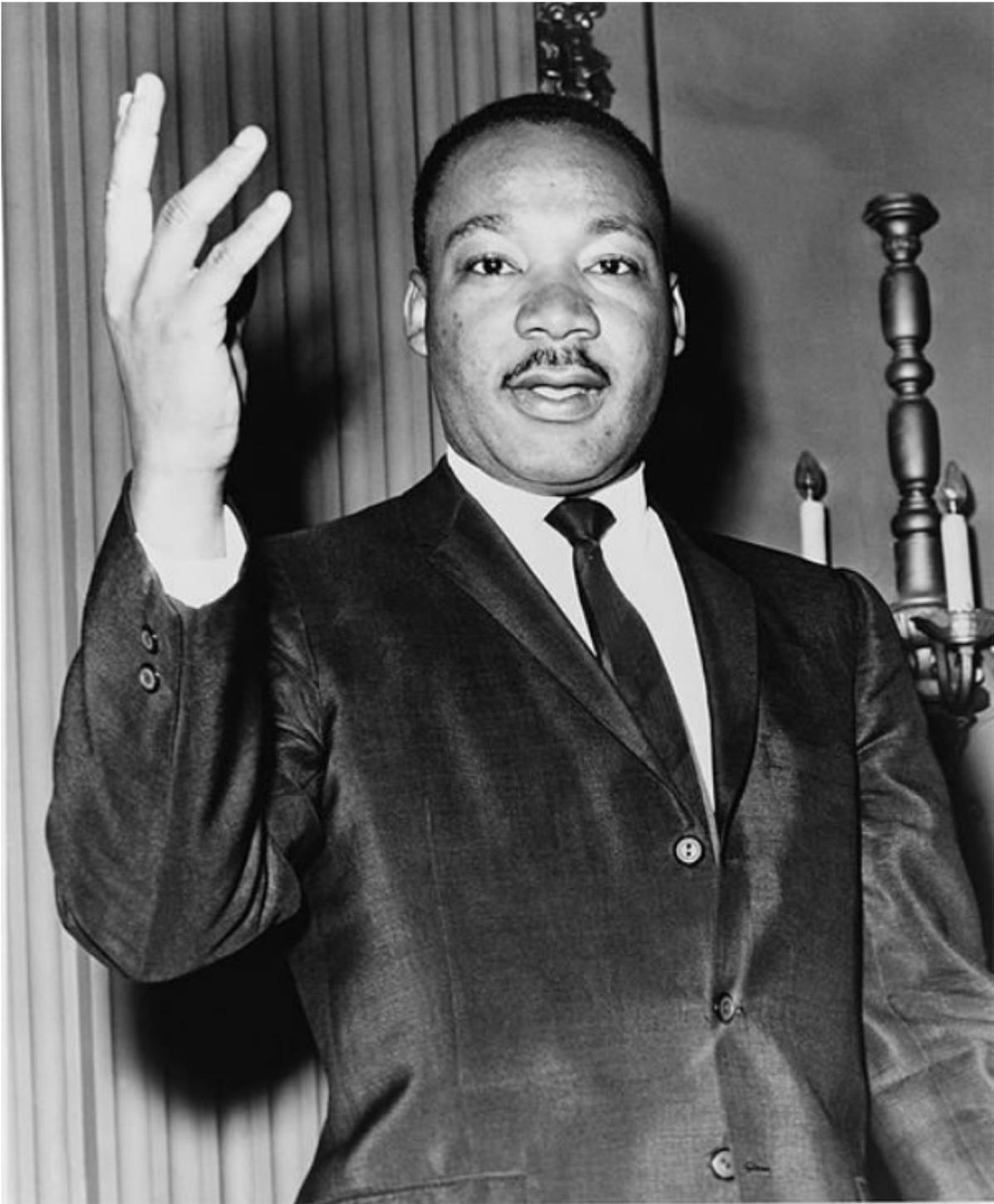
Therefore, let your mind be ever absorbed in Me, O Arjuna, remain unattached to the outcome of your actions, and go forth to do your duty, knowing the Spirit is deathless and eternal.

**BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THOREAU, GANDHI, AND KING**

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/thoreau_ghandi_king.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/thoreau_ghandi_king.pdf) for printing.







BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4: LEADER RESOURCE 2: HINDUISM BACKGROUND

In this workshop, we explore a faith so ancient it is considered indigenous, yet it has grown through the millennia to attain a high level of complexity and sophistication. Furthermore, it is followed by more than 900 million people—nearly a billion human beings—around the world. This religion is Hinduism.

In check-in, you shared some of the ideas you had about Hinduism. It is fascinating how, living in a society where Hinduism is not predominant, we have lots of shared impressions about it, some of which are fairly accurate and some of which are not.

Hinduism takes many different forms. A famous Hindu saying is, "Truth is one; sages call it by different names."

Hinduism shares with Unitarian Universalism the belief that individuals are responsible for finding their own path to truth and that there are as many legitimate paths as there are individuals. Today, we will talk about the most common beliefs of Hinduism.

Monotheistic or Polytheistic?

Strict belief in a god is not necessary to Hinduism. Some Hindus might say they believe not in a "god" but in an Ultimate Reality, that is, the force behind the universe. Yet most Hindus understand this Reality as God. Some Hindus say that their religion is monotheistic (write "ONE GOD — Monotheistic" on newsprint), with a belief in one god, whom they call by different names, but Brahman (write "Brahman" on newsprint) is the most popular. However, Hinduism has literally thousands of gods and goddesses, and some Hindus would say that their religion is both monotheistic and polytheistic. How can this be? Is this a contradiction?

All these gods and goddesses are seen as facets of Brahman. They spring from the Hindu understanding that Ultimate Reality is too big to be grasped by most people all at once. People can, however, understand a god who oversees material possessions (Ganesha, or Ganesh), or a goddess who is a fierce protector (Kali). The nearly infinite variety of gods and goddesses is suited to the nearly infinite variety of human beings and human needs.

In Indian culture, the fact that Hinduism is both polytheistic and monotheistic is not a contradiction. It is not important to define the religion in this manner. One

label could be considered insulting to Brahman, while the other makes the various manifestations seem less important. The understanding that something can be "both/and" (both monotheistic and polytheistic) is a belief you will encounter again in other Eastern religions, such as Taoism and Confucianism.

The fundamental energies of the divine are seen as both male and female, with masculine forces representing the strength of peace and awareness, and feminine forces representing power and energy.

Five gods and goddesses are the most important. Three of them form what is sometimes called the Hindu Trinity: Brahma (who is different from Brahman), Vishnu, and Shiva. (Share images from Leader Resource 3, Images of Hindu Gods, as you discuss the gods.)

- Brahma is the Creator. In Western religious thought, there is a lot of emphasis on God as Creator, but in Hinduism, Brahma the Creator (or the facet of Brahma that creates) is actually the least important of the Hindu Trinity.
- Vishnu is the Preserver, who protects and preserves.
- Shiva is the Destroyer and God of Change, because all material things come to an end.

In these three, we have Creation, Preservation, and Destruction. The other two of the top five Hindu deities are Durga, Goddess of War, and Ganesha, God of Success. These two can be seen as somewhat balancing each other: They are deities to support people in conflict or in prosperity.

Two other popular Hindu deities are Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth, and Kali, the Scary One—also called "the Black One," Goddess of Death and Rebirth, the cycle of creation.

Kali (which translates literally as "time") is the fiercest image in the Hindu pantheon, with her many weapons and her necklace of skulls. She is often shown doing a dance of birth and death that occurs literally on Shiva, who smiles up at her. He might be the God of Change, but she is the active force that causes change in the universe. Ask the youth what they think the image of Kali dancing on Shiva might mean.

Hindus will often pray to Kali when they want to change some negative behavior, since there's no nonsense about her: When something needs changing, Kali changes it.

Ask the youth:

- Do you see some utility in having different deities to represent different aspects of human life, or different facets of reality?
- If you were to choose some deity—it does not have to be one of these—to focus energy on, related to some area of great importance in your life, what would it be? What would it relate to? Your family? Your work? Your dreams? Would it be love? Music? Worldly success? Spiritual enlightenment? Service to others?

Nonattachment to Results

Among the most important concepts in Hinduism is the idea of nonattachment. (Write "nonattachment" on the newsprint.) But—nonattachment to what?

Nonattachment to the results of your actions. This can be hard for Westerners to grasp, because it seems to say we should not care about anything, whereas our society tends to value passion and caring. But what nonattachment means is to not allow the results of our actions to make us happy or unhappy. We will discuss this in more detail later in the workshop.

Vegetarianism

Most Hindus are vegetarians, believing it is wrong to kill an animal for food. But even Hindus who eat meat believe it is always taboo to eat beef. Some people think that Hindus worship cows, but this is not true. Cows do hold a special place in India, where they are protected and often treated with great affection, but there is a very practical reason for this. Indian society is

mostly agrarian—most people survive by farming. Cows produce milk, a great source of protein, and their dung is also used in many ways, particularly as fertilizer for crops and fuel. A cow, which provides wealth in multiple ways, is considered too valuable to be butchered for food.

Cows are considered good gifts for high priests. On Gopastami, the "cow holiday," cows are washed, decorated in the temple, and given gifts in the hope that they will live long and continue to contribute to the well-being of the family and farm.

Karma and Reincarnation

The ultimate goal of Hinduism is to be relieved of the cycle of rebirth. Hindus traditionally believe that the soul is reincarnated—that after death, an enduring soul moves into another body and another life. Karma determines where the soul moves.

Karma refers to your moral actions in life. Positive moral actions lead to good karma, and negative ones lead to bad karma. The better your karma, the quicker you move through the cycles of reincarnation, and the sooner you reach the end.

Liberation from the cycle of rebirth is called moksha, or enlightenment, and it leads to the soul becoming one with the Ultimate Reality. This process is sometimes called nirvana. ("Nirvana" is originally a Buddhist term, yet the concepts are similar.)

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4: LEADER RESOURCE 3: IMAGES OF HINDU GODS

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/hindugods.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/hindugods.pdf) for printing.

Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesha, Lakshmi, Kali, Durga



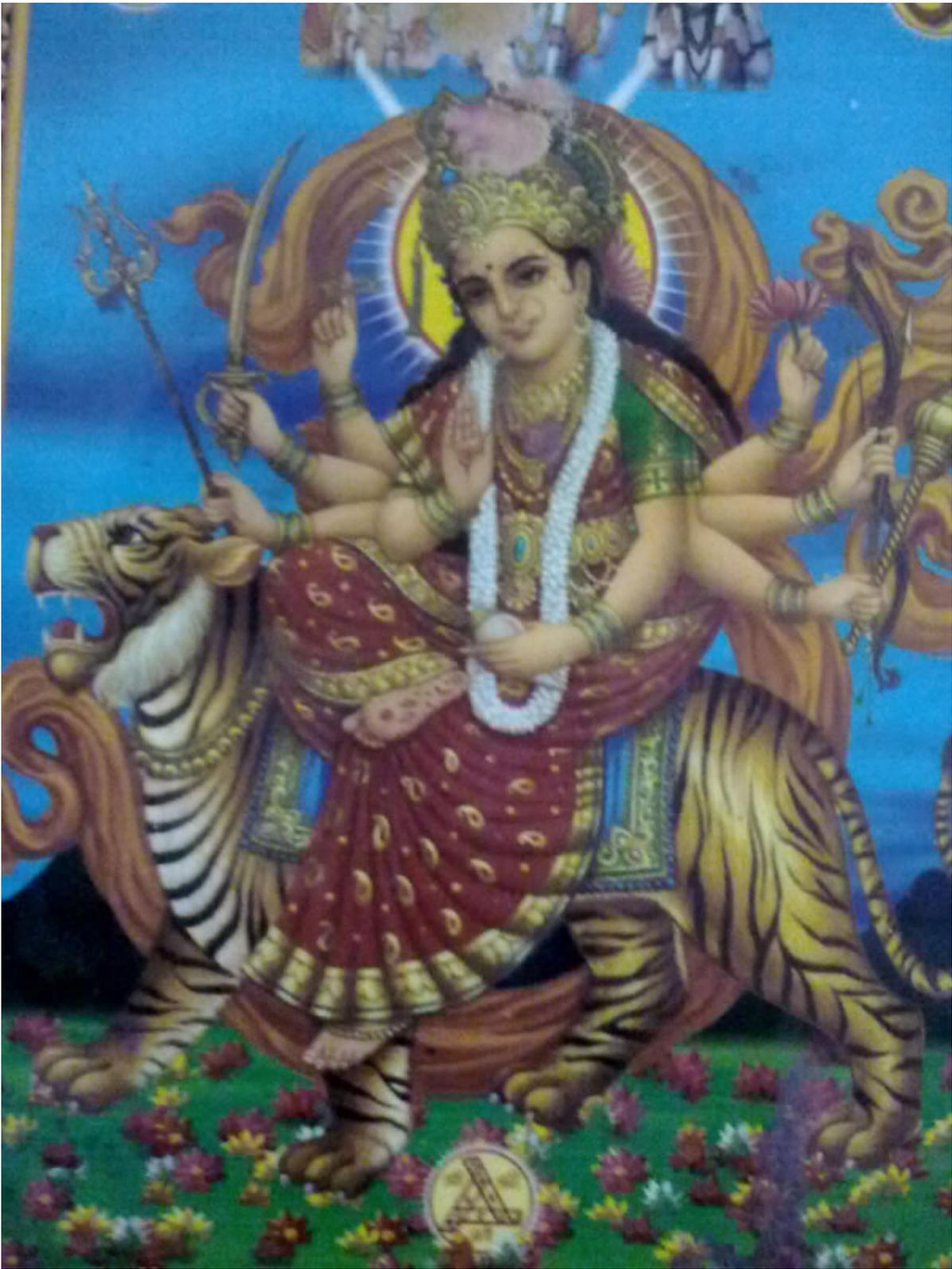












BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4: LEADER RESOURCE 4: IMAGE OF KRISHNA

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/krishna.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/krishna.pdf) for printing.



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 4: LEADER RESOURCE 5: CHILDREN'S CHALICE LIGHTING WITH GESTURES

Speak the text while performing the gestures described in italics.

We light this chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism.

This is the church of the open mind.

This is the church of the helping hands.

This is the church of the loving heart.

Together we care for our earth and work for friendship and peace
in our world.

When saying "Unitarian," cup your right hand in a U shape.

When saying "Universalism," cup your left hand in a U shape.

Touch your hands to your head, then open them outward.

Hold your hands out in front of you, palms up.

Cross your hands flat over your heart.

FIND OUT MORE

Some good websites on Hinduism include [Hinduwebsite](http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduindex.asp) (at www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduindex.asp), [Sanatan Society](http://www.sanatansociety.org/) (at www.sanatansociety.org/), [The Heart of Hinduism](http://hinduism.iskcon.org/) (at hinduism.iskcon.org/), and [Religion Facts](http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/deities/goddesses.htm) (at

www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/deities/goddesses.htm).
A basic book for reading is *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hinduism*, 2nd edition, by Linda Johnsen (NY: Penguin, 2009). This series also publishes guides on Buddhism, Early Christianity, Christianity, Judaism, Evangelical Christianity, Catholicism, Islam, the Hebrew Scriptures, the Bible, the Koran, Paganism, Mormonism, Taoism, and World Religions.

WORKSHOP 5: JUDAISM 1—THE BIRTH OF THE ABRAHAMIC TRADITION

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Jews started it all—and by "it" I mean so many of the things we care about, the underlying values that make all of us, Jew and Gentile, believer and atheist, tick. Without the Jews, we would see the world through different eyes, hear with different ears, even feel with different feelings ... we would think with a different mind, interpret all our experience differently, draw different conclusions from the things that befall us. And we would set a different course for our lives. — Thomas Cahill, author of The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels

Jewish people number only 14 million worldwide (about two-tenths of one percent of the world's population, or one of every 500 people), yet Judaism is one of the major religions. As the first of the Abrahamic religious line that birthed both Christianity and Islam, Judaism's legacy encompasses at least 3.6 billion people, well over half the population of the globe. Considering the theological, cultural, and political reach of these three faiths across the world's geography, many scholars, such as Thomas Cahill, argue that the influence of Judaism reaches nearly every person who shares our planet.

Judaism and Unitarian Universalism

Unitarian Universalism acknowledges our Jewish and Christian faith heritage as one of our Sources. In our contemporary society, Unitarian Universalists share with Jews strong values for education, equality, religious freedom, and social justice, grounded in a theological position that human agency matters in our own fates and the fate of our world. Further, both Jews and Unitarian Universalists believe we have a responsibility to act to make a difference. Congregations affiliated with religiously liberal branches of Judaism often cooperate with Unitarian Universalist congregations in social justice work, as well as in practical matters, sometimes sharing facilities. Unitarian Universalism has many members who grew up ethnically, culturally, and/or religiously Jewish. Some

may identify as both Jewish and Unitarian Universalist, while others may view themselves as simply Unitarian Universalist. In your congregation, there may be UUs with Jewish background who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with the group. Invite these members to speak from their own, individual experience; do not present anyone as a spokesperson for all UU Jews, or for all Jews.

A Range of Jewish Expression

Judaism in the U.S. today has secular participants (culturally Jewish) as well as adherents who represent a wide range of religious observance. Many, but not all, identify with an institutionalized movement in Judaism—Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, or Reconstructionist. Jews may or may not belong to or attend a synagogue. Judaism has fundamentalist expressions in Orthodox and Chasidic communities which remain close-knit; adherents strictly observe laws given in the Torah (the five books of Moses, or, Old Testament) as interpreted by scholars and leaders of their branch of Judaism. Traditional Judaism asserts that the Torah contains 613 commandments, and many Orthodox Jews try to follow all 613 as literally as possible. The detailed rules for keeping a Kosher household and diet are among these—for example, the biblical injunction against cooking a calf in its mother's milk dictates separate dishware for dairy meals and meat meals in a contemporary Kosher home.

Strictly observant Judaism may not make sense to youth: You might point out that, for some people in many different faiths, living strictly by the rules of their religion strengthens both their faith and their identity in ways they find meaningful, even necessary. The terms "People of the Book" and "People of the Law" date back many centuries to a time when Jewish observance was generally fundamentalist in this way. However, these terms rightly capture an enduring value of study and inquiry across all branches of Judaism—another value shared with Unitarian Universalism.

It may also be worth pointing out that while Jews of European (Ashkenazi) heritage comprise a majority among Jews in the U.S., if not the world, Judaism also encompasses large Sephardic (non-European) communities across North Africa and the Middle East as well as non-European communities in India, Ethiopia, Uganda, and China. There are African

American Jewish congregations in the U.S., and converts to Judaism from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Israel — A Flashpoint

Study of the Jewish faith may spark youth's comments or questions with regard to Israel, its right to exist, its role in international politics. It is important to clarify, first, that Judaism is both a religion which anyone may explore, practice, or embrace in faith and a people with a long history which recently includes the formation of a homeland, the modern State of Israel. Explain briefly that Israel's establishment in the Middle East was arranged by the U.S., Great Britain, and France following the Allied defeat of Hitler's Nazi Germany. Youth probably know that under the Nazi regime, six million European Jews were exterminated along with numbers of political dissenters, homosexuals, and others. They may not know that Europe's Unitarians also suffered, including Norman Capek, the Czech Unitarian minister who created the flower communion ritual many Unitarian Universalist congregations use today. As needed, explain that Jews in the U.S. today—indeed, around the world—vary widely in their feelings about the concept of a Jewish homeland in the Middle East, their attachment to the State of Israel, and their support for the actions of the Israeli government. In adult, political discourse, controversy about Israel can serve as a flashpoint for stereotypes about Jews, particularly the wrong beliefs that Jews have special powers to advance their needs over other peoples' or that Jews think they matter more than other people. You might explain that when Judaism calls itself "the Chosen People," this phrase reflects a Jewish faith tenet. Religious Jews believe God, speaking through Abraham and then Moses, chose the Jewish people to shoulder the responsibility of doing God's work on earth—that is, to promote justice and well being, and act as stewards to earth and all life on it. Whether and how this Jewish tenet informs the State of Israel's political actions may be a topic worthy of exploration.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce some basic tenets of Judaism
- Describe the birth of the Jewish people through the story of Abraham's covenant with God
- Demonstrate the key Jewish ideas of covenant, *tikkun olam* (repair of the world), hope, and Shabbat
- Set Judaism in historical context as the first Abrahamic faith, progenitor of Christianity and Islam and convey a variety of Jewish expression today
- Draw parallels between Judaism and Unitarian Universalism

- Optional: Invite youth to engage with Judaism at a worship service.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand that Judaism is an ancient, monotheistic religion with worldwide influence and varied modern expression
- Be familiar with important tenets of Judaism and key ideas including covenant, *tikkun olam* (repair of the world), hope, and Shabbat
- Explore spiritual lineage by beginning an examination of the Abrahamic faiths
- Experience the Jewish and Unitarian Universalist belief in human agency and the power of hope, through articulating their own hopes for the future
- Understand commonalities between Unitarian Universalism and Judaism, including common faith heritage roots and common values of social justice and lifelong learning.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story — Abraham's Covenant with God	20
Activity 2: Hope for Tomorrow	25
Activity 3: Jewish Holidays	15
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	5
Activity 5: Time Line	5
Faith in Action: Making It Right	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	120
Alternate Activity 2: What's in a Name?	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider the endurance of the Jewish faith and the Jewish people. Hundreds of generations have carried Judaism across hardship, persecution, and minority, transient status in others' homelands. What makes a faith and a people endure? In what situations have you experienced your own endurance, and how did you do

it? Was your faith stronger than your fear? Did a community give you comfort and support? Were there ways you adjusted your expectations, in order to keep hope and survive?

In European history, Jews rejected bitterness when they might have justified and embraced it. Jewish teachings often use humor, and Jewish wisdom acknowledges human imperfection. When has rejecting

bitterness helped you endure? Have humor or realism worked as tools to help your endurance?

Think of Judaism's gifts to humanity, among which are the Christian and Islamic faiths, religious homes to nearly half the people on Earth. Recognize the Jewish strains of thought in the principles of social justice, truth-seeking, and covenanting we celebrate in Unitarian Universalism. Prepare to invite youth to explore this ancient, enduring faith.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- List on newsprint, and post:

1. God Creates the World in Six Days (then Rests)
2. Jonah and the Big Fish (Whale)
3. Lazarus Raised from the Dead
4. Moses and the Ten Commandments
5. Daniel and the Lion's Den
6. The Prodigal Son
7. Queen Esther Saves Her People
8. John the Baptist
9. Noah and the Ark (the Great Flood)
10. Samson and Delilah
11. The Good Samaritan
12. Joseph and His Amazing Coat of Many Colors
13. Adam and Eve
14. Wise King Solomon
15. Cain and Abel
16. David and Goliath
17. The Birth of Jesus
18. Lot, His Wife, and the Pillar of Salt
19. The Book of Ruth
20. Joshua and the Battle of Jericho

Description of Activity

As participants enter, invite them to read the list of stories and identify which they think are from the Hebrew Bible, sometimes called the Old Testament. When it is time for the session to begin, share with youth that all the stories except for numbers 3, 6, 8, 11, and 17 come from Hebrew scripture. Point out that biblical stories from Hebrew scripture connect Unitarian Universalists to our Jewish religious heritage.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

- Leader Resource 1, [Judaism Background](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [World Religions Distribution Map](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Review Leader Resource 1 and 2, so you will be comfortable presenting the information.
- Post a blank sheet of newsprint.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions you were unable to answer at the last workshop meeting.

Then light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly sharing something from their personal experience with or knowledge about Judaism. Say there are many Unitarian Universalists who are personally connected to Judaism and some in the group might identify as Jewish. Invite youth who identify as Jews to share their experience with Judaism, if they are comfortable doing so.

Ask what questions participants have about Judaism. Write the questions on newsprint. Answer the ones you can. Tell the group this workshop may answer some of their questions and, after the workshop, you will seek answers to remaining questions which you will share at their next meeting.

Read or share in your own words the information in Leader Resource 1. List important terms from the resource on newsprint.

Share Leader Resource 2; explain that Judaism is the first of the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — ABRAHAM'S COVENANT WITH GOD (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Abraham's Covenant with God](#) (included in this document) "
- A globe or world map
- Optional: A computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Locate Israel on the globe or map. If possible, post a map.
- Optional: View a short, contemporary, animated version of the verses from Chapter 12 of the Book of Genesis which deal with Abram and Sarai, on the [g-dcast website](http://www.g-dcast.com/lech-lecha) (at www.g-dcast.com/lech-lecha). You may want to show this clip to the group.

Description of Activity

Tell participants that Jews are called God's Chosen People because of a covenant formed between Abraham and God, described in the biblical Book of Genesis. Biblical archaeologists and historians date this event at approximately the 15th century BCE. At the time the covenant was formed, Abraham had the name Abram, and his wife's name was Sarai. Invite participants to listen for the names of Abram and Sarai in this story—they are the same people as the biblical Abraham and Sarah whose names are more familiar. Explain that, in the Book of Genesis, God instructs Abram and Sarai to change their names to Abraham and Sarah.

Tell or read aloud the story, "Abraham's Covenant with God."

Then, share, in your own words:

In these chapters in Genesis, God mentions making a covenant for the first time. Later chapters explain more of the terms of the covenant. Scholars differ on the historical accuracy of biblical descriptions of events. Whether it is strictly accurate or not, this story tells about the birth of Jewish faith.

If participants have done Workshop 4, Hinduism, ask the group whether the story of Abram and Sarai seems more, or less, fantastic than the Bhagavad Gita, in which Lord Krishna stops time to help Arjuna in his spiritual crisis. Point out that the two histories show God interacting with people in different ways.

Facilitate a discussion with questions such as:

- Does one seem more personal than the other?
- Does one or the other make God more accessible to humans?
- How would these different "styles" affect how the people feel about God? About their religion?
- Jews consider themselves God's Chosen People based on the covenant formed with Abraham. The covenant has a variety of rights

and responsibilities. In contrast to other faiths that require each adherent to embrace a relationship with God—for example, to accept Jesus as one's savior—Judaism accepts as Jews anyone who is born Jewish, of a Jewish-born mother. How might this view have affected people's attitudes toward Jews over the years? Can such a claim contribute to anti-Semitism (prejudice against Jews)? Why?

- Many Jews see the covenant as an agreement between the Jewish people and God to be God's partners on earth. The Hebrew phrase *tikkun olam* means "repair of the world." Many believe the covenant with God compels Jews to help "repair the world" in all aspects of life. Observant, religious Jews seek to do this by Torah study, prayer, and acts of loving kindness (charity). Liberal Jews may interpret *tikkun olam* as a charge to express their faith with social and political activism to promote justice—similar to a Unitarian Universalist linking of faith and justicemaking. One aspect of the biblical covenant promised Jews a homeland where Israel is now. (Show Israel on a map.) It was not until 1948, after World War II, that the State of Israel was created. The Jewish people waited thousands of years to become a Jewish nation on this land. How do you think this heritage of waiting for a homeland might affect Jewish feelings about Israel? How do you think the history of persecution as a minority could make a Jewish person feel about protecting the State of Israel's independence and safety?
- In the story, God tells Abram his descendants will be strangers in a foreign land; they will be mistreated by the foreigners and have to serve them. How does this mesh with the idea of being God's Chosen People?
- Why would God allow Jews to suffer servitude for hundreds of years before helping them become free? The Jewish people recognize and teach that suffering can have purpose and deep meaning. What connections do you see between Jewish history and this belief?
- Other peoples have endured genocide, slavery, and marginalization as minorities in a dominant culture. What kinds of thoughts about God and the meaning of suffering might emerge among a people with such experiences?

ACTIVITY 2: HOPE FOR TOMORROW (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper, drawing supplies, painting supplies, old magazines, scissors, and glue
- Coverings for floor and table surfaces
- Optional: Music and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Invite participants to bring old tee shirts or protective clothing for using art materials.
- Determine where you can display a selection of the youths' completed artwork, preferably in a public congregational space.
- Set protective coverings on surfaces and set out art materials.
- Optional: Select 15-20 minutes of reflective music that sounds hopeful to you, and prepare to play it while participants create artwork.

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

- One of Judaism's most far-reaching contributions is its orientation toward hope for a better tomorrow.
- Judaism is the first of the messianic faiths. Messianic means to look to a messiah, or holy messenger, to bring peace and unity to the world. Ancient Jews captured hope in the expectation of a messiah—a leader who would help their nation establish and spread peace.
- This deeply ingrained hope laid groundwork for Christianity, which identified the expected messiah as Jesus.
- The hope of a better tomorrow also spurs the Jewish passion for social justice. In Judaism, hope goes hand-in-hand with the belief in tikkun olam—the faithful obligation to repair the world, as part of the covenant with God.

Facilitate a discussion with questions such as:

- Have you ever thought about hope as a foundation of society? Do you think our society is based on hope, or not? Why?
- How do having hope and not having hope differ? How could having hope make a difference in how someone lives their life, and what they believe about life?
- Do you ever think some things will be better in the future? How will this happen?

Invite youth to create images of what they hope for themselves, the people they love, their congregation, and their world. This assignment may be a stretch for youth who do not feel especially hopeful or youth who

have adopted a pessimistic or dour persona. Encourage them to express even a small hope they have, perhaps for a sunny day or to do well on a test. Assure them that even small hopes can shine bright!

When youth complete their creations, involve everyone in clean-up. Invite volunteers to talk about their art. Ask youth if they are willing to include their works in a display. Some may wish to take their artwork home instead.

ACTIVITY 3: JEWISH HOLIDAYS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Jewish Holy Days and Holidays](#) (included in this document)
- Envelopes for each team

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how you will form three or more teams and how many you will create.
- Make a copy of Leader Resource 3 for each team, plus a copy to keep intact. Cut the team copies into strips by "Holy Day/Holiday," "Celebrates," and "Observed by." Place one set of 24 slips into each team's envelope.

Description of Activity

As part of the Jewish covenant, God expects observance of holy days. Some observances are dictated in scripture; others have grown from tradition. Some Jewish holy days and holidays may be familiar to youth.

Form teams. Give each team an envelope and ask participants to match the nine holy days and holidays with ways Jews observe them and what they celebrate or commemorate.

Allow seven minutes for teams to complete the matching. Then read the correct matches aloud.

Ask youth if they know which holy day Jews consider the most important. The answer is, the Sabbath. Jews are commanded to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. Observant Jews in modern times try to strictly follow biblical injunctions against working on the Sabbath; they will not drive a car, or turn appliances off or on in their homes. A liberal Jew might keep the Sabbath by lighting candles before dinner on Friday night or making time for restful activities together with their family on Friday evening or Saturday. A religious Jew would view strict Sabbath observance as a "must" for keeping their covenant with God; a liberal Jew might keep the Sabbath in their own way as a welcome reminder to be in regular touch with their faith and values.

Share this quote from Ahad Ha'Am, a Russian Jew writing at the turn of the 20th century:

More than Israel has kept the Sabbath,
the Sabbath has kept Israel.

Ask the youth how they think keeping a weekly observance might have the effect of holding a religious people together.

Now invite youth to recall observances of Jewish holy days or holidays they have participated in. Encourage volunteers to share their experiences.

Point out observances of Jewish holy days or holidays that occur at your congregation. Ask volunteers to recount how your congregation has observed Pesach (Passover), Yom Kippur, Chanukah, or another Jewish holy day or holiday. Ask:

- What did you know about these holy days or holidays and their significance of when you celebrated them?
- How might participation in a Jewish holiday observance at our congregation be different for a non-Jewish person than for someone who has a Jewish background or identity?
- How does knowing a holiday's significance change feelings about the celebration?

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Judaism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1. Review the handout and answer participants' questions. Point out that Jewish teachings, along with Christian teachings, is our fourth Unitarian Universalist Source. Ask: What part of today's workshop illustrates how wisdom from Judaism is a Source for our living faith today?

If you plan to engage the group with a Jewish worship service, give participants the information they need.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine point marker
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Post religions time line in the meeting space.
- Create and set aside a sticky note saying "Judaism, 1400 BCE."

Description of Activity

Ask participants if they remember the approximate date historians believe Abraham formed the covenant with God (15th century BCE). Place the sticky note on the time line.

Point out that this is the earliest date we have for a non-indigenous faith, a religion whose birth date we can identify.

Ask participants if they remember in what part of the world Judaism was born. Point out Israel on the map. Ask where Judaism is practiced today. (Jews live all over the world, but Israel is the only Jewish nation.)

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Newsprint with questions about Judaism (from Opening)

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Post newsprint with questions about Judaism generated in Opening.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Revisit questions generated in the Opening. Lift up answers that have emerged during this workshop. Note questions that remain unanswered and tell the group what you will do to find answers before the next meeting.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: MAKING IT RIGHT

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pens/pencils for all participants

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

- The Jewish High Holy Days are ten days long, beginning with the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) and ending with the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar.
- The sacred ten Days of Atonement are a time for introspection, when Jews confront their own mistakes of the past year. They acknowledge wrongs they have done to others, and other ways they have failed to keep the covenant with God. They commit to rectifying the wrongs they can and commit to right ways of living and action for the year ahead. The High Holy Days culminate in the worship services of Yom Kippur, when Jews believe they are forgiven by God and blessed to start anew.
- Yom Kippur requires not just thought but action. Feeling sorry for a wrongdoing is not enough. One must make efforts to right the wrong.
- An action that upholds the covenant is called a mitzvah. This word has become common in English to mean "a good deed." You may not be able to mend a dish you accidentally broke, but, to replace it is a mitzvah. The Days of Atonement are a time for such actions of repentance and reconciliation.

Remind the youth that it takes strength to apologize. Unitarian Universalists are historically very courageous! Encourage participants to let their faith sustain them in the sacred action of confronting their wrongdoings and making amends.

Distribute paper and pens/pencils and give these instructions:

- List the wrongs you have done—actions that were hurtful or unfair. Be completely honest. No one needs to see this list but you.
- Review the list and assess which mistakes you could correct. How would you make amends? Note your internal resistance, reflecting on how difficult and humbling the actions you might take would likely be.
- Choose one item you have wished many times had happened differently. Plan what you could do to correct the situation. Be specific. Then, follow through and do it.
- Keep in mind that sometimes a situation cannot be resolved—for example, someone may

refuse to accept your apology. Still, you have done the mitzvah. The positive energy you gave to the effort still has meaning.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take the time to discuss with co-leaders:

- How did the workshop run?
- Which activities worked well with your group? Which were less successful?
- Did the youth seem to grasp the concepts?

Discuss how you can use your answers to these questions to prepare for future workshops.

Plan who will seek answers to questions about Judaism that arose in the workshop.

Display the artwork participants have given you permission to post—in a public congregational space, if possible. Post an explanation that the images are youths' visions of hope.

TAKING IT HOME

The Jews started it all—and by "it" I mean so many of the things we care about, the underlying values that make all of us, Jew and Gentile, believer and atheist, tick. Without the Jews, we would see the world through different eyes, hear with different ears, even feel with different feelings ... we would think with a different mind, interpret all our experience differently, draw different conclusions from the things that befall us. And we would set a different course for our lives. — Thomas Cahill, author of *The Gifts of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels*

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we examined the ancient religion of Judaism, including how it began and some of its enduring values and contemporary expressions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

One can be ethnically Jewish, culturally Jewish, religiously Jewish, or a combination of these. How is your ethnicity connected to your religion? Have you inherited both from your birth parents? As you have grown from an infant to a youth, what layers of ethnicity or religion have you acquired? From whom, or where?

Do you think of yourself as being a hopeful person? Do you believe in hope? What might be the benefits of practicing hopefulness, intentionally thinking more hopefully about things?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Prayers

Religious Jewish practice involves prayers of praise and gratitude toward God. In our increasingly secular society, a common time for people to say a prayer is before a meal. Use these questions to begin a family discussion:

- Does your family or anyone in it say a prayer before meals?
- Do older family members remember times when their family prayed together? At mealtime? At bedtime? When someone died? In a church, a temple, a mosque, or a civic community gathering?
- What benefits might there be of praying as a regular part of daily life? What drawbacks might there be?
- If the term "prayer" is off-putting, or if praising or thanking God does not reflect someone's beliefs, an affirmation can have the same reverent influence. Would incorporating a regular affirmation into your daily or weekly routine make sense for your family? Why or why not? Why might you want to do it? Why might you not want to?

No Touching

With the exception of opposite-gender parents, children, or spouse, ultra-Orthodox Jews do not touch members of the opposite sex, even to shake hands. Avoiding physical contact is seen as a way to keep the covenant; the rule is intended to help people focus on a close relationship with God and Torah rather than on other people. Limiting physical contact to only a few people—those very precious to you—reinforces the importance of the physical contact you do have.

Discuss the restriction with your friends.

- What might we learn from this practice?
- What benefit do you and your friends see in raising the value of physical contact by making it more rare?
- What value do you place on human touch?

English's Yiddish Words

Yiddish is a Germanic language of Jewish origin that is spoken worldwide in Jewish communities with European roots. Yiddish has contributed many words to common English. See if you, your family, and friends can match the Yiddish words below with their English definitions. For answers, check out the playful [Bubby Gram](http://www.bubbygram.com/yiddishglossary.htm) (at www.bubbygram.com/yiddishglossary.htm) or the more formal [Yiddish Dictionary Online](http://www.yiddishdictionaryonline.com/) (at www.yiddishdictionaryonline.com/).

- Yiddish: borscht, chutzpa, glitch, kvetch, maven, meshugeneh, oy vey, putz, schlep, schmooze, schtick, schpiel, and tush
- English: a comic bit; a little problem; a crazy person; to haul or drag; guts or daring; buttocks; to complain; to make small talk; an expert; an idiot or a jerk; a beet soup; an expression of disbelief or horror; a sales pitch

Unitarian Universalist Connections

[Unitarian Universalists for Jewish Awareness](http://www.uuja.org/) (at www.uuja.org/) is an organization committed to addressing the Jewish dimension of Unitarian Universalism's multicultural challenge.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (120 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- See general suggestions on Engagement in the program Introduction, under Implementation.
- Contact a local synagogue and arrange a visit for a Shabbat (Sabbath) service on a Friday evening (usually preferable) or a Saturday morning. Arrange, if possible, for a synagogue rabbi or leader to talk with the youth following the service. You may wish to contact the synagogue youth group and arrange for the two groups of youth to meet following the service.
- If possible, invite one or two members of Jewish heritage from your congregation to talk to the group before and/or after the visit. If before, ask them to tell youth what to expect during the visit and what behavior is appropriate. They may also wish to share personal experiences that illustrate what their Jewish heritage means to them and how it relates to their Unitarian Universalist identity.
- Find out the guidelines for appropriate clothing and behavior from a contact at the synagogue. Provide a handout as well as verbal instruction to participants before the day of the visit. For example:
 - Appropriate clothing may include a yarmulke, which is not required of non-Jews but is often worn by men and boys, and sometimes women and girls, entering a sanctuary as an expression of respect (in Jewish tradition, covering one's head before God). Ask your contact at the synagogue whether they provide yarmulkes to guests.
 - In an Orthodox or Conservative congregation, men and women may sit in separate sections for worship. Find

out in advance where male and female participants may sit.

- Optional: Provide a handout with questions to help guide participants' observations during the visit. These might include:
 - What can you tell about connections between the members' faith and their daily lives? What classes or services are offered to the congregation? What notices and announcements are posted?
 - Depth of familiarity expected of members? Are explanations or instructions offered during the service? Does the entire congregation seem to know the order of service, the words spoken, the tunes sung? Are directions written or spoken in English and/or Hebrew?
 - What are signs the members respect the service, its leaders, and the space in which it is held? How can you tell which spaces, objects, or moments are most sacred/least sacred for this congregation?
 - What is the role of children in the service? How well behaved are the children or youth attending the service? Do congregants practice communal parenting; in other words, do parents correct other congregants' children?

Description of Activity

Prepare the group to observe the guidelines you have been given by your contact at the synagogue you will visit. For example, explain where youth will find yarmulkes to put on before entering the worship sanctuary; explain where male and female participants may sit during the service. As needed, explain that the tradition of covering one's head reflects respect for God's sacred space and that the separation of men and women is intended to minimize distraction in the synagogue.

Provide guidance for the observations you expect youth to make during the visit. If you have made a handout, distribute it. Tell youth to write their observation notes after, not during, the worship service. Mention that religious Jews do not write on the Sabbath and it would be disrespectful for a guest to write, as well.

Attend service at a synagogue. If possible, meet afterward with someone knowledgeable in Judaism or with the synagogue's youth group for discussion.

After the visit, follow up with participants on the observations you suggested. To prompt further discussion, ask:

- Jewish services typically involve a cantor—singer—whose role is nearly as important as the rabbi's, since much of the liturgy is sung. How did the presence of so much music affect you? What effect did it have on the atmosphere of worship?
- The Torah contains the five books of Moses, the body of Jewish wisdom and law. Most synagogues keep a Torah in a special cabinet at the front of the worship space. A Torah reading is part of every service, and over the course of each year the entire Torah is read aloud. What purpose do you think the constant physical presence of the Torah serves? What do you think is the value of reading the entire Torah every year?
- (If you attended a service where men and women sit separately.) What did you observe about the separation of men and women during worship? What purpose do you think the practice serves for the congregants?
- Did the yarmulke heighten your awareness of the worshipful nature of the event? How did it feel to put it on, wear it, take it off?
- Were the parts of the service before and after the sermon spoken in predominantly Hebrew, Hebrew and English equally, or mostly in English? What effect did the language choice have?
- There are many shared values between Unitarian Universalism and Judaism. What familiar elements or themes were in the sermon, if any? Could the sermon have been delivered from a Unitarian Universalist pulpit?
- What message did the sermon deliver? Did it seek action from the congregants? Did it suggest thought? Did it encourage gratitude, greater awareness, or dedication to a purpose? Did it pertain to social justice, the community, or history of the Jewish people? Did it tie together several themes of Jewish life?

Including All Participants

Visit the temple ahead of time to locate accommodations for youth with disabilities.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WHAT'S IN A NAME? (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Traditional Jewish Names](#) (included in this document)

- List of participants' names and their meanings
- Paper and pens

Have youth use their ideas and themes to research names. They can share their research in the next workshop.

Preparation for Activity

- Look up the [meanings](http://babynamesworld.parentsconnect.com/) (at babynamesworld.parentsconnect.com/) of participants' names and create a list.
- Make copies of Handout 2 and the list of participants' names and meanings.

Description of Activity

Say, in your own words:

In ancient Jewish society, a person's name was considered a definition of who they were. The Bible has frequent stories of people who, following transformation, change their name or are assigned a new name by God. After Jacob (the Betrayer) wrestles with the angel of God, he is humbled and his life is completely changed. To honor this transformation, God renames him Israel (Wrestler with God). When Abram and Sarai conceive a child, and thus begin the Jewish line, God honors the event by renaming them Abraham and Sarah. Many cultures practice this tradition when young people come of age. In many faiths, youth take the name of someone in their religious heritage whose life and works they admire and whom they would like to emulate in adulthood.

Distribute Handout 2 and the list of participants' names, and allow participants a few moments to review and discuss them.

Invite youth to consider what it would be like to have a name that defines who they are. Ask: If their name could represent what is most important to them or a personal goal or a significant aspect of their family's history or faith, what would that name be?

Distribute writing materials and invite youth to brainstorm for a few minutes. Encourage them to jot down anything that comes to mind—things they would want a name to say about them. Have youth review their lists and see what themes emerge.

Invite volunteers to share their ideas. Ask:

- What makes those ideas meaningful enough to incorporate into your name?
- Would you keep your name in its current language or would you change the language?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 5: STORY: ABRAHAM'S COVENANT WITH GOD

From The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the [National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America](#).

Genesis, Chapter 12, Verses 1-9

1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5** Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, **6** Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. **7** Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. **8** From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. **9** And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

Genesis, Chapter 13, Verses 14-18

14 The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; **15** for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. **16** I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. **17** Rise up, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you." **18** So Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord.

Genesis, Chapter 15, Verses 12-21

said to Abram, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; **14** but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. **15** As for yourself, you shall

go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. **16** And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." **17** When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. **18** On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, **19** the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, **20** the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, **21** the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 5: HANDOUT 1: JUDAISM FACT SHEET

Birthed: Approximately 15th century BCE

Adherents: 14 million, about .2-percent of the world population

Ranking: Eighth, behind Christianity, Islam, Atheism/Agnosticism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Taoism. Nevertheless, Judaism is considered one of the "Big Five" world faiths with Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Judaism is less than four percent the size of Buddhism, which has 360 million adherents. The other three have 900 million or more.

Prophets: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Moses, Miriam, Joshua, Jonah, many more. All Old Testament books named after people are named for Jewish prophets.

Texts:

Torah — The first five books of Hebrew scripture (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), are also called the Pentateuch.

Tanakh — Hebrew scripture, including the Torah, Prophets (scripture including God's direct messages to the Hebrew prophets), and Writings (writings of the prophets guided by God). The Tanakh is sometimes referred to as the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament.

Talmud or Oral Torah — consists of two parts: the Mishnah (explanations of Torah committed to writing after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem) and Gemara (centuries' worth of rabbinical questions, discussions, and commentaries on Torah).

Midrash — a body of oral and written narrative that represents rabbis' and scholars' contributions over centuries to flesh out or illuminate the stories in the Torah.

Clergy: Rabbis ("teachers" in Hebrew) are self-selected. They can prepare by a combination of private study, individual mentoring, formal education including Jewish seminaries, and work in ministry. Continuous lifelong education is expected of Jewish religious leaders. Institutionalized movements in U.S. Judaism—Reform Judaism, Orthodox Judaism, etc.—each ordain clergy; their requirements for preparation and schooling vary. Traditionally, a private gathering of three rabbis can ordain a rabbi within their own Jewish community. There is no rabbinic hierarchy in Judaism, though a large congregation may have a senior rabbi and one or more assistant rabbis.

Symbols: Star of David, menorah (seven-candle candelabra), yarmulke (male head covering), synagogue (house of worship), tallit (fringed prayer shawl)

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

Shabbat—Jewish Sabbath, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

Mitzvah (plural mitzvot)—literally "commandment"—may refer literally to one of the Torah's 613 commandments or instructions to the Jewish people, or, more generally, to a kind or righteous deed.

Kosher—literally "fit"—describes food that is in keeping with Jewish law. There are laws applying to kinds of food, food combinations, slaughter, preparation, and serving.

Rosh Hashanah—Jewish New Year; begins the period of High Holy Days that concludes with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Rosh Hashanah is observed on the first two days of the Jewish year, a time of celebration, worship focused on giving thanks and taking personal stock of how one has kept covenant with God and with others over the course of the preceding year. Jews eat sweets (in European tradition, apples and honey) in symbolic herald of a sweet new year.

Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement, the most solemn holy day of the Jewish calendar. A day of fasting, reflection, and prayer. Expected mitzvot for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are to "come clean," to engage in the difficult effort to make things right with those you have wronged or offended.

Channukah or Hannukah—"Festival of Lights" celebrating a miracle of Jewish history.

G-d—the way the name of the deity appears in Jewish scripture and other writings. Writing the name of God is seen as presumptuous and risky: presumptuous because we are only human, and risky because if it is written and subsequently crumpled or destroyed it would be blasphemy.

Passover—High Holy Days celebrating God's deliverance of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. The term "Passover" specifically relates to God's sparing, or passing over, Jewish families in the tenth and final plague, Plague of the Firstborn, when God killed all firstborn sons in the land of Egypt. After this event, the Pharaoh allowed the Jews to leave. Passover is the most observed holiday in the Jewish calendar, frequently celebrated even by nonobservant Jews.

Exodus—Departure of Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Exodus cannot be dated with certainty. Most commonly placed at 1440 BCE or 1290 BCE; the 15th-century date is more consistent with biblical narrative, while the later date is more consistent with archaeological findings. However, there are discrepancies in each case.

Orthodox, Conservative, Reform—Three branches of modern Judaism that vary by how strictly adherents observe Jewish law. Orthodox Jews try to live strictly within the exact, literal specifications of the commandments; Conservative Jews try to adhere to the

most important commandments and to maintain the spirit of the commandments throughout their lives; Reform Jews try to uphold the spirit of the commandments to revere life without feeling they must follow the letter of the law. Interpretations can vary from a person hardly ever thinking about obeying the commandments to someone who thinks of their faith constantly and adapts every facet of their lives to keeping the commandments. There is often tension among the branches, yet always recognition of their shared cultural heritage.

Mezuzah—Hebrew blessing mounted on a Jewish household's doorframe as a reminder of the household's covenant with God and God's blessing on their home.

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- Values behavior over professions of faith: "Deeds, not creeds"
- Disproportionate effect on culture and history relative to their percentage of the population
- Value education and lifelong learning
- Great emphasis on personal choice and responsibility
- Strong commitment to social justice work
- In *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), readings 450, 453, 467, 497, 507, 629-637, 641-644, 707, 708, 710, and 711 and hymn 89 are from the Jewish tradition.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 5: HANDOUT 2: TRADITIONAL JEWISH NAMES

Abram — Exalted Father

Abraham — Father of Many / Father of Nations

Amos — To Carry

Baruch — Blessed

Benjamin — Son of the South

Chaya — Life

Esther — Star

Ethan — Solid, Enduring

Ezra — Help

David — Beloved

Deborah — Bee

Ephraim — Fruitful

Eli — Height, Ascension

Hannah — Favor or Grace

Hillel — Praise

Isaac — He Laughs

Israel — One Who Wrestles with God

Jacob — Supplanter (one who takes another's place) /
Betrayer

Joseph — He Will Add

Leah — Weary

Levi — Attached

Marni — Rejoice

Martha — Lady, Mistress of the House

Maya — Water

Menachem — Comforter

Miriam — Bitterness, Rebelliousness, or Wished for
Child

Naomi — Pleasantness

Rachel — Ewe

Raisa — Rose

Reuben — Behold, a Son

Ron — Song, Joy

Sarah — Princess / Princess of All

Sarai — My Princess

Shayna — Beautiful

Shimon (Simon) — Harkening, Listening

Solomon — Peace

Tobiah — Yahweh Is Good

Uriel — God Is My Light

Zelda — Luck

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 5: LEADER RESOURCE 1: JUDAISM BACKGROUND

Although ancient, Judaism is not considered an indigenous religion; it is based on the revelation of religious wisdom and law to the people, not on an understanding that grows from personal experience or intuition. Revelation is believed to be a direct interaction between God and a human being.

Monotheistic

Monotheistic religions worship one God. In Judaism, God is conceived of, communicated with, and understood only as a singular entity—unlike Hinduism, in which God may be "separated" into hundreds of deities. Jewish monotheism does not allow practitioners to worship images of God. Out of respect, traditional Jews will not write the name of God (instead, in English, a Jew might write "G-d").

Non-creedal

Although scholars debate whether Judaism can be described as non-creedal, the religion is primarily concerned with what practitioners do and less with what they believe.

Jews call themselves the People of the Law, People of the Book, or the Chosen People because of the covenant God made with the Jewish people, which includes laws, given in the Torah, which the people must obey. Different branches of Judaism today practice these laws to a greater or lesser degree. Orthodox Jews live strictly within the exact, literal specifications of 613 commandments given in the text of the Torah, shaping every facet of their lives to keep them. Conservative Jews adhere to the commandments they consider most important and maintain the spirit of the covenant. Reform Jews may symbolically follow selected commandments, but focus on a conceptual keeping of the covenant by honoring God, caring for the earth and all life on it (the world God created), and working to promote justice and heal our world. Reconstructionist Jews are religious humanists who emphasize Jewish values, culture, and history over teachings from biblical text.

Many people consider themselves Jewish by heritage, yet know little of the Jewish religion and may in fact belong to another faith (such as Unitarian Universalism) or none at all. Likewise, many without a biological Jewish heritage consider themselves Jewish by affinity or through formal conversion. In contemporary Western cultures and in Israel today, the range of Jewish

identities, beliefs, and practices can cause tension to the point where some conservative Jews do not recognize converted Jews or religiously liberal Jews as Jewish at all.

Judaism's Ties to Unitarian Universalism: Social Justice

Like Unitarian Universalism, Judaism is linked with public witness and action to promote justice. Jews believe in the concept of tikkun olam, or, repair of the world, and thus feel charged to act to make a difference to make the world a better place. Further, Jewish history includes thousands of years of marginalized status, discrimination, enslavement, and even genocide by those in power. Others' experiences of injustice often resonate with Jews for that reason. Jews from fundamentalist through secular often share a resolve to do what they can to make the world better for those who cannot help themselves.

- Disproportionate contributions to humanity, considering our numbers. Unitarian Universalists have contributed more to science, art, literature, social change, and religious thought than one might expect based on our small numbers. This is also true of Jews, on a larger scale. Accounting for only two-tenths of one percent of the world population, Jewish people have made disproportionate significant accomplishments in every arena of human endeavor.
- Values of inquiry, education, and personal accountability. Like Unitarian Universalists, Jews expect to begin education in childhood and continue learning throughout life. Both faiths value inquiry and critical thinking. While religious Judaism promotes obedience (to God) where Unitarian Universalism does not, both faiths affirm individuals to constantly question, to seek truth, and to develop their ability to make informed and righteous decisions over their lifetimes.
- Unitarian Universalism has a significant presence of Jews, many of whom claim a blended Jewish and UU identity. Some UU congregations adapt traditional Jewish New Year, Day of Atonement, or Passover Seder rituals to lift up shared Jewish and Unitarian Universalist values. [Unitarian Universalists for Jewish Awareness](http://www.uuja.org/) (at www.uuja.org/) is committed to addressing "the Jewish dimension of Unitarian Universalism's multicultural challenge."

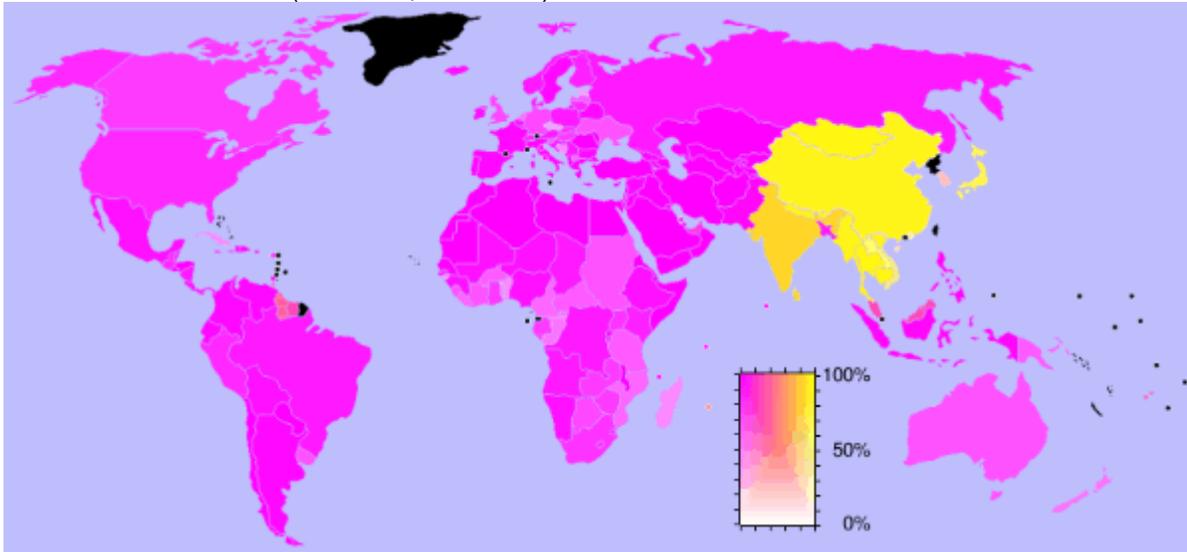
BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 5: LEADER RESOURCE 2: WORLD RELIGIONS DISTRIBUTION MAP

Used by permission of the author, [D. Bachmann](#).

Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/map.pdf) for printing.

Pink = Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)

Yellow = Dharmic faiths (Hinduism, Buddhism)



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 5: LEADER RESOURCE 3: JEWISH HOLY DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Holy Day/Holiday: Rosh Hashanah

Celebrates: New Year (Rosh Hashanah, two days), beginning of High Holy Days period

Observed by: Two-day period of worship including sounding the shofar (ram's horn trumpet); dipping apples in honey; abstaining from work; tashlich ceremony, or symbolically casting off of sins by throwing bread crumbs in the river.

Holy Day/Holiday: Yom Kippur

Celebrates: Day of Atonement, most holy of the High Holy Days; conclusion of the High Holy Days period
Observed by: Much of the day is spent in synagogue in prayer. Fasting; repentance; sounding of the shofar.

Holy Day/Holiday: Succoth

Celebrates: Harvest festival that also commemorates the forty years of wandering in the desert between leaving Egypt and reaching the Promised Land
Observed by: Building and decorating a sukkah, a temporary shelter outdoors; use of the four species (palm, willow, myrtle, and citrus branches) in worship services.

Holy Day/Holiday: Simchat Torah

Celebrates: The Torah as a tree of life for the Jewish people; affirmation of lifelong study; conclusion of the year's weekly Torah readings and starting a new cycle of reading the Torah from the beginning.
Observed by: Joyful celebration; Torah scrolls are taken from the ark and carried or danced around the synagogue seven times. During the service, the concluding section of Deuteronomy, the fifth book of Torah, is read, followed immediately by the opening section of Genesis, or B'reishit as it is called in Hebrew.

Holy Day/Holiday: Hanukkah (Festival of Lights)

Celebrates: The rededication of the Temple after it was defiled in ancient times

Observed by: Eight days of celebration include lighting candles on a hanukiah (a nine-candle menorah); playing with a dreidel (toy top); eating latkes (potato pancakes) or sufganiyot (sugared donuts); some Jews living in majority Christian societies give gifts.

Holy Day/Holiday: Purim

Celebrates: Esther, a Jewish queen of Persia, saving her people from death

Observed by: Reading the Book of Esther aloud (the megillah) and sounding a noisemaker each time the story's villain (Haman) is mentioned; performing the Purim story in costume; merrymaking

Holy Day/Holiday: Passover (Pesach)

Celebrates: The story of the Exodus, the Jews' escape from slavery in Egypt; God's "passing over" Jewish households during the tenth plague of Egypt

Observed by: A seven- or eight-day period that begins the evening before the first day with a seder (ritual meal) and the reading of the Haggadah, the story of the Exodus; eating matzoh instead of leavened bread; observant Jews may clean their homes of all foods not allowed during Passover; in worship services, beginning the counting of the 49-day Omer period (in preparation for Shavuot, the holiday which marks the Jews' receiving of the Torah from God at Mount Sinai).

Holy Day/Holiday: Shavu'ot (Festival of Weeks)

Celebrates: The Jewish people's receiving of the Torah
Observed by: Reading the Torah and the Book of Ruth; all-night Torah study at a synagogue; completing the counting of the Omer; a celebration with dairy foods.

Holy Day/Holiday: Shabbat (Sabbath)

Celebrates: Doing the mitzvah (God's commandment) of rest from work on the seventh day of the week, freedom, time spiritual learning

Observed by: Abstaining from work; sharing a Friday evening meal with family and visitors which may include blessings over candles, a beverage, and food; studying Torah, attending worship services, or taking time for spiritual learning; quiet time with family.

FIND OUT MORE

Jewish Teachings and Practice

The [Judaism 101](http://www.jewfaq.org/toc.htm) (at www.jewfaq.org/toc.htm) website offers basic, wide-ranging information on modern Judaism.

[My Jewish Learning](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/) (at www.myjewishlearning.com/) is a comprehensive website with information on Jewish holidays, life, beliefs, global demographics, and more. Though centered on European Jewry's history and contemporary practices, the website also addresses a range of cultural communities and diverse practices within Judaism.

On the [Ask Moses](http://www.askmoses.com/en/article/411,99/What-is-a-Mitzvah.html) (at www.askmoses.com/en/article/411,99/What-is-a-Mitzvah.html) website, you can type questions and receive answers from a rabbi or another person learned in Judaism. Research [kashrut](http://www.askmoses.com/en/article/139,48/What-is-Kosher.html) (at www.askmoses.com/en/article/139,48/What-is-Kosher.html) (keeping Kosher) and other topics. The Absolute Astronomy website offers a variety of encyclopedia-style articles about facets of Judaism, including "[Atheist Jew](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Atheist_Jew)" (at www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Atheist_Jew)" and "[Humanistic Judaism](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Humanistic_Judaism)" (at www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Humanistic_Judaism)."

History of Judaism

A PBS Nova program, "[The Bible's Buried Secrets](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html)" (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html), can be viewed online and is available on [DVD](http://www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=3333844) (at www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=3333844). The program is supported with material on the PBS website, including "[Archeology of the Hebrew Bible](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/archeology-hebrew-bible.html)" (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/archeology-hebrew-bible.html), an article by William Dever, professor emeritus at the University of Arizona, and "[Writers of the Bible](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/writers-bible.html)" (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/writers-bible.html), an interview with Michael Coogan, professor of religious studies at Stonehill College. A website published by the Christian Resource Institute offers "[The Date of the Exodus](http://www.cresourcei.org/exodusdate.html)" (at www.cresourcei.org/exodusdate.html), Dennis

Bratcher's compilation of a variety of kinds of evidence suggesting a date for the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. *The Eighth Day: The Hidden History of the Jewish Contribution to Civilization* by Samuel Karlinsky (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994) is an excellent scholarly book on Jewish contributions to humankind.

Torah, Commentary, and Interpretation

The [Internet Sacred Text Archive](http://www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm) (at www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm) website offers the Jewish Publication Society's 1917 translation of the [Tanach](http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/jps/index.htm) (at www.sacred-texts.com/bib/jps/index.htm)—the Five Books of Moses plus the Books of Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, and II Kings.

A searchable, comprehensive [Complete Torah](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/index.htm) (at www.mechon-mamre.org/index.htm) is published by Mechon Mamre ("the Mamre Institute"), an Israeli group of observant Jewish Torah scholars.

An [article](http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/330/) (at www.islamreligion.com/articles/330/) on The Religion of Islam website explores how both Torah and Talmud function as authorities for observant Jewish practice.

Israel, Today

The website of the Central Intelligence Agency offers a factual brief about [modern Israel](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html) (at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html) including history and demographics.

The [Jewish Virtual Library](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/) (at www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/) published by the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise offers information about Israel including its links with U.S. organizations and enterprises, its position in international politics, and a "virtual tour" of the land.

Unitarian Universalism and Judaism

[Unitarian Universalists for Jewish Awareness](http://www.uuja.org) (at www.uuja.org) convened in February, 2011, hosted by the [Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta](http://www.uuca.org/worship/spirituality-groups) (at www.uuca.org/worship/spirituality-groups), a congregation that has a group for Jewish awareness and celebrations; find information about [L'Chaim](http://www.uuca.org/worship/spirituality-groups) (at www.uuca.org/worship/spirituality-groups) on the congregation's website.

WORKSHOP 6: JUDAISM 2—PEOPLE OF THE LAW

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In a free society, some are guilty. But all are responsible. — Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1944; 1964
Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. — Psalms 1:1-3 (New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

This workshop continues the study of Judaism. Participants learn the core Jewish biblical story of Moses' receiving the Ten Commandments and examine the role of prophets in Jewish thought and history. They explore the tension between the identity of the Jews as a people and the spectrum of religious expression in Judaism as a faith. To extend youth's look at how some Jewish practices and values might relate to or could enrich their own lives and faith, this workshop offers a Faith in Action activity on kashrut (Jewish observance around food). Alternate Activities invite youth to develop a year's calendar of Unitarian Universalist readings, delve into Viktor Frankl's philosophies regarding the meaning of suffering, or experience a Passover seder.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Continue and deepen exploration of Judaism begun in Workshop 5
- Explore the core Jewish story of Moses and the Ten Commandments
- Introduce the biblical prophets' dual role in Judaism as makers of history and models of faith
- Articulate parallels between Judaism and Unitarian Universalism
- Reinforce Bible literacy with a story about King Solomon and an activity to familiarize participants with prophets from Hebrew scripture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Deepen understanding of Judaism begun in Workshop 5
- Explore the role of prophets in Jewish history and faith through stories of two biblical prophets, Moses and Solomon
- Consider the significance of the Ten Commandments in Judaism, in Western culture and norms, and in their own lived experience
- Discover justice as a core value in Judaism; make connections between Jewish and Unitarian Universalist values related to a faithful person's responsibility to work for justice
- Increase Bible literacy.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story — Moses and the Ten Commandments	25
Activity 2: God Speaks through Prophets	25
Activity 3: Passion for Justice	20
Faith in Action: Every Bite You Take	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Unitarian Universalist Lectionary	25
Alternate Activity 2: Meaning in Suffering	20
Alternate Activity 3: Passover Seder	0

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Meditate on the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments as allegory. The fact that no witnesses were present when Moses received the stone tablets from God does not diminish the story's allegorical strength. What lessons do you draw from this story that are relevant to your daily life?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [What Now?](#) (included in this document)
- Pens or pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Greet participants. Ask them to take a copy of Handout 1 and a pen/pencil and write responses to the challenging situations listed on the handout. Invite them to discuss their responses with their peers in the time before the workshop begins.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1, [Additional Judaism Background](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1 so you will be comfortable presenting the information it provides.
- Post a blank sheet of newsprint.

Description of Activity

Answer the questions you were unable to answer during the last workshop.

Then light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly relating either:

- What their names mean, if they looked them up between Workshop 5 and today, and their reaction to the meaning
- A thought or question they have had about Judaism since the group completed Workshop 5.

Read or share in your own words the information on Leader Resource 1. List important terms from the resource on newsprint.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — MOSES AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Moses and the Ten Commandments](#) (included in this document) "
- Handout 2, [The Ten Commandments](#) (included in this document)
- Pens or pencils
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Moses and the Ten Commandments" so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Write each of the Ten Commandments across the top of separate sheets of newsprint. Post along with five blank sheets.

Description of Activity

Remind the group that the covenant God made with Abraham, described in the Book of Genesis, is the reason Jews are called God's Chosen People. Point out that, according to the Hebrew Bible, direct communication between God and certain Jewish prophets continued over many generations. Explain that, in both biblical and historical tradition, Moses—"the Lawgiver"—was Judaism's most important prophet.

Share the following:

This is one biblical account of the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai by God. Another appears in the Book of Deuteronomy. Moses stayed on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights; God's instructions to Moses fill twelve chapters of the Hebrew Bible. At the end of the forty days and forty nights, in the last verse of Chapter 31 of Exodus, the Bible states: "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."

Tell or read aloud the story, "Moses and the Ten Commandments."

Invite initial responses to the story. Then ask:

- What do you think about the Ten Commandments?
- What do you think the purpose of the Ten Commandments might have been to the ancient Hebrews?
- Do you think we need such instructions?

Distribute Handout 2 and pens/pencils and invite youth to rank the Ten Commandments in their personal order of importance. Invite them to add rules to the Ten Commandments if they feel a necessary rule is missing. Allow a few minutes for the youth to complete this.

Ask volunteers for any rules they wish to add to the Ten Commandments. Write each addition on a new sheet of newsprint.

Then, invite the group to re-number the Ten Commandments and the additions, based on the importance of each rule. Tell them they need not agree on the ranking. Ask them to come to the newsprint sheets and write the number they assigned each rule.

With participants, discuss the rankings they assigned to the Ten Commandments. Ask:

- Where does there appear to be agreement in the ranking of the Ten Commandments?
- Where do you see differences of opinion?

Suggest that the rules which seemed necessary and important to the ancient Hebrews might be different than the most important rules needed in our society today. Ask:

- How is life in our society different from life in the ancient Hebrews' time and circumstances?
- How is life the same?
- Do you think your own cultural bias might have affected your ranking? If so, how?

Now invite the youth to examine the rules they added. Taking the rules one at a time, invite participants (whether they contributed a rule or not) to say why they feel the rule is needed. Encourage participants to respect one another's ideas. Remind them that a person's ideas about what rules we need express that person's values and concerns; everyone's ideas should be honored.

Prompt further discussion with these questions:

- What are some reasons we have rules? (Safety, health, to keep people from hurting one another, to keep order, so things can be fair.)
- Rules are generally made to benefit individuals and community. Which of the Ten Commandments and your new rules are geared toward benefiting individuals? Which

are geared toward benefiting community? Why do you think so?

Including All Participants

If any youth are unable to easily move to the posted newsprint and write their rankings of the Ten Commandments, offer to do it for them or invite them to choose a peer to do it.

ACTIVITY 2: GOD SPEAKS THROUGH PROPHETS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Ten Hebrew Prophets](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Bibles (Hebrew scriptures) to share

Preparation for Activity

- Plan a quiz game, along the lines of Jeopardy (TM) or a matching game the group can play in teams or all together. The goal is for participants to match the names of individuals from Hebrew scripture with the characteristics and events they are known for. Instead of a game, you might invite small groups to role play and then discuss different prophet stories.
- Print Leader Resource 2. Make as many copies as you will need for the activity you have planned.
- If participants will read aloud from the leader resource, be prepared to help them pronounce unfamiliar names.
- Optional: Gather Bibles for youth to share. Plan to include at the beginning or end of this activity a challenge to find, in the text, the names of the ten prophets provided in Leader Resource 2.
- Optional: Enhance this activity with more information about the ten prophets in Leader Resource 2. For each prophet, find out and add to the leader resource:
 - how God spoke to the prophet
 - how reluctant or slow they were to hear God
 - the message God wanted them to share
 - whether people believed them
 - how their story/life ended.

Description of Activity

Invite a volunteer to define "prophet." Point out that Abraham and Moses were prophets and that the Torah, where the stories of these men are found, also contains stories about many other prophets. Tell them Judaism recognizes 55 prophets from Hebrew scripture—48 male and 7 female.

Lead the group to play the game or do the role-playing activity you have planned.

Afterward, process learning with questions such as these:

- What new information did you learn during the game?
- Why do you think prophets were important to the early Jews? (Prophets conveyed God's wishes about how people should act; they were proof that God is involved in people's lives; they carried the vision of what God had planned for the Jews.)
- What does the importance of prophets tell us about Jewish religious beliefs? (Everyone can, potentially, directly hear God—not only high born or ordained leaders; sticking firm to your beliefs is admirable, even when others doubt or persecute you; God will send help through prophets, when God's people need help.)
- Why, do you think, did some prophets originally reject the idea that they were chosen by God?
- Most of the prophets were ridiculed, humiliated, beaten, and jailed. Some were sentenced to execution. What does such treatment of the prophets say about human nature?
- Christianity and Islam share some of these prophets with Judaism. Then, why do you think Christians refer to the Hebrew Scriptures as the Old Testament? (Judaism has no sacred text pertaining to Jesus. Christians view Jesus as the final and penultimate prophet, and a divine Son of God. Muslims accept the words of most of the Hebrew prophets and accept Jesus as a prophet, but, they do not believe Jesus is a divine Son of God, and they believe Muhammad was the final prophet.)
- As a Unitarian Universalist, what do you believe about prophets and divine people? What do you believe about listening to wise people? If you do not believe in God, or are not sure what you believe about God, how do you understand what it means to be a prophet, or have a prophetic voice?

Read to the group the text of the second Unitarian Universalist Source:

Words and deeds of prophetic women and men...

Ask:

- When we in our faith refer to "prophetic women and men" who are we talking about? What do we mean?

- When we say someone is prophetic, do we all mean that God is speaking directly through that person?

ACTIVITY 3: PASSION FOR JUSTICE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [The Judgment of Solomon](#) (included in this document)
- Props such as a small bundle to represent a baby and a yardstick or broomstick to represent a sword

Preparation for Activity

- On a sheet of newsprint, write "Justice" in large letters, and post.
- Print Leader Resource 3. Copy the script for five youth who will read the parts of Narrator, King Solomon, First Woman, Second Woman, and Guard. If possible, arrange in advance for volunteers to read these roles and give each volunteer the script.

Description of Activity

Ask participants to define "justice." Write youths' answers on the sheet of newsprint. If you do not hear "righteousness," "lawfulness," or "fairness," you might suggest them.

Remind youth of the previous workshop on Judaism and the concept of tikkun olam, "heal the world." Say, in your own words:

Justice-making can be a way to heal the world. While the Torah is considered "the Law" in Judaism, Jews believe that to seek true justice we must be ready to interpret the law. Since ancient times, Jewish text, commentary, and traditions have dealt with questions of justice. A famous story "The Judgment of Solomon," told in the Book of First Kings, is one example.

Invite five volunteers to perform a skit. Give each a copy of Leader Resource 3 and distribute the props. Allow the actors time to review their scripts before they perform.

After the skit, inform the group that Solomon is not always considered a prophet in Judaism, but his counterpart in Islam (Suleiman) is considered one. Yet, to Jews, he is still an important figure and a wise king.

Invite youth to share their initial responses to the story. Prompt discussion with these questions:

- In what ways did King Solomon show wisdom in distinguishing between law and justice? If neither woman had objected, do you think King Solomon would have had the baby cut in two? Why or why not?
- Some people believe that laws should always be followed exactly as they are written. Others believe that law needs to be interpreted: what might be just in one situation might not be in another. What do you believe?

Say:

Solomon's decision reflects the Jewish desire for a justice not based merely on written laws, but ultimately on compassion. Like other religions, Judaism is a living faith that helps adherents live in the grey space that can arise between "law" and "justice." As Solomon was clever in seeking to apply a law fairly, living Judaism looks to the Torah for law, yet the lens that God wants us to live together in a climate of compassionate justice. Interpreting and analyzing the teachings and stories of the Torah is central in all movements in Judaism, from ultra-Orthodox to contemporary humanist. While the "baseline" Jewish belief is that Torah contains all God's laws for people, it is also true that Judaism has long been lively with debate about how to interpret "the Law" so we may live, in our modern circumstances, the obedience to God and the compassionate justice toward one another that God asked of the ancient Hebrews 5,000 years ago.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for each participant.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: EVERY BITE YOU TAKE

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [Laws of Kashrut](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 3 and say, in your own words:

- Most people have heard the word "kosher." Colloquially, it can mean "okay" or "appropriate," as in, "No worries; your comment was kosher." However, its original meaning in Judaism is much more specific. The adjective "kosher" means "fit," and applies only to food.
- Of the 613 commandments in the Torah, 33 relate to food and are called the laws of kashrut. These laws describe things to do and not do in preparing and eating food. For example: "Check that an animal is healthy and whole before killing it for food;" "Don't eat meat and milk together."
- Scholars believe in a variety of reasons the laws of kashrut appear in the Torah. Some of the most common are:
 - to make the food supply safer
 - to set the Jewish people apart
 - to demonstrate the Jewish people's obedience to God.
- Rabbinical sources agree on certain points, however:
 - According to the scriptures, God intended for humans to be vegetarian, but they ate animals anyway. Kashrut law recognizes that eating meat is a moral compromise. The laws provide a framework for doing so ethically by raising people's consciousness and

seeking to spare animals unnecessary pain.

- Kashrut supports spiritual growth by encouraging awareness, thankfulness, and reverence for life.

Remind participants that food is part of our everyday life and is necessary for our survival. Use these questions to prompt discussion about spiritual practice related to food:

- What other religions have dietary laws?
- How could awareness of what you are eating be an expression of your Unitarian Universalist faith?
- If you were to create a kashrut—a body of laws of fitness—in keeping with your highest values, what rules would you follow for preparing and eating your food?
- The laws of kashrut were written before the advent of processed foods. Consequently, the laws do not address ingredients like preservatives, artificial sweeteners, and other manufactured additives. In creating your own laws, what action might your faith lead you to take, in regard to these substances?
- If you choose to eat meat, what action might your faith suggest in regard to factory farms, where chickens, cows, and other food animals are raised inhumanely, and with extraordinary use of resources such as fresh water, for industrial food production?
- What is the value of reflecting on and being thankful for the foods that sustain us? How might increased mindfulness of what we eat change our connection to food?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. As a continuation of the group's exploration of Judaism, did the youth grasp the additional concepts introduced? Did they appreciate the strength of connection between Judaism and Unitarian Universalism? Many youth, experiencing the strong emotions of adolescence, feel they have deep understanding of suffering; how did the Viktor Frankl activity (Alternate Activity 2) resonate for them? Consider how to use your answers to these questions to shape future workshops.

Workshop 9, Activity 3 involves a guest speaker. If you plan to lead this activity, read the instructions now so you can issue an invitation in plenty of time.

TAKING IT HOME

In a free society, some are guilty. But all are responsible. — Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1944; 1964

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. — Psalms 1:1-3 (New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we learned Judaism's core story about Moses and the Ten Commandments, and considered the relevance of the Ten Commandments to our lives today. We learned about some prophets in Hebrew scripture and acted out a story about King Solomon that explores justice. We learned more about concepts and practices of Judaism and sought connections between Jewish practices and values and our own faith.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Many American Jews are very defensive of the State of Israel. Even Jews who are ready to acknowledge mistakes Israel may have made or injustices it may have committed can respond to criticism of Israel as if they were personally being criticized. Can you understand why this would be so? Sometimes difficult subjects can be broached if one seeks to understand the other's viewpoint, assumes their best intentions, and honors their values. How well do you talk with people about subjects they feel passionately about?
- Do you find meaning in your food choices? If other people were to observe your food choices and ask why you eat what you do, how would you answer? Would you be proud of your answers? Would your answers reflect your faith beliefs? Your spiritual or moral values?
- Do you feel associated with "a people?" If you do, what is the basis of that affiliation? National origin (like "Italian"), culture (like "gamer"), gender, sexual orientation, race?
- Do you feel that Unitarian Universalists are a people? If not, would it be good if we were? If so, what holds us together? What can you do to help Unitarian Universalists be "as one?"
- Can you differ in some ways from another Unitarian Universalist, yet share a sense of belonging to the same people? Why? When do

you feel the most at one with other Unitarian Universalists?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Invite your parent or guardian to talk with you about a hard time they have experienced. If they prefer not to share about their own difficult times, ask if they will share some family history with you about a difficult time another family member has experienced. Does your parent/guardian feel anything was learned in that time? If something was gained, did it take time to realize it? Did the person involved undertake a process to find meaning in the experience, or did it just come to them? Did the hardship make them more aware of hardship faced by others?
- Talk to your friends about the idea of home. What does it mean to have a home? Do you and your friends feel you have true homes? Have you thought about what it would be like not to have one? Is it important to you to have a religious home? Is your religious home associated with a building? With a person—a friend, teacher, minister, mentor? Any gathering of like-minded people? What is it, for you, that makes a religious home? Do your friends have similar ideas about what makes a religious home?
- Talk with family and friends about justice as practiced in the United States. Is the current system of judge, jury, lawyers, evidence, and witnesses the best we can do? What role, if any, does each of those parties play in making sure justice is done? Would it be better to take out some of the players? Add more? Change the rules? What would make it a better system? If large-scale change would be beneficial, how could one begin to change the entire system—what would be first?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LECTIONARY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of the Bible, preferably the *New Revised Standard Version*, and other sacred texts as available: Qu'ran, Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching, Dhammapada, Book of Mormon, etc
- Lectionaries: Jewish, Christian, Muslim
- Lined paper and pens or pencils
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Go online to find lectionaries, including a [Catholic Lectionary](http://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/) (at catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/) and a [collection of lectionaries](http://www.bombaxo.com/lectionaries.html) (at www.bombaxo.com/lectionaries.html), ancient and modern. The website of [Liberal Judaism](http://www.liberaljudaism.org) (at www.liberaljudaism.org) offers a current calendar-year [lectionary of Jewish liturgical texts](http://www.liberaljudaism.org/written-word-resources/lectionary.html) (at www.liberaljudaism.org/written-word-resources/lectionary.html).
- Set out sacred texts where you can display them for the group as you introduce the activity.

Description of Activity

Participants discuss merits of a lectionary and explore what they would like to see in a Unitarian Universalist lectionary.

Tell the group:

Judaism is the first of the great faiths to establish a lectionary—a cycle of readings. Most Jewish congregations read the entire Torah in worship services over the course of either one or three years. Many other faiths have lectionaries of their sacred texts, including most Christian denominations, Islam, and many others. Many Christian groups use a three-year cycle to work their way through the biblical material they want to include. The lectionaries are widely used, so in a given denomination, congregations all over the world are pondering the same readings and themes on any given day of worship.

Ask participants if they can see the value of worshipers in a denomination sharing some parts of their worship experience with other people all over the world. Would that serve as a unifying force within a denomination?

Point out: One important purpose of using a lectionary is so members are exposed regularly to the most important sacred literature of their faith. Ask the youth: Do they think it could strengthen Unitarian Universalism to have texts that nearly all Unitarian Universalists knew well?

If so—and many Unitarian Universalist ministers and theologians think it could—then how would we choose? The six Sources of inspiration we cite are:

- Personal experience of mystery and wonder
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men (there's our prophetic tradition!)
- Wisdom from the world's religions

- Jewish and Christian teachings
- Humanist teachings
- Earth-centered traditions

We could create a lectionary with a different reading every single day for ten years, and not cover all the texts offering wisdom from these Sources! But because it very well could strengthen our faith to have texts we all actually knew something about and because it is worthwhile to think about what is most important...

What If... ?

Distribute writing materials. Invite the youth to brainstorm the most important things they have ever read. This would be works that affected them profoundly, brought them something they needed at a critical time, left them thinking, or even changed their lives. Let youth know this does not have to be something considered "serious," nor does it have to be intentionally instructive... sometimes people's lives are changed by a poem, song, essay, children's book, or portion of a novel. That's one joy of being Unitarian Universalist; we have no limitations in this area; we are free to take wisdom wherever we find it.

Give the youth a few minutes to think and write individually. Then, ask if any are willing to share. Have a volunteer write the ideas on newsprint. After collecting their ideas, further discussion with questions such as:

- What would you consider essential reading for being a Unitarian Universalist? (Acknowledge this could change over time.)
- What would you want every Unitarian Universalist to be exposed to every single year?
- Would you want a one-year cycle? Two years? More? Would you want some texts read every year and others less often?
- What would be a good structure for a UU lectionary? Should it follow the seasons? Holidays? (Which ones?) The seven Principles?

Ask the youth if they would like to do anything with these ideas. Would they like to pursue thinking about and perhaps creating a more comprehensive list of things to include? Perhaps they would like to share their ideas with their minister, a Unitarian Universalist scholar, or the UUA. Would they want to create a reading cycle for themselves, whether or not their congregation used it?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MEANING IN SUFFERING (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

- Handout 1, [What Now?](#) (included in this document)
- Pens/pencils

Preparation for Activity

- If you have done the Welcoming and Entering activity, make sure participants have their copies of Handout 1 with their notes about how they would respond to challenging situations.
- If needed, copy Handout 1 for all participants. Plan on a few extra minutes up-front for the youth to respond to the challenging situations presented on the handout.
- Write on newsprint, and post:

If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering.
— Viktor Frankl, 20th-century Viennese Jewish writer

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 1 and pens/pencils, and invite the youth to take a few minutes to respond, in writing, to some of the challenging situations provided on the handout. Allow the youth a few minutes to respond on their handouts. (Or, if the group has done the Welcoming and Entering activity, ask everyone to find their copies of Handout 1 with their notes.)

Now, ask for a volunteer to read the quotation you have posted on newsprint, or, read it aloud yourself. Invite discussion: Do youth agree with it? Why, or why not? Tell the group Victor Frankl was a Jewish Holocaust survivor who created an approach to psychotherapy based on insights from his experiences in concentration camp. Explain that *logos* is a Greek word for "meaning." Explain that logotherapy rests on six assumptions:

1. The human being is an entity consisting of body, mind, and spirit.
2. Life has meaning under all circumstances, even the most miserable.
3. People have a will to find meaning in life.
4. People have freedom under all circumstances to activate the will to find meaning.
5. Life has a demand quality to which people must respond if decisions are to be meaningful.
6. The individual is unique.

Share this summary:

These assumptions say every human is a unique combination of body, mind, and spirit. Our lives are composed of unique experiences. We make meaning out of these experiences, which help us make future decisions

and more experiences. Every person always has freedom to find meaning in any and all experiences. Finding meaning in our lives is our primary motivation for living.

Now share this excerpt from Frankl's most famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning*:

And as we stumbled on for miles, slipping on icy spots, supporting each other time and again, dragging each other up and onward, nothing was said, but we both knew: each of us was thinking of his wife...

A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth—that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man[kind] can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man[kind] is through love and in love....

The experiences of camp life show that man does have a choice of action. ...

Man(kind) can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress....

If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering. Suffering is an eradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete.

Ask participants:

- How does this reading strike you? Are you convinced there is meaning in suffering?
- Does finding meaning in suffering lessen the suffering?
- Could it be dangerous to say there is meaning in suffering? How so? Does this mean we require suffering, for our lives to have meaning? Are we saying suffering is necessary, or at least, worthwhile?
- Does the idea that suffering has meaning lessen the responsibility of those who caused the suffering? Does it let them off the hook?
- How do you think Frankl's survival of genocide during the Holocaust affected his theory?

Invite the youth to refer to their individual copies of Handout 1, What Now? Ask them how their answers might differ now. Allow a few moments.

Remind the group that Frankl survived extreme suffering and emerged with his spirit strengthened. Ask: Does it always work that way for everyone? Affirm that there can be times when anyone may feel they have too much pain to bear. That does not mean one's spirit is weak or faulty. In those times, we need to turn to the supports that can help our spirits stay strong. Religion might be one of these. Friends, family, and loved ones can help. It is important to reach out to others when we need support and to be there for others when they need support.

Suggest that the youth, too, might have within them the strength of a Viktor Frankl, the ability to discover the power of love in times of suffering.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: PASSOVER SEDER

Materials for Activity

- A Passover haggadah
- Optional: Music for the traditional song "Eliyahu Hanavi" (Elijah the Prophet)

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange for youth to attend a Passover seder. If the seder will happen a while after the group has studied Judaism, be prepared to refresh their memory on important topics.
- Invite a guest to tell the group about the meaning of Passover and what to expect at the seder. If someone who will host the group at the seder is not available, find out if your congregation has members who are familiar with the Passover seder and are willing to meet with the youth.
- Obtain the haggadah that will be used in the seder the participants will attend. Or, gather a few different haggadot for youth to browse ahead of time. "Seder" means order, and a haggadah serves as the order of service for the Passover ritual meal. Any haggadah will provide the story of Passover interspersed with the elements of the ritual meal. You can find many online, including these contemporary haggadot which include English transliteration of Hebrew text:
 - [Freedom Seder](http://www.theshalomcenter.org/node/1482) (at www.theshalomcenter.org/node/1482), first used for an interfaith gathering in April, 1969, at the one-year anniversary

of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

- The [Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah](http://velveteenrabbi.com/2006-Haggadah.pdf) (at velveteenrabbi.com/2006-Haggadah.pdf)
- [Passover Offerings on Beliefnet](http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Judaism/2001/03/Passover-Offerings.aspx) (at www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Judaism/2001/03/Passover-Offerings.aspx)
- Optional: Familiarize yourself with the song "Eliyahu Hanavi" (Elijah the Prophet), traditionally sung at the Passover seder. You can [listen to the song](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp9sdwll7mY&feature=related) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp9sdwll7mY&feature=related) on YouTube. The songbook *Rise Up Singing*, edited by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out Corporation, 2004) has the lyrics and guitar chords. Write the lyrics to "Eliyahu Hanavi" on newsprint, and post:
Eliyahu Ha Navi,
Eliyahu Ha Tishbi,
Eliyahu, Eliyahu,
Eliyahu Ha Giladi.
Bimhera yavo elenu,
Im Mashiach ben David. (2x)
(Translation: Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah the Giladite, May he soon come to us, with Mashiach the son of David.)

Description of Activity

Youth gain a greater understanding of Passover and celebrate Jewish heritage with other people of faith. As Unitarian Universalists, we celebrate the diversity of faiths in our world. One way of doing this is to celebrate holidays with people of other faiths. Most communities have synagogues or Jewish organizations that invite non-Jews to Passover seder. Jewish members of your congregation might celebrate Passover with a seder. As a group, prepare for and attend a seder at Passover.

One way to prepare would be to invite a Jewish member of the congregation to speak to the group about the meaning of Passover. Your minister might speak to the group. You could also download information from the websites above.

Before the seder, obtain a copy of the haggadah (the text that sets out the order for the seder) used. Review the parts of the haggadah. What meaning does it hold for them? More generally, what meanings from Passover do they see reflected in our Unitarian Universalist faith?

Ask youth how they think the haggadah and the seder might hold different meanings for Jews and non-Jews. Invite any youth who identify as Jewish to reflect on the

different meaning they might draw from the Passover rituals, as Unitarian Universalists who are also Jewish. Share with the group that it is controversial that some UU congregations hold seders. Do they feel this is cultural misappropriation? What if UUs of Jewish heritage lead the Seder? Does that change things?

Including All Participants

Determine the accessibility of the seder location. Make arrangements so everyone in the group will be able to participate fully.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 6: STORY: MOSES AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

From Hebrew scripture, the Book of Exodus.

Exodus, Chapter 19, Verses 16-25

It came to pass on the third day when it was morning, that there were thunder claps and lightning flashes, and a thick cloud was upon the mountain, and a very powerful blast of a shofar, and the entire nation that was in the camp shuddered. **17** Moses brought the people out toward God from the camp, and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. **18** And the entire Mount Sinai smoked because the Lord had descended upon it in fire, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of the kiln, and the entire mountain quaked violently. **19** The sound of the shofar grew increasingly stronger; Moses would speak and God would answer him with a voice. **20** The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, to the peak of the mountain, and the Lord summoned Moses to the peak of the mountain, and Moses ascended. **21** The Lord said to Moses, "Go down, warn the people lest they break [their formation to go nearer] to the Lord, and many of them will fall. **22** And also, the priests who go near to the Lord shall prepare themselves, lest the Lord wreak destruction upon them."

23 And Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot ascend to Mount Sinai, for You warned us saying, Set boundaries for the mountain and sanctify it." **24** But the Lord said to him, "Go, descend, and [then] you shall ascend, and Aaron with you, but the priests and the populace shall not break [their formation] to ascend to the Lord, lest He wreak destruction upon them." **25** So Moses went down to the people and said [this] to them.

Exodus, Chapter 20, Verses 1-15

God spoke all these words, to respond:

2 "I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
3 You shall not have the gods of others in My presence.
4 You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness which is in the heavens above, which is on the earth below, or which is in the water beneath the earth.
5 You shall neither prostrate yourself before them nor worship them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a zealous God, Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, **6** and [I] perform loving kindness to thousands [of generations], to those who love Me and to those who keep My commandments.

7 You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not hold blameless anyone who takes His name in vain.

8 Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it.

9 Six days may you work and perform all your labor, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your stranger who is in your cities.

11 For [in] six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

12 Honor your father and your mother, in order that your days be lengthened on the land that the Lord, your God, is giving you.

13 You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

14 You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor."

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 6: HANDOUT 1: WHAT NOW?

Does your attitude about life, your base level of happiness and hope for the future, change when bad things happen to you? When bad things happen, do you tend to be: Happy and positive no matter what? Upset but generally trusting that good will come eventually? Recognizing things could be good again, but generally dejected and negative? Absolutely depressed? Angry or frustrated? Would humor play any part in your response?

Think about what your attitude about life would be if any of the following things happened to you. Write your response in the space below each event.

- You fail a major exam
- You do something dangerous and break your leg
- You are arrested for no reason
- Your parents are held in prison for months without representation or explanation

- Someone you love becomes fatally ill
- Your car is stolen
- Your family becomes destitute and have to move away
- Illness or accident permanently destroys your ability to taste and smell
- You are rejected by your first choice in colleges
- Your house burns down along with all your family's possessions
- You completely lose the ability to do the thing you most love

Discuss your responses with friends. On the above list, do you think some events might affect your life outlook more than others? What factors contribute to how "big" your reaction is to an event, or how far-reaching a change it might bring? What is your thought process when something bad happens? Is your inclination to incorporate humor in your response? Do you think it would be better if you reacted differently than you usually do? If you do think it would be better to react differently, how could you go about changing?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 6: HANDOUT 2: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Traditional adaptations from Hebrew scripture, Exodus 20:2-14.

Jewish Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your G-d.
2. You shall have no other gods before me; You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your G-d.
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (lie).
10. You shall not covet anything belonging to your neighbor.

Protestant Ten Commandments

Preface: I am the Lord your God.

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make unto you any graven images.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness.
10. You shall not covet anything belonging to your neighbor.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 6: HANDOUT 3: LAWS OF KASHRUT

"Kashrut" means "fitness." Food that has been prepared according to the laws of kashrut is kosher—"fit"—for consumption by an observant Jew. Many Reform Jews do not keep kosher; Orthodox Jews eat only kosher food; Conservative Jews usually follow the laws of kashrut but less strictly than their Orthodox counterparts.

NOTE: Sometimes restaurants will call a dish "kosher style" but this is a misnomer. "Kosher" refers to a process—the how, not the what. Any style of food (Chinese, Indian, Mexican, etc.) may be prepared kosher or non-kosher.

Kosher (permitted)

Animals that chew their cud, have cloven hooves, are not diseased or flawed, and have been ritually slaughtered (e.g., cattle, sheep, goats, deer)

Domesticated fowl: chicken, turkey, quail, geese, ducks

Sea animals with fins and scales, such as salmon, tuna, carp, herring, cod

Meat or dairy, as long as they are eaten several hours apart

Wine or grape juice made in a kosher facility (under rabbinic supervision)

Soft cheese and kosher hard cheese

All fruits, vegetables, and grains are permitted except grape products (see above)

Trayf (forbidden)

Pork (ham, pork bacon, pork sausage, pepperoni), camel, rabbit, rodents, reptiles, any animal that died of natural causes or was killed by another animal

Birds of prey and scavengers (eagle, hawk, vulture)

Sea animals lacking either fins or scales (all shellfish: crab, lobster, shrimp, clam, octopus, swordfish, sturgeon)

Meat eaten with dairy (e.g., a cheeseburger, tuna with a glass of milk)

Any other wine or grape juice

Most hard cheese

Insects

Food Preparation and Eating

Pots, pans, dishes and utensils carry the status of the food last heated in them. Kosher homes have at least two sets of cookware, dishes, and utensils, one set for preparing and eating meat and the other for dairy.

Keeping kosher away from home requires making sure of ingredients as well as kosher preparation.

Foods sold in grocery stores are marked with specific symbols if they have been certified kosher by a rabbi or the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations. Most common of these are a "K" inside a circle (but not a "K" by itself), a "P" inside a circle (meaning fit for Passover), and "pareve" (PAR-uh-vah), meaning "neutral." Pareve foods can be eaten with either meat or milk products.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 6: LEADER RESOURCE 1: ADDITIONAL JUDAISM BACKGROUND

In our previous workshop on Judaism, we learned that Judaism is monotheistic (believes there is one God), covenantal (based on a covenant of faith and practice between its believers and God), varied in its expressions, and geared to raise awareness and gratitude for every aspect of life. We also recognized that Judaism, grounded in the Torah and its stories, birthed both Christianity and Islam and has comprehensively influenced Western philosophy, culture, and thought.

Here are some other important things you should know about Judaism.

A People, and a Faith

Judaism is both a nation and a faith. In ancient Jewish history and in Hebrew scripture, the two aspects of Judaism were intertwined. However, in our contemporary society, an individual who identifies as Jewish by heritage may or may not also consider themselves Jewish by religion. Further, there is great variety among Jews' religious beliefs and practices. A Jew might belong to a synagogue in Judaism's Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist movement; to a faith community which follows a particular leader, such as the Chasidic Lubavitch community; or to an informal faith community called a *chaverah* (ha-veh-RAH) which meets for worship, without a rabbi, in people's homes.

Many Jews consider themselves "cultural" Jews; while they do not embrace Jewish theology or observe religious rituals, they may affirm faith-based principles and values associated with Judaism. They may honor some combination of ethnic and religious practices at home.

The State of Israel is a political entity. Its identity is based on the nationhood of the Jewish people. However, in Israel one will find as broad a spectrum of Jewish religious identity and beliefs as one sees among Jews in the U.S.

The Diaspora

A central feature of Judaism is the historical fact of the diaspora (dee-AS-por-uh), or scattering, of the Jewish people across the globe. The homeland of the ancient Hebrews was the kingdom of Judea in Jerusalem in the 6th century BCE. The heart of the kingdom was its Temple. When the Babylonians conquered Judea, they destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and exiled most of

the Jewish population. Many traveled and settled together, but Jews fanned out in every direction and many have never been "home," that is to Jerusalem, since.

Destruction of the Second Temple

Over the next several hundred years, Jews regained Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple, again according to biblical instruction. However, in the year 70 CE, just after Passover, the Jerusalem city walls were breached by Titus Caesar, son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian. It took Roman soldiers another three weeks to defeat Jews defending their city, but they slaughtered everyone left in the city and on the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av, the very same day the First Temple had been destroyed, the Romans burned the Second Temple to the ground.

The destruction of the Second Temple is one of the most important days in Jewish history. The Jews who escaped the massacre in Jerusalem fled for their lives, and the diaspora was renewed. Today, all Jews living outside the State of Israel are considered to be living in diaspora.

Matrilineal

Judaism has traditionally been matrilineal, meaning it follows the female bloodline. Someone born to a Jewish mother is considered Jewish. In biblical times, the community might not know a child's father but would usually be sure of who a child's mother was; that is sometimes given as an explanation for the matrilineal tradition. The Torah indicates the matrilineal principle, in Deuteronomy (7:3-4):

Thy daughter thou shalt not give to his son, nor shalt thou take his daughter to thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.

This clearly implies that the ancient Hebrews believed a child's loyalty to Judaism followed the mother. Matrilineal descent was codified into Jewish law before the 2nd century CE and remained incontestable until the 20th century. In the U.S. and other Western countries, interfaith couples where the woman was not Jewish began bringing children into Judaism. These couples became dissatisfied that their biological children needed a conversion ceremony in order to be considered Jewish. In 1983, the Reform movement of Judaism—the most religiously liberal—agreed to accept children of Jewish fathers as Jews, without a conversion ceremony, if they had been raised as Jews. This is still absolutely rejected by Conservative and Orthodox Jews, however, who accept anyone as

Jewish with a conversion ceremony, but only automatically consider someone Jewish who had a Jewish birth mother.

Prophetic Tradition

Most of the names we think of as from the Bible are from the Hebrew Bible, what Christians call the Old Testament, and they almost all are prophets, meaning human beings who have received truth directly from the Source, personified in the Bible as God. Jonah, Deborah, Samson, Miriam, David, Daniel, Moses—55 in all—are people in Hebrew scripture considered prophets in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Unitarian Universalism also proudly follows a prophetic tradition. While we do not always call our religious sources prophets, and we do not always call our source of truth God, we honor the truth that human beings receive directly from their own experience and intuition, and honor the sacred calling to share what truth we come to know.

Our story this workshop is about one of the most important prophets of the Hebrew Bible: Moses.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 6: LEADER RESOURCE 2: TEN HEBREW PROPHETS

Category: Daniel

- Was carried off to Babylon at a young age
- Served as a dream interpreter in the royal court of King Nebuchadnezzar; predicted Armageddon
- Interpreted the "handwriting on the wall" which foretold the destruction of King Belshazzar's kingdom: "God has numbered the days of your kingdom and will end it, He has weighed you on the scales and found you wanting, your kingdom will be divided and portioned off to others" (this is where the phrase "the handwriting on the wall" comes from)

Category: Deborah

- Only female judge of Israel
- Her story is told in the Book of Judges
- Delivered judgments beneath a palm tree
- Was a poet
- Fought alongside Barak and other men and women against enemies of Israel, who they conquered

Category: Elijah

- Convinced the people of Israel to stop worshipping the god Baal, and to worship the one true God
- Expected by some believers to return to earth before the Messiah
- Traditionally, invited to every Passover seder by an open door and a place set at the table

Category: Isaiah

- Prophesied restoration of the nation of Israel
- Predicted events 700 years in the future
- The subject of stories on which Handel based his "Messiah" symphony
- Went barefoot and naked three years to get people to pay attention to his prophecies
- Predicted a future "servant of the lord" or Messiah

Category: Jeremiah

- Was sent by God to warn the Jews that they had broken their covenant with God by worshipping false idols
- Prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and hardship for the Jewish people for years to come
- Predicted that someday all nations would join in accepting God's sovereignty

- Thought by some to be the author of the Book of Lamentations—five poems that tell the story of Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians
- Known as "the weeping prophet"

Category: Jonah

- Told by God to preach to people of Ninevah, but ran away from God
- Sailed on a ship which was struck by a destructive storm, then asked to be thrown overboard so the sailors on board could live
- Survived three days in the belly of a fish
- Accepting God's charge, traveled to Ninevah to prophesy the city's doom; the people repented and God spared them
- Was angry that God was so forgiving

Category: Joshua

- Leader of Israelites after Moses
- Prophesied that God would protect God's people as they conquered the land that was to be Israel
- Led the Israelites around the big wall surrounding the city of Jericho. They marched around the wall for seven days. On the last day, the Israelites marched around the city seven times, blew a ram's horn, shouted, the wall fell down and the city was conquered.
- In a battle, asked God to stop the sun so the battle could continue in daylight

Category: Miriam

- Led the women in dancing to praise God after leaving Egypt
- Followed baby sibling Moses along river until Pharaoh's daughter found the baby
- Was struck with a skin disease after questioning God's special relationship with Moses; was cured after being exiled for seven days
- Has a name that was the source of the common Christian name "Mary"
- Sometimes is celebrated at Passover with a cup or an orange on the seder table

Category: Noah

- Prophesied a flood that lasted 120 years
- Collected a male and female of every animal to carry onto a wooden ark (boat)
- First tiller of the soil
- Planted the first vineyard

Category: Samuel (Shmuel)

- Was a judge, at a time when Jews had no kings, but judges
- Was told by God to appoint Saul as the first king. Saul was the first to start building a kingdom of Jerusalem and preparing for first

temple; Saul was succeeded by son-in-law David, who was succeeded by Solomon, who finally built the temple.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 6: LEADER RESOURCE 3: THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

Adapted from Hebrew scripture, 1 Kings 3:16-28.

Narrator: Now the guard brought two women to King Solomon. They stood before him.

Guard: These women bring a dispute before you, my Lord.

First Woman: My Lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me. The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone. There was no one in the house but the two of us.

Second Woman: But the night after my baby was born, her baby died. And now she is saying I took her baby.

First Woman: Yes! Her baby died in the night and she switched him for my baby.

Second Woman: In the morning, she found her baby dead, and now she wants to take mine! Don't let her take my baby, my Lord.

First Woman: When I got up to nurse my son, he was dead! But when I looked closely at him in the morning light, I saw it was not my son who was dead. It was hers.

Second Woman: The living one is my son. The dead one is yours.

First Woman: No! The dead child is yours. The living one is mine.

Solomon: Hold! You each say the same: My son is alive and your son is dead.

[Solomon turns to Guard.]

Solomon: Bring me a sword.

Narrator: So they brought a sword for the king.

[Guard holds out the sword.]

Guard: And now, my Lord?

Narrator: King Solomon then gave an order.

Solomon: Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.

[Guard turns toward the baby and raises the sword.]

First Woman: Oh, wait! Please, my Lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!

Second Woman: Neither you nor I shall have him. Cut him in two!

[Guard again raises the sword.]

Solomon: Guard, stop! Do not kill the child. Give the living baby to the woman who wished him spared. She is his mother.

Narrator: When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw King Solomon had wisdom from God to administer justice.

FIND OUT MORE

Ten Commandments

The website of the Biblical Heritage Center offers a comparison of [Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant versions](http://www.biblicalheritage.org/Bible%20Studies/10%20Commandments.htm) (at www.biblicalheritage.org/Bible%20Studies/10%20Commandments.htm) of the Ten Commandments.

Viktor Frankl

On the [Logotherapy Institute](http://www.logotherapyinstitute.org/About_Viktor_Frankl.html) (at www.logotherapyinstitute.org/About_Viktor_Frankl.html) website find information on logotherapy and its founder, Viktor Frankl (1905-1997), a Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning*.

The PBS website has a [biography of Viktor Frankl and some writings](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/voices/frankl.html) (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/voices/frankl.html).

Ritual Eating and Ethical Eating in Judaism

Read about varied and evolving perspectives on [keeping kosher in Reform Judaism](http://www.beth-elsa.org/be_s0119a.htm) (at www.beth-elsa.org/be_s0119a.htm) in a thoughtful, 2001 sermon by Rabbi Barry H. Block.

The online "Kosher Wizard: [A Guide to Eating Jewishly](http://www.chabad.org/generic_cdo/aid/113424/jewish/Kosher.htm) (at www.chabad.org/generic_cdo/aid/113424/jewish/Kosher.htm)" from the Chabad-Lubovitch organization is an excellent comprehensive resource for Jewish dietary law and keeping kosher.

An article on the website of the London-based organization, Liberal Judaism, describes the [biblical basis and practical interpretation of the laws of kashrut](http://www.liberaljudaism.org/written-word-resources/values-and-affirmations/123-ethical-eating.html) (at www.liberaljudaism.org/written-word-resources/values-and-affirmations/123-ethical-eating.html). The article explains where laws of kashrut and principles of ethical eating do, and do not, intersect.

The [Union for Reform Judaism](http://urj.org/) (at urj.org/) and [Hazon](http://www.hazon.org/) (at www.hazon.org/), a Jewish environmental organization, jointly created the curriculum [Food for Thought](http://urj.org/life/food/?syspage=document&item_id=27461) (at urj.org/life/food/?syspage=document&item_id=27461). Appropriate for grade-school through adult learners, its chapters include "Gratitude, Mindfulness and Blessing Our Food;" "Food and Ethics: The Implications of Our Food Choices;" and "Today's Golden Calf: How Much Red Meat Is Enough?"

An article by Aaron Gross in *Tikkun Magazine*, "[When Kosher Isn't Kosher](http://www.jewishveg.com/media11.html)" (at www.jewishveg.com/media11.html), is posted on the website of Jewish Vegetarians of North America. The book *Eating Animals*, by Jewish American writer Jonathan Safran Foer (*Everything Is Illuminated*), brings a moral perspective to ecological and humane concerns related to meat-eating.

Passover

The Chabad-Lubavitch movement of Judaism provides a comprehensive [Passover resource guide](http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/default_cdo/jewish/Passover.htm) (at www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/default_cdo/jewish/Passover.htm).

WORKSHOP 7: INTRODUCTION TO EASTERN RELIGIONS

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

All things are within me, and on self-examination, I find no greater joy than to be true to myself. We should do our best to treat others as we wish to be treated. Nothing is more appropriate than to seek after goodness. — Mencius, Confucian philosopher (372-289 BCE)

This workshop introduces a cluster of faiths that coalesced between 600 and 500 BCE in the Middle East (Iran), South Asia (India), and Central Asia (China). While differing in their details, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism are linked by some foundational principles as well as by their emergence within a few thousand miles and a hundred years of one another. Each represents a response to people's urgent need for meaning, purpose, and spiritual sustenance. All are still followed in some form today.

The workshop emphasizes Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and Confucianism, as the program provides other workshops on Taoism (Workshop 8) and Buddhism (Workshops 9 and 10). The Faith in Action activity introduces a sixth Eastern religion, Shintoism, which originated earlier and was formalized later than the other religions, yet shares similarities with them.

By presenting this cluster of faiths together in overview, the workshop invites youth to recognize both similarities and differences among Eastern religions. Showing similarities will likely prove easy, as the workshop highlights commonalities that link these faiths. To avoid the impression that the Eastern religions are "all alike," highlight differences among them, too. As with other religions explored in the program, participants will likely discover ideas and practices that resonate with their own.

This workshop provides a large amount of overview information. The group may react with inattentive or physically restless behavior. Be ready to add short energy breaks when needed.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Deepen understanding of how societies develop different religions to meet the same basic needs, through exploring five religions that emerged within a short period of time in the Eastern hemisphere
- Introduce fundamental aspects of Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism and some of the precepts they share
- Demonstrate ways Unitarian Universalists can draw wisdom from Eastern faiths by exploring the Buddhist concept of ahimsa, or nonviolence; Confucian aphorisms; fire's symbolism in Zoroastrianism; and an allegorical story about interconnectedness, "Indra's Magnificent Jeweled Net," from Hindu and Buddhist traditions
- Enhance appreciation for the global diversity of faiths and world views.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand how different societies embrace different religions to meet the same basic needs, by exploring five Eastern religions born between 500-600 BCE
- Become familiar with fundamental aspects of Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and Confucianism, including some common qualities of these faiths
- Explore the Buddhist and Jain concept of ahimsa, nonviolence, as an Eastern faith wisdom embraced by many Unitarian Universalists
- Discover universal wisdom in sayings of Confucius, and learn how Confucianism has been trivialized in Western cultures
- Connect Eastern faith perspectives with our seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, respect for the interconnectedness of living beings, through the allegorical story from Hindu and Buddhist traditions, "Indra's Magnificent Jeweled Net."

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0

Opening	15
Activity 1: Story — Indra's Magnificent Jeweled Net	10
Activity 2: Sayings of Confucius	10
Activity 3: Fire, Symbol of God	25
Activity 4: Life of a Jain	15
Activity 5: Fact Sheet	5
Activity 6: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Beauty All Around Us	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: What Goes Around, Comes Around	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

The word "religion" derives from the Latin *religare*, meaning to bind or tie fast—to connect. All religions emerge to serve this function. Religions last when they continue to connect their adherents, and the five religions introduced in this workshop have each lasted more than 2,500 years. Think of how many journeys

these faiths have supported, how many lives enriched, how many with courage emboldened, how many hearts replenished.

These Eastern faiths share some fundamental principles which are less apparent in Western faiths, for example, the high value placed on duty, the sense of connection with ancestors, and behavior guidelines based on a goal of societal harmony. Remarkably, all five took hold in the Eastern hemisphere within 100 years of one another.

Once you have read the workshop, try a time-travel reflection. You may want to light a candle and sit quietly for 15 minutes or so. Consider how your Unitarian Universalist faith fulfills the functions of a religion. How does it connect you with yourself, your family and community, perhaps something greater? Now, mentally transport yourself to what is now Iran, India, or China, in the year 600 BCE. Try to imagine what your life would be like. Your basic, human needs would be the same needs you have now. But, your life would be quite different. How you would meet your basic physical needs? How do you think the religion emerging around you in 600 BCE might meet your spiritual needs? Take time to acknowledge the appeal and the enduring vitality of these Eastern religions and the many millions of connections they have brought to humanity.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [600-500 BCE, Eastern Religions History Game](#) (included in this document)
- A few bowls, and tape to share

Preparation for Activity

- Print out the leader resource and make multiple copies (enough for the number of groups you expect participants will form on their own).
- Obtain bowls (one for each copy of the leader resource).
- For each copy of the leader resource: Cut the leader resource into five columns. One column at a time, cut apart the pieces of information as indicated and mark the back of each piece with a letter—use "A" for the pieces from the first column, "B" for the pieces from the second column, and so on. Use soft pencil so the writing is not visible from the front. Then, place all the pieces in a single bowl.
- Set the bowls and the tape on work tables.

Description of Activity

As youth arrive, invite them to begin sorting the papers in one of the bowls or to join youth already working. Suggest they pull out a few pieces of paper and try to match the pieces to find out about five religions founded between 600 and 500 BCE. Encourage youth to work together.

Youth will soon discover the letters on the backs of the pieces. Tell them all the pieces with matching letters on the back relate to the same religion. Invite them to tape related pieces together as they discover which pieces make a set. Encourage them to use information they may already know about Eastern religions, as well as the letter clues.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Globe or world map
- Leader Resource 2, [Eastern Religions Background](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: History game pieces (Leader Resource 1) youth used in (optional) Welcoming and Entering activity

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 2, Eastern Religions Background, so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Draw a 100-year time line on newsprint. Mark "600 BCE" on the left end and "500 BCE" on the right. Add a single mark at the halfway point and label "550 BCE." Post the time line.
- Post another, blank sheet of newsprint.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions you were unable to answer at the last workshop meeting.

Then light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Tell the group they will look at several Eastern religions that all began around the same time. If you have done the Welcoming and Entering activity, invite them to name all five based on the game. Ask participants what Eastern faiths they are familiar with. If the group has done Workshop 4, Hinduism might also be named. Comment that while the youth might not be familiar with all the religions born in the Eastern hemisphere during this explosive time in human history, all five of these faiths have been influential in world history and still are practiced today.

On the 100-year time line, write:

- Zoroastrianism — around 600 BCE
- Jainism — around 556 BCE
- Taoism — around 550 BCE
- Buddhism — around 531 BCE
- Confucianism — around 500 BCE

Remind youth that "BCE" stands for Before Common Era, that is, before the year zero; the bigger numbers indicate longer ago, like negative numbers on a number line.

Explain, in your own words:

Iran, India, and China in the several hundred years leading up to 600 BCE were places of danger, turmoil, and radical social change. The tensions in which people lived had multiple effects: artistic expression and scientific invention abounded, and because life was so tenuous in their physical world,

people looked beyond themselves for answers. From this fertile spiritual soil of high energy and creativity, rapid change, and great uncertainty emerged five major religions, all of which survive, including one of the five largest faiths on earth, Buddhism. These religions, born in dynamic answer to human need, have been sustaining people ever since.

There are remarkable similarities among these faiths and notable differences. All emerged on the contiguous land mass of Asia. (Show countries on map as they are named.) Zoroastrianism arose in Iran, Jainism and Buddhism emerged in India, and Taoism and Confucianism in China. We can speculate why there might be such similarity among faiths born in the same part of the world around the same time.

Read aloud or share in your own words the information in Leader Resource 2. List important terms on newsprint.

As you go along, or afterward, invite participants to share knowledge they already hold about Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and Confucianism. Tell the group they will study Taoism and Buddhism in greater depth in later workshops.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — INDRA'S MAGNIFICENT JEWELED NET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Indra's Magnificent Jeweled Net](#) (included in this document) "
- A wide, flat pan
- A pitcher, filled with enough water to cover the bottom of the pan, one inch deep

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Set the pan and pitcher on a work table where the group can gather immediately after you tell the story.

Description of Activity

Tell participants one theme that links the Eastern faiths is the interrelated nature of living things. The story, "Indra's Magnificent Jeweled Net," explores this theme.

Tell or read aloud the story. Ask participants for their initial reactions. What did they think of the story? What did it mean to them? Did it resonate with their Unitarian Universalist beliefs?

Continue discussion with questions such as the following:

- Indra's net can be interpreted as an image about the emptiness or the illusion of reality. However, in this telling of the story, we hear mostly about the interconnectedness symbolized in the net. Do youth agree with the central point of the story, that all living things are indivisibly connected?
- Is this the same point as the Unitarian Universalist seventh Principle: "We affirm and promote ... respect for the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part?" Can you agree with the seventh Principle and not agree with the full implications of the story?
- Do youth agree that a person cannot take any action, good or bad, without affecting every other person? What are the implications of that idea?
- The story states, "However powerful ... appearance might be, it is yet only a reflection of what is real." Do the youth agree with this statement?

A web or net is a common metaphor for interconnectedness. Share with participants that water can also illustrate interconnectedness. Explain that it is impossible to disturb one point on the surface of a body of water without affecting all the rest of the water.

Invite the youth to gather around the pan and the pitcher. Pour water into the pan to a depth of at least one inch. Allow the water to settle until the surface is calm. Invite everyone to watch closely and ask one youth to just barely touch the surface of the water. Observe that even a slight touch affects all the water in the pan!

Ask another youth to more strongly flick the surface of the water. Again, observe. Ask the group for their thoughts. What was the difference? The effect might have been bigger with the stronger disturbance, but was it more comprehensive? Did the tiny touch reach just as far as the bigger one? Process with these questions:

- Is the water an apt analogy for people? Are human connections as fluid as water? Does this hold true in our close communities? Does it hold true for humanity across the globe? Across history?
- What about other life, such as plants, wild life, domesticated animals, and bugs?

- If beings are interconnected, would we, as UUs, say there is a moral imperative to not take harmful actions, not only because of their effect on ourselves, but because they affect others? What about the opposite—if all life is interconnected, is there a moral imperative to do good.

Including All Participants

Situate the pitcher and pan so participants with impaired mobility can observe the demonstration after the story without moving position.

ACTIVITY 2: SAYINGS OF CONFUCIUS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Aphorisms of Confucius](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils/pens
- Optional: Bag of fortune cookies

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the handout.
- Optional: Purchase fortune cookies that contain sayings allegedly by Confucius (not all do). If ordering, do so at least two weeks ahead. Find them at a Chinese restaurant supply outlet, or online at the [K and B Bakery](#) (at www.kbbakery.com/home) website. If you wish, customize the message.

Description of Activity

Participants explore Confucianism through 20 sayings attributed to Confucius. They consider the impact of Westerners encountering Confucian wisdom initially through fortune cookies or jokes. They discuss how the brevity of a message or the context of its delivery might enhance, or detract from, its wisdom. They seek ways to distinguish a religion from a philosophy.

Ask if participants have heard of Confucius. Ask if they have heard someone introduce a saying with the phrase, "Confucius say..." If they have, what was the intent of words follow? Serious, funny, or a combination of both?

Youth may demonstrate or ask about quoting Confucius ungrammatically and with a "Chinese accent." Use the teachable moment; analyze with questions such as:

- Why do you think people find this funny? Do you think it is funny?
- Who would not think this is funny? What about someone who is Chinese? Someone who practices Confucianism? Someone for whom English is a second language? Someone of a

different racial or ethnic group than the person saying it?

Tell the group many Westerners first encounter the name and ideas of Confucius through Chinese restaurant fortune cookies, movies, or TV shows. For this reason, the name of Confucius has been a springboard for jokes among non-Chinese. Give this example:

- Confucius say... when called an idiot, sometimes is better to be quiet, than open mouth and remove all doubt.

Now, ask the group:

- Is there wisdom? What is the wisdom?
- Is there humor in this statement? Why? (Is it the incorrect English phrasing? The content of the statement? Or maybe the way poor English and valuable wisdom are combined?)
- What might a statement like this, tucked inside a fortune cookie, which imitates Confucius' style make people think about Confucianism? If you are someone who, before today, had only heard of Confucius because of fortune cookies, you can speak from your own experience.
- What does it say about our Western culture that Confucius is presented as a humorous character?

If you have time, use the same questions to examine another fortune cookie example:

- Confucius say... war not determine who is right; war determine who is left.

Now say, in your own words:

These statements were not written by Confucius, a revered Chinese philosopher who lived over 2,000 years ago. However, Confucius did teach in short sayings like these—aphorisms. An aphorism is a brief statement that expresses an important idea in a memorable way. Confucius never considered his teachings religious. He offered practical advice to help people behave virtuously and conduct harmonious relationships with their parents, spouse, family members, friends, and also their ruler and/or subjects, in the hierarchy of his time and place. People's spiritual beliefs were of no concern to Confucius. That is why many consider Confucianism a philosophy and not a religion. While there is no formal Confucian religion for people to join today, Confucian ideas are woven into other

Eastern faiths that consider a sense of duty, right behavior, and respect for elders and ancestors very important. As Unitarian Universalism, we may also draw from Confucian wisdom.

Distribute the handout and invite youth to read the sampling of Confucian sayings (aphorisms). You may wish to read the sayings aloud, or invite one or more volunteers to read them.

Ask the group for their initial reactions: Which sayings are meaningful to them? Which speak to important principles?

Distribute pencils. Give these directions:

1. Circle aphorisms you agree with.
2. Draw a line under aphorisms that remind you of a teaching from another religion we have studied together or another religion or philosophy you know about.

Allow youth a few minutes to work. Then, lead the group to unpack the wisdom in the sayings. Start by inviting volunteers to share their responses from their handouts. To help the group find parallels between Confucian ideas and ideas of other faiths, suggest:

- 4 is similar to Jewish beliefs about atonement and repentance
- 7 is similar to the Golden Rule, found in many faiths
- 13 and 15 reflect our fourth Unitarian Universalist Principle, "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning"
- 20 reflects our seventh Principle, "respect for the interdependent web of all life."

If you have brought fortune cookies, distribute them as a snack. Invite participants to share the messages they find inside their cookies.

Variation

If you have time, before distributing the handout engage the group to distinguish between a philosophy and a religion. Use these questions:

- What is the difference between a philosophy and a religion?
- Must a religion offer instruction about the spirit? What are some examples?
- Is instruction in living a good life inherently religious? Why or why not?

Including All Participants

As with any activity that includes a snack, find out in advance about participants' food allergies and restrictions. If anyone might be allergic to an ingredient, skip the fortune cookies.

Be alert to how youth use humor as the activity moves into the Confucian sayings and, if you have them, fortune cookie messages. If necessary, remind youth gently that to seek laughs by delivering a saying in poor or accented English reflects a narrow view of the world's religions and indeed its wisdom, and violates our own first Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

ACTIVITY 3: FIRE, SYMBOL OF GOD (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A chalice, lighter, and extinguisher
- Art paper and water colors, pastels, crayons, markers, color pencils
- Optional: Three-dimensional art materials such as modeling clay and/or craft items for collage or sculpture
- Optional: An LED/battery-operated chalice

Preparation for Activity

- The use of flames may be restricted in your meeting space. You may wish to move the group to another location, possibly outdoors, for the first part of this activity. If you cannot use fire, use an LED/battery operated chalice and adapt the activity as described below.
- Optional: Find out where in the congregation you can display the work of participants willing to share. An exhibit of varied images will show the youth's exploration to the congregational community.

Description of Activity

Youth learn the meaning of fire in Zoroastrianism and explore the meanings of the Unitarian Universalist flame.

Share the following:

Zoroastrianism is an intricate religion. It espouses a constant battle between good and evil and humans play an important role in this battle, marked by many festivals and rituals. Several rituals involve fire. Zoroastrians are sometimes misunderstood as worshipping fire. While not true, the misconception derives from their use of a sacred fire in prayer and worship. Fire as a symbol of God exists from the most ancient times: fire is mysteriously powerful, it devours, it purifies, it is light, warmth, and energy—just as God

is frequently portrayed as light, warmth, and energy. Zoroastrians therefore utilize a sacred fire to focus their worship, but are not worshipping the flame itself.

Ask if any other religions feature fire, light, or candles prominently.

Move the chalice to the center of the space. Remark that almost all Unitarian Universalist congregations share the symbol of the flaming chalice, and like Zoroastrians we use it as a symbol of all we share, whatever each of us considers Most High or Divine.

Invite youth to observe the flame for a time and contemplate what it means to them.

If you cannot use a live flame, invite the youth to share experiences they have had staring into a fire or flame: What did it look like? Smell like? Were they close enough to feel the fire's heat? Did they have a meditative experience? Was it alone, or shared with others? What sorts of thoughts did they have while staring into the fire?

Invite volunteers to share about any symbolism fire or the chalice hold for them. Then, share, in your own words:

In Unitarian Universalism, flame has many meanings: the search for truth, Truth itself, the intellect, God, inspiration, commitment, mission, fellowship, spirit, and much more. The symbol of our faith, the flaming chalice, takes many forms as individuals seek to express what it means to them. There are colorful chalices, line drawings of chalices, chalice jewelry. There are chalices that look like people, rainbows, fountains, atoms, and more. Yet all the chalice symbols refer to the same, simple flame.

Ask:

- If you were to create a chalice that expressed your own highest vision of your faith, what would it look like?

Distribute art supplies. Invite youth to create a chalice that embodies symbolism of flame, fire, or our chalice.

Allow time for youth to work. Encourage them to talk with one another about the meaning and the process of creating their chalice or fire representations.

Actions

Ask which of the youth are willing to display their creations in the congregation. Share with youth any plans you have made to display or present their work.

ACTIVITY 4: LIFE OF A JAIN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Jain Symbol](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 3.
- Optional: Read the article "[The Concepts of Ahimsa or Nonviolence](#)" (at www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/concepts/ahimsa.asp) by Jayaram V on the [HinduWebsite](#) (at www.hinduwebsite.com); it details how ancient and contemporary Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists have practiced ahimsa in daily life.

Description of Activity

Youth explore the concept of *ahimsa*—nonviolence, or, doing no harm to any living being—and consider the trade-off we make in industrialized societies: casual harm for human convenience.

Share with participants that Jains are fervently committed to ahimsa. As far as possible, they do no harm to anything that lives. Display the Jain symbol (Leader Resource 3). Explain, in your own words:

The Jain symbol is a hand with a wheel and the word "ahimsa" in the palm, reminding Jains to be aware of the effect they have on their world. Jains practice radical mindfulness of all living things: humans, of course, but also animals (all kinds, mammals to bugs), plants, even microorganisms—anything they know to be alive.

Ask youth to stand up. Indicate two ends of a continuum: no harm at one end, great harm at the other. Tell them you will read a list of human actions that could affect other life, and you would like them to position themselves along the continuum to show how much harm they think is done by each action.

Read each item aloud. Give youth time to move, and then ask if they think that action would be all right to do: If the action is doing harm, would they nonetheless consider the actions justifiable? Why or why not? Would they feel bad about it? Would the amount of harm be different if they did the action, as opposed to someone else? Why or why not?

Stepping on a bug by accident

Stepping on a bug on purpose

Hitting a dog with your car

Eating leftovers

Eating root vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots (destroying the plant)

Having an ill or aged pet put down by the veterinarian

Knocking down a hornets' nest

Swatting a mosquito on your arm

Treating your pet for fleas

Cutting down a tree that is in the way of building a house

Paving a parking lot

Treating your house for termites

Insulting someone

Stealing something

Invite youth to return to their seats, and continue discussion:

- What constitutes harm?
- Do you think about not doing harm in your daily lives? When?
- How do you, or could you, choose when to do harm and when not to?
- Is everything that is alive worthy of consideration before harming it? Is everything that is alive capable of experiencing distress? Should that be a deciding factor?

Share with the group:

Jains take an oath to "Take nothing unless it is offered," either by a person or by the earth. Here is a partial list of what Jains will not do:

- Kill an animal for food.
- Pick fruit from a tree.
- Eat any root vegetable.
- Eat leftovers.
- Burn a fire at night.
- Smack a mosquito.

Ask for youth's thoughts about the Jain commitment. Do they find it admirable? What purpose do they think it serves the individual practitioner? What purpose might it serve the earth and life on it?

Continue discussion with questions such as:

Telling a lie

Wearing leather shoes

Pulling weeds from your yard

Treating a child for lice

Driving a car

Laughing at someone

Buying something wrapped in lots of packaging

Throwing away food

Buying more than you need or buying something you do not need

Eating more than your body needs

Downloading pirated music or software

Not helping someone when you can, even in small ways

- What would youth consider "reasonable" harm? What makes harm okay?
- Is being grateful enough compensation to the earth, or to other life, for our actions that cause harm? Is being grateful even necessary or important?
- Can preventing greater harm justify doing harm? When is doing harm "worth it?"
- What about harm done in your behalf?
- Does dedication to a goal that is impossible seem simple-minded or foolish? If the goal is a worthy one, than is getting as close to it as possible better than not trying at all?
- How would your life be different if you applied the principle of ahimsa as Jains do? What would you have to change?

Including All Participants

If any participant is unable to easily move along a physical continuum, have the youth show their answers another way, such as by raising two hands for "great harm," one hand for "some harm," and no hands for "no harm."

ACTIVITY 5: FACT SHEET (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Comparative Chart of Eastern Religions](#) (included in this document)

- A poster of the Unitarian Universalist Principles

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the handout for all participants.
- Display a poster of the seven UU Principles in the meeting space.

Description of Activity

Youth receive a comparative chart to take home.

Inform youth, as you distribute the handout, that instead of the standard fact sheet on each religion, this handout is a chart comparing the Eastern religions explored today and in upcoming workshops. Review the handout, using these prompts:

- Can you identify aspects of these religions that engage with the basic human needs met by religion? [answers to big questions, a connection to something larger than ourselves, knowing right from wrong, providing meaning and a purpose to life, and creating a sense of belonging]
- What beliefs do UUs and these religions share?
- How does knowing about these Eastern religions influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

If there are outstanding questions about the religions, assign volunteers to research and bring answers to the next workshop or divide these duties between facilitators.

ACTIVITY 6: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Display the time line where all participants will be able to see it.
- Create and set aside sticky notes saying "Confucianism, 500 BCE," "Jainism, 556 BCE," and "Zoroastrianism, 600 BCE."

Description of Activity

The time line is updated to add new religions.

Have the group add Confucianism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism to the time line and mark on the globe or map where each originated.

Ask participants if they remember or can guess where Confucianism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism were born. Mark China, India, and Iran on the map or globe.

Invite them to remember or guess the founding dates of all three, and place the sticky notes on the time line.

If appropriate, remind the group they will study Taoism and Buddhism in more depth in future workshops.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: BEAUTY ALL AROUND US

Preparation for Activity

- Choose an outdoor site on your congregation's grounds and plan the group's "site visit."
- Talk to the congregational grounds committee or a staff member involved with the grounds and property to get ideas for projects and permission to proceed.
- If the group has talked about Shinto in Workshop 3, Indigenous Religions, plan how you will help the youth connect this activity with their previous learning.

Description of Activity

Participants apply principles of Shinto to design and implement a project bringing beauty to your congregational environment.

Say, in your own words:

Another Eastern religion is not on our fact sheet today because it did not originate during the same time period. In fact, no one knows when it originated or who started it. It is a

nature-based religion. Does anyone know the name?

Wait for answers. Then continue:

It is Shinto. Shinto began in Japan. It may be as old as Hinduism, or older. Today, modern Shinto is followed by many people who also follow Buddhism, so there is a link between these two.

Explain that Shinto was practiced for quite some time before followers began to develop a formal practice around the first century CE. Shinto's followers believe divine energy causes events in nature and manifests itself in the forms of kami, which are gods or spirits. Kami can inhabit living organisms such as people, animals, and plants as well as inanimate things, like rocks and art. For years, until World War II in the mid-20th century, Shinto was the official state religion of Japan.

Some followers visit temples to worship, pray, and perform rituals in honor of specific kami, yet Shinto practices are part of everyday life in Japan. For example, new construction jobs often start with offerings and prayers onsite led by a Shinto priest.

Tell the youth that four affirmations are core to Shinto belief: families and their traditions; physical cleanliness and purity; love of nature; and matsuri, which is worship and honor given to kami. Ask the group which of these affirmations seem to be ones Unitarian Universalists also hold dear. Point out that many Unitarian Universalists hold reverence for nature and believe the natural world deserves our protection. We may not believe the trees hold spirits inside, but the concept of nature as holy or sacred may not seem familiar to a UU.

Bring the group outdoors. Tell youth that most Shinto shrines are made of wood and located near flowing water and sacred trees. Ask: How did the builders of our congregation choose the location for the building? Perhaps you rent space; perhaps the founders lived long ago and you do not know their thoughts. Look around the site your congregation occupies. Can you find beauty in it? You do not have to be in a pastoral spot to find beauty. A lawn or patio can look warm and inviting. Trees provide shade and homes for songbirds, as can bushes. Nearby buildings can be architecturally pleasing. Are people outside? This sign of life itself can be holy.

Decide as a group on a way to beautify the congregation's grounds. Be creative. You might plant a small garden or clean up the parking lot, wash windows, or install (and maintain) bird feeders. A fun project might be to arrive early before a worship service

and chalk pretty, welcoming images on the sidewalk. Discuss your plans with the grounds committee or a member of staff before proceeding.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. This workshop introduced an important historical time in the development of world religion, as well as five enduring faiths. How did the youth handle this large amount of material? Were they able to absorb most of it? Did they connect the concept of ahimsa to their own lives? Could they engage the familiar subject of interrelatedness through a story from another faith tradition? Did they seem to understand the deeper religious and philosophical concepts, particularly those they encountered for the first time today? Which kinds of activities worked well with your group?

Discuss how you will apply your answers to these questions in future workshops.

Follow up on displaying the youth's flaming chalice artwork.

TAKING IT HOME

All things are within me, and on self-examination, I find no greater joy than to be true to myself. We should do our best to treat others as we wish to be treated. Nothing is more appropriate than to seek after goodness. — Mencius, Confucian philosopher (372-289 BCE)

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we discussed the almost simultaneous birth of five religions in Asia between 600 and 500 BCE. We examined fundamental concepts of Confucianism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and Taoism and discovered some beliefs and practices they share.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Do we "take things with us?" Whether or not you believe in the doctrine of karma, do you believe there is spiritual baggage from our actions?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- One fundamental agreement among four of the five world religions birthed in Asia between 600 and 500 BCE is gender equality, that women and men have equal capabilities. What do the religions of your family members and friends say about gender equality? Are all professions of faith—including the ministry—open to all genders?

- Fortune cookie inserts are sometimes silly or meaningless. However, simple statements can have deep meaning, even if they are funny. Here is an interesting idea for fun or as a fundraiser for any group. Schedule a time with family or friends to write sayings to go in fortune cookies. Write things that are simple or funny but have a meaningful message, too. For Valentine's Day, you might write sayings about love and relationships. Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Chinese New Year (February or March) are also good opportunities, as is Halloween. For a graduation, collect wisdom from and for the graduating class. Then make fortune cookies together; find a recipe online at [Fortune Cookie Recipe 1](#) (at [allrecipes.com/Recipe/Fortune-Cookies-1/Detail.aspx](#)) or [Fortune Cookie Recipe 2](#) (at [chinesefood.about.com/od/diningout/r/fortunecookie.htm](#)). Stuff the fortune cookies and serve them to friends or sell them for a fundraiser. Of course, this is best done without any humorous references to respected Chinese philosopher, Confucius.
- Do you include interesting quotes as part of your email signature or on your Facebook page? Add a saying attributed to Confucius and see how friends respond.
- The I Ching is an ancient book of revelation—at least 3,000 years old. Find someone experienced in this art associated with Confucianism and have them help you ask the I Ching a question...if you dare!
- Confucianism advises that we keep loving foundations in five relationships: parent/child, older sibling/younger sibling, between spouses, between friends, and ruler/subject. How are you doing in these relationships? If you feel that one or more is not as loving as you would like, how can you fix it? Notice that most of the relationships can be found in the home, which Confucius considered the cradle of a strong ethical being. The one that noticeably is not in the home is ruler/subject. One modern way of expressing this here would be representative/voter. Do you communicate with your political representative? Are they held accountable for responding to you in a humane and loving way? You might also think of your relationships with teachers or coaches in this way.
- Covering three schools of thought in one workshop only allows for a basic introduction. Here are a few good places to find out more: [Religious Tolerance](#) (at

[www.religioustolerance.org/](#)); [BeliefNet](#) (at [www.beliefnet.com/](#)); [Jainsim.org](#) (at [www.jainism.org/](#)); [Spiritual Sanctuary](#) (at [www.thespiritualsanctuary.org/Confucianism/Confucianism.html](#)).

- Jains are vegetarians. So are many Buddhists. So are many UUs. A Jain website for young children has a song (sung to the tune of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm") to teach young people that you can be vegetarian and still enjoy an array of food. Listen to "[I Am A Vegetarian](#)" by [Nimisha Asthagiri](#) (at [www.jaina.org/?LillamVegetarian](#)).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newton's Cradle desktop toy (see Leader Resource 4, [Newton's Cradle, Illustration](#) (included in this document)) or a pendulum

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a Newton's Cradle toy. Or, make a simple pendulum: Tie a stone (approximately 2 inches across is a good size) or a similar object to a string about 12 inches long, and tie the loose end of the string someplace where the stone can both hang at rest and be pushed into motion and swing freely.

Description of Activity

Participants explore the concept of karma, and the idea that all actions have consequences.

Ask youth what they have heard about karma. Is this a term that is casually used by family members or friends? As they have heard it used, does it have a specific meaning or more general implications? What does it mean to them? Does it seem important?

Share this definition:

Karma: inevitable results of actions, good or bad, either in this life or in a reincarnation.

Ask for participants' initial response. Did they notice the word "inevitable?" Do they feel their actions have inevitable results? Sometimes? Some actions? Always and all actions?

Say, in your own words:

Karma has important implications in some Eastern religions. In both Buddhism and Jainism, dispelling the accumulated effects of one's harmful actions—getting rid of bad karma—is

necessary before someone can be fully enlightened and free of the cycle of reincarnation (transmigration of the soul). This accumulation is the work of all the lifetimes a soul has lived, but liberation can be achieved in a single lifetime if the person is dedicated enough.

Ask the youth what they think about this concept. Does it make sense to them? Suggest that whether or not they believe in reincarnation of souls, they might still believe in karma—that is, the idea that negative energy accumulates from our harmful actions. Allow discussion.

You might say:

Some people speak of "instant karma," meaning when they do something bad they are made to suffer for it immediately. Does this idea have meaning for you?

Demonstrate the desk toy Newton's Cradle, if you have one, or the pendulum. Explain that it is named for Newton's Third Law of Motion: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Let the youth play with it for a brief time. Comment that this toy demonstrates nicely the continuation of energy suggested by the concept of karma—when an action is taken, the action itself is not the end of it; there is more, and the outcome is inevitable.

Say:

The Law of Karma might be stated:
"For every action there is an equal and congruent spiritual reaction."

What is the youth's response to this? Conservation of energy is a fundamental concept of physics. Does this concept extend to the spiritual realm? Do our actions have conservation of momentum in the spiritual as well as the material world?

Continue discussion with these questions:

- What qualifies as a "consequence" to an action? Would you consider realizing you have done something wrong a consequence?
- Have you ever known you have done something wrong but not felt bad about it? If so, was it still wrong? Why? If it was truly wrong, why did you not feel bad?
- Do consequences have to be inevitable for the idea of karma to be an important idea?

Distribute lined paper and pencils/pens. Tell the group that in an episode of the television show "My Name is Earl," the lead character lists all the bad things he remembers doing and sets about apologizing to the

people he wronged and trying to do nice things to balance his karma. Earl is not Buddhist, so his approach to clear his karma by apologizing and trying to rectify unpleasant situations he may have caused is a concept more modern American than Eastern. Despite that, do youth think it is a good idea? If so, invite youth to make their karma list, starting with two or three items. Ask them to reflect on how they can rectify a wrong. Remember that an apology is necessary, too. Invite a few volunteers to share their intentions with the group, if they feel inclined. Do youth feel that working on a karma list—whether or not you believe in reincarnation—is in keeping with their Unitarian Universalist values?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 7: STORY: INDRA'S MAGNIFICENT JEWELLED NET

A traditional Buddhist and Hindu story.

Far, far away, in the abode of the great god Indra, king of heaven, hangs a wondrous vast net, much like a spider's web in intricacy and loveliness. It stretches out indefinitely in all directions. At each node, or crossing point, of the net hangs a single glittering jewel. Since the net itself is infinite in dimension, the jewels are infinite in number. The sparkling jewels hang there, suspended in and supported by the net, glittering like stars, dazzling to behold.

Close your eyes, now, and imagine what this magnificent jeweled net looks like, spread across the vast expanse of space. Now, keep your eyes closed and move in close to one jewel in the net. Look closely, and you will see that the polished surface of the gem reflects all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number, just as two mirrors placed opposite each other reflect an image ad infinitum. Each jewel reflected in this gem you are gazing into also reflects all the other jewels, so that the process of reflection is itself infinite.

Now open your eyes, and know that you are a sparkling jewel in Indra's Net, as is every person around you. Every jewel is connected with all the other jewels in the net; every person is intimately connected with all the other persons in the universe. Each has an independent place within the net and we all reflect and influence each other. A change in one jewel—or person—produces a change, however slight, in every other. Realize, too, that the infinite reflections speak to the illusory nature of appearances. Appearances are not, in fact, reality, but only a reflection; the true nature of a thing is not to be captured in its appearance. However powerful that appearance might be, it is yet only a reflection of what is real.

In addition, whatever you do to one jewel affects the entire net, as well as yourself. You cannot damage one strand of a spider web without injuring the entire web, and you cannot damage one strand of the web that is the universe without injuring all others in it, whether that injury is known or unknown to them. This can work for good or ill because, of course, just as destructive acts affect the entire net, so do loving, constructive, compassionate acts affect the entire net. A single helpful act—even a simple act of kindness—will send positive ripples across the infinite net, touching every jewel, every person in existence.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 7: HANDOUT 1: APHORISMS OF CONFUCIUS

Gathered from online sources including the [Quotations Page](#) and the [Brainy Quote](#) websites.

1. Those who would perfect their work must first sharpen their tools.
2. Everything has its beauty but not everyone sees it.
3. A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do you know the youth's future will not be equal to or greater than your present?
4. A person who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake.
5. Forget injuries. Never forget kindnesses.
6. One who exercises leadership by means of virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the other stars turn toward it.
7. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.
8. I hear and I know. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.
9. If a person takes no thought of what is distant, sorrow will be near at hand.
10. In errors a person is true to type. Observe the errors and you will know the person.
11. Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.
12. It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.
13. Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.
14. To move a mountain, one begins by carrying away small stones.
15. They must often change who would be constant in happiness or wisdom.
16. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.
17. Wheresoever you go, go with all your heart.
18. Plant a thought, reap an act. Plant an act, reap a habit. Plant a habit, reap a character. Plant a character, reap a destiny.
19. Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do.
20. Before embarking on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 7: HANDOUT 2: COMPARATIVE CHART OF EASTERN RELIGIONS

	Zoroastrianism	Jainism	Taoism	Buddhism	Confucianism
Year	600 BCE	556 BCE	550 BCE	531 BCE	500 BCE
Country	Iran	India	China	India	China
Prophet / Founder	Zoroaster (Zarathustra)	Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara	Lao Tzu	Siddhartha Gautama	K'ung-fu-tzu (Confucius)
Followers	2.6 Million	4.2 M	20 M	360 M	6 M
Ahimsa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theistic	Monotheistic: Ahura Mazda	No	No	No	No
Karma	No	Yes	Silent	Yes	No
Rein-carnation	No	Yes	Silent	Yes	No
Gender equality	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Called a "philosophy"	No	Sometimes	Yes	Sometimes	Yes

NOTE: Ahimsa = Nonviolence; do no harm

**BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 7:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: 600-500 BCE, EASTERN RELIGIONS HISTORY GAME**

A	B	C	D	E
Zoroastrianism	Jainism	Taoism	Buddhism	Confucianism
Founded: 600 BCE	Founded: 556 BCE	Founded: 550 BCE	Founded: 531 BCE	Founded: 500 BCE
Iran	India	China	India	China
Founder: Zoroaster (Zarathustra)	Founder: Mahavira	Founder: Lao Tzu	Founder: Siddhartha Gautama	Founder: K'ung-fu-tzu (Confucius)
2.6 million followers	4.2 million followers	20 million followers	360 million followers	6 million followers
Teaches ahimsa	Teaches ahimsa	Teaches ahimsa	Teaches ahimsa	Teaches ahimsa
Monotheistic	Nontheistic	Nontheistic	Nontheistic	Nontheistic
Does not teach karma	Teaches karma	Does not mention karma	Teaches karma	Does not teach karma
Does not teach reincarnation	Teaches reincarnation	Silent on reincarnation	Teaches reincarnation	Does not teach reincarnation
Gender equality	Gender equality	Gender equality	Gender equality	Reflected much of the patriarchal thinking of the time
Never called a philosophy	Sometimes called a philosophy	Often called a philosophy	Sometimes called a philosophy	Very often called a philosophy

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 7: LEADER RESOURCE 2: EASTERN RELIGIONS BACKGROUND

In Iran...

Beginning in 653 BCE, the Assyrian Empire to the east conquered part of the region, the Median Empire was overrun by Scythians, and a new Persian ruler took advantage of the mayhem to seize control. Further victories and defeats, maneuverings, and strategic alliances fed the growth of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. It was a dangerous and unsettling time to live in Iran. Into this maelstrom was born Zarathustra, more commonly known as Zoroaster. A religious leader, Zarathustra preached that God had a single aspect, called Ahura Mazda. Monotheism was a radical shift from the native polytheistic religion of Iran, and many found it profoundly reassuring. Zarathustra taught that Ahura Mazda was in constant relationship with human beings and sought expression through the physical world (water, for example, was a specific expression of God), so in Zoroastrianism, God is physically present in everything a person sees, breathes, eats, or touches. Thus was born Zoroastrianism. The Three Wise Ones of the East who traveled to Bethlehem bringing gifts to the baby Jesus might have been Zoroastrians.

In India...

The ancient tribal structure of society was disintegrating, forming instead into regional kingdoms. Change in age-old social structure was profoundly unsettling, and made more difficult by the maneuverings for power and land among the new leaders, always dangerous to ordinary civilians. Into this atmosphere were born Vardhamana and Siddhartha Gautama, both of whom would later be known by different names: Mahavira and the Buddha. In the Hindu tradition, a teacher is often honored with a different name upon reaching a high level of spiritual attainment, and both the names Mahavira and Buddha are honorifics, "Mahavira" (muh-hah-VEER-uh) meaning "Great Hero" and "Buddha" meaning "awakened one" or "enlightened one." Both the Buddha and Mahavira were born into the ruling warrior caste in India. Both as young adults left their privileged lives to follow a spiritual path. Both sought for years, attained enlightenment, and devoted the rest of their lives to teaching what they had learned. Buddha taught the Middle Way: strong self discipline, yet with neither self-indulgence nor self-denial. Mahavira was 24th in a line of tirthankara ("pathmakers" or great teachers); however, he is credited with founding Jainism since he

distilled the teachings of many centuries. Mahavira's central teaching, the most fundamental principle of Jainism, was ahimsa, "nonviolence"—do no harm to any living thing, and do as much good as possible. While the Buddha also taught ahimsa, the lengths the Jains went to not cause harm was extreme by comparison. The teachings of both Mahavira and the Buddha were for women as well as men, for people of all castes or classes, and provided clear guidelines for living a good life and making spiritual progress. This accessibility and clarity were profoundly reassuring for a populace whose social fabric was unraveling.

In China...

The sixth century BCE was the end of the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history. After more than 100 years of invasions, strategic alliances, and broken treaties, warlords were consolidating kingdoms and wiping out smaller adversaries. Creativity is a frequent outlet for human anxiety, and in China, as in India and Iran, this was a time of surpassingly beautiful art and scientific innovation. The blisteringly fast rate of cultural change, political upheaval, and everyday danger in China created an atmosphere where people were ready for the calming, interconnecting philosophies of Taoism as taught by Lao Tzu, and the down-to-earth practicality of the teachings of K'ung-fu-tzu, known by Westerners as Confucius. Taoism and Confucianism provided ballast and meaning in a physical world that was anything but predictable. Many Chinese today still practice both Taoism and Confucianism. The strict, ethical guidelines of how to be in humane relationship with other people of Confucianism is seen to balance the less structured and less directional Taoism.

Shared Beliefs:

There is one particular belief on which all five faiths agree: ahimsa, the doctrine of nonviolence.

Four out of the five religions are noteworthy for the concept of gender equality. Looked at through a social justice lens, we see these two doctrines are related. Treating people unequally does harm, so a full and logical application of ahimsa would require gender equality. By "gender equality" we mean that these religions did not give one set of instructions to males and one to females. It does not imply that societies founded on these religions did not or do not exhibit proscribed gender roles, such as which gender is presumed to take care of the home and children and which gender is given preferential treatment in education. It is not unusual to find a culture among religious societies that does not reflect all aspects of a religion's doctrine. This can be seen by the fact that Confucianism, based strongly on cultural practices of its

founding time, reflects many patriarchal attitudes, such as how wives should be obedient, while also emphasizing the value of both men and women.

Other parallels among these faiths:

- All are creedal. They teach specific ideas, as enduring truth.
- All are prophetic faiths, created from the teachings of inspired human beings.
- All but Zoroastrianism are nontheistic. Of the five founders, only Zarathustra taught the existence of a literal God. The existence or nonexistence of God is immaterial to Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.
- All are nonjudgmental. None of these five preached theirs as the only way to enlightenment or salvation. Zoroastrianism, while it teaches that the good will go to heaven and the bad to hell, does not require that people be Zoroastrian to be considered good.

Further, hell is a temporary place: Zoroastrians, like our Universalist forebears, believe in universal salvation.

- All except Zoroastrianism are sometimes called philosophies since they do not require belief in a literal God. Usually, however, Buddhism and Jainism are considered religions, Taoism less so. Confucianism is most commonly considered, "a philosophy with a religious function," and is sometimes called a Chinese example of humanism. However, as we saw when discussing Hinduism, the distinction between a religion and a philosophy is not terribly significant to Eastern thought. Many Easterners would answer the religion versus philosophy question by saying their faith is both/and: both a religion and a philosophy.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 7: LEADER RESOURCE 3: JAIN SYMBOL

Provided by Elembis.

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/jainsymbol.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/jainsymbol.pdf) for printing.

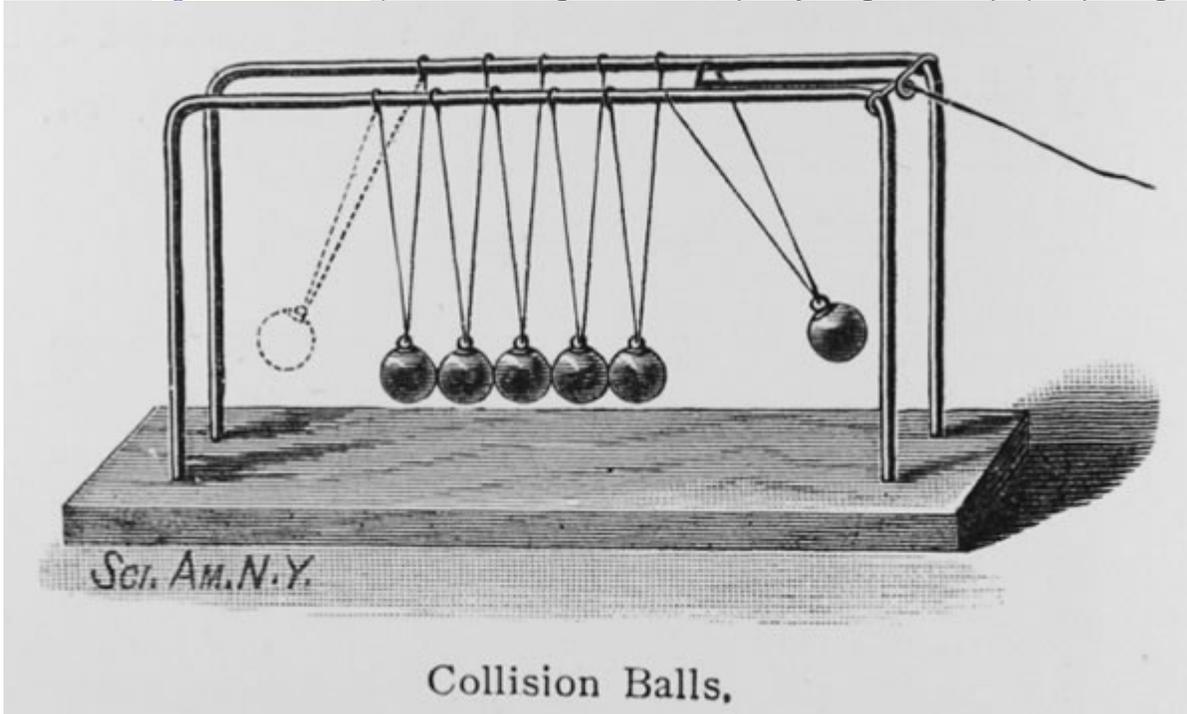
The Jain Hand symbolizes the Jain Vow of Ahimsa, or nonviolence. The Sanskrit word in the middle of the palm is "ahimsa." The wheel represents the dharma (teachings) of Jainism, through which Jains seek to attain rational perception and ultimately freedom from the cycle of transmigration (reincarnation).



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 7: LEADER RESOURCE 4: NEWTON'S CRADLE, ILLUSTRATION

From *Scientific American*.

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/cradle.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/cradle.pdf) for printing.



FIND OUT MORE

Ahimsa

A yoga teacher in Santa Cruz offers on her website the page [Ahimsa: Non-Harming](http://www.yogawithamey.com/ahimsa.html) (at www.yogawithamey.com/ahimsa.html), a very nice page on ahimsa, the path to true nonviolence. The article "[The Concepts of Ahimsa or Nonviolence](http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/concepts/ahimsa.asp)" (at www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/concepts/ahimsa.asp) by Jayaram V, on the [HinduWebsite](http://www.hinduwebsite.com/) (at www.hinduwebsite.com/), details how ancient and contemporary Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists have practiced ahimsa in daily life.

Jainism

"[Jainism—Respect for All Life](http://www.jainworld.com/pdf/Jainism%20By%20%20Myrtle%20Langley.pdf)" (at www.jainworld.com/pdf/Jainism%20By%20%20Myrtle%20Langley.pdf) on the [Jainworld](http://www.jainworld.com) (at www.jainworld.com) website is an excellent article on the origins and precepts of Jainism. The Religion Facts website provides a comprehensive [history of Jainism](http://www.religionfacts.com/jainism/history.htm) (at www.religionfacts.com/jainism/history.htm). Harvard University's [Pluralism Project website](http://www.pluralism.org/) (at www.pluralism.org/) has a [Directory of Religious Centers](http://www.pluralism.org/directory/index.php) (at www.pluralism.org/directory/index.php) which lists [Jain religious centers in the U.S.](http://www.pluralism.org/directory/index.php) (at

www.pluralism.org/directory/index/country:US/tradition:10) Another website, Adherents.com, has a listing of U.S. [Jain temples](http://www.adherents.com/largecom/templjain_statesUS.html) (at www.adherents.com/largecom/templjain_statesUS.html).

"[Gender and the Tao](http://taoism.about.com/od/roleofwomengender/a/gender.htm) (at taoism.about.com/od/roleofwomengender/a/gender.htm)" by Elizabeth Reninger, on the About.com website.

Zoroastrianism

The article "[Rise of the Achaemenid Empire](http://persianempire.info/Achaemens.htm)" (at persianempire.info/Achaemens.htm) on the Persian Empire Info website describes Iran (Persia) in the time of Zarathustra. A further article, "[Origins and Beliefs of Zoroastrianism](http://persianempire.info/zoro.htm)." (at persianempire.info/zoro.htm) sets the religion's development in Persia and Western Asia in a social context.

"Indra's Jeweled Net"

This story was also published in the Fall, 2010 *UU World* full-color insert Families: Weave a Tapestry of Faith with reflections and activity suggestions on the theme "O, Sparkling World of Difference." [Download the Family pages](http://www.uua.org/documents/uuworld/families/10_fall.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/uuworld/families/10_fall.pdf) from the UUA website.

WORKSHOP 8: TAOISM

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*Thirty spokes are joined together in a wheel,
but it is the center hole
that allows the wheel to function.
We mold clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that makes the vessel useful.
We fashion wood for a house,
but it is the emptiness inside
that makes it livable.
We work with the substantial,
but the emptiness is what we use. —
Tao Te Ching, translated by J. H.
McDonald*

This session introduces Taoism (DOW-iz-uhm), an Eastern faith more than 2,500 years old. Taoism arose from indigenous Chinese religion. Its unique approach to the spiritual journey was first recorded in approximately 550 BCE, when Lao Tzu (LAU tsuh) wrote the Tao Te Ching (DOW duh jing), Taoism's most important text. Taoism does not usually refer to "God." It teaches instead "the Tao," which translates as "the Way" or "the Path." The Way is indistinct and incorporeal, it has no personality, and it is infinitely soft and infinitely powerful.

The engagement activity will deepen participants' understanding of Taoism and is encouraged; however, if no engagement takes place outside of workshop time, consider using Alternate Activity 2 to provide an experiential component. Further, consider holding the entire workshop outdoors, to express Taoism's connection with the natural world.

The basic concepts of Taoism are supremely simple, yet its very simplicity can be a trap—if something is "simple," it seems like it should be easy! The tendency to underestimate the depth of Taoism is the biggest pitfall in understanding it. You may need to remind participants that Unitarian Universalism looks simple to people, too: Most people agree with the values inherent in the seven UU Principles. However, living those principles—just like living Taoism—is not easy. Nondogmatic religions (those with no specific doctrine relating to such matters as morality and faith) ask followers to bear a huge responsibility for their own understanding of what is true and good.

If anyone in your congregation is Taoist or has a Taoist background, consider replacing an activity with a guest to speak with the group.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce participants to some fundamental aspects of Taoism
- Promote discussion of ways in which Taoism resonates with participants' Unitarian Universalist faith
- Optional: Invite youth to engage with Taoist concepts in nature.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand and discuss fundamental tenets of Taoism
- Explore the Tao Te Ching
- Realize that sacred texts are subject to different interpretations by both the writers and the readers
- Experiment with balance as represented in the yin/yang symbol
- Compare Taoism and Unitarian Universalism and understand how the Taoist tradition can inform Unitarian Universalism
- Optional: Experience service to the community from a Taoist perspective (Faith in Action).

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	20
Activity 1: Tao Te Ching	15
Activity 2: Story — A Cup of Tea	10
Activity 3: So Little, So Much	15
Activity 4: Equal and Opposite	12
Activity 5: Fact Sheet	10
Activity 6: Time Line	5

Faith in Action: Simply Do It	20
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: Tai Chi	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Prepare the workshop materials well in advance so you are not scrambling on the day of the workshop.

Before the workshop, think of an object you can bring to increase the beauty of the workshop space. The object does not have to be large, and no one else needs to know it has been added. It is simply for your benefit. However, you may choose to tell participants you brought a special object and why.

On the day of the workshop, give yourself plenty of time. Don't rush—let things unfold as they will. Practice awareness. Be deliberate, and do only one thing at a time.

If time permits, sit with your co-facilitator for a five-minute silent meditation before participants arrive. Close your eyes, focus gently on your breathing, and relax your body. If you find yourself thinking about something, even Taoism, let it go and refocus on your breathing. Don't check your watch. Instead, set an alarm with a soothing ring or vibration to let you know when time is up, so you are not thinking about that, either.

If you do not have time for the meditation, do not worry. Accept your reality.

See if you can maintain this relaxed posture during the workshop. If you find yourself clenching up in judgment, irritation, or impatience, unclench your body. Take a breath and breathe out the tension in your shoulders. Let go of the tension in your stomach or arms, and concentrate on the spots where you store tension. When our feelings stiffen, our bodies grab hold, too. Relaxing your body will bring you a feeling of greater peace.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Scarves of many colors, textures, and lengths, several per participant
- Box to hold the scarves
- Recording of Asian flute music or Handel's *Water Music*, and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Place scarves in the box and put them by the door, where they are easily accessible.
- Begin playing the music before participants arrive.

Description of Activity

As participants arrive, offer a scarf silently or with very few words. Take one yourself and model how to dance with it, flowing in response to the music. As more participants arrive, offer scarves and invite them to join you in dancing.

Encourage people to be creative in their movements—run in a circle to let their scarves stream out behind them, have two people hold onto both ends of a scarf, or model how to change their levels, so that they go as high or as low as they can reach. These are all actions that will enrich discussion during the workshop.

When it is time to begin the first activity, pick up the box, collect all the scarves, and indicate that everyone should be seated. Do not turn off the music until everyone has taken a seat.

Including All Participants

Pay sensitive attention to participants with physical impairments. These youth may benefit from being partnered with another dancer and changing partners several times during the dance. Encourage the others to move around and with these youth. Later, in your discussion of Taoism, note that the inclusive nature of the group dance was itself an illustration of a Taoist practice, since the Way—the Tao—effortlessly incorporates all, without any fuss.

OPENING (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Taoism Background](#) (included in this document)

- The quotation from the Tao Te Ching, from the beginning of this workshop
- A copy of the Tao Te Ching

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1, Taoism Background, so you will feel comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions you could not answer from the last workshop.

Invite the youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in. If they participated in the Welcome and Entering activity, say:

For check-in, say your name and then tell us something you noticed about the dance we just did—for example, how the dancers interacted with each other, or what effect using the scarves had, or how the music affected your own movements—something you noticed as you experienced the dance.

If these observations are mentioned, point out that they are attuned to Taoism: flow, connectedness, peaceful feelings associated with moving to the music, or a balance between people.

If you did not do the Welcome and Entering activity, invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly sharing something they know or have heard about Taoism.

Ask participants if they know any adults who describe themselves as Taoists. What do they think people mean when they say they are Taoists? What does that mean for the way those people live or think?

Ask what questions they have about Taoism, and write their questions on newsprint. Answer the ones you can. Tell the group that during this workshop, many of their other questions will be answered, and, after the workshop, you will seek the answers to any remaining questions, which you will share at their next meeting.

Read or share with the youth, in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 1, Taoism Background. Use newsprint to list important terms from the resource.

Read the quotation from the beginning of this workshop. Ask for responses. Tell youth the reading was from the Tao Te Ching, the most important text in Taoism. Tell them that although it is a tiny volume (show them the book), the Tao Te Ching is very important as a religious text. It has 81 chapters, which sounds like a lot, but each chapter is only a few lines or paragraphs long. (Open the book and show them a page or two.) Part of the reason for this simplicity is that there is a trade-off of work: The chapters are intentionally spare because they are intended to be catalysts. The reader must contemplate them to discover their meaning.

Remind the youth that during the workshop, they should reflect on how Taoism meets the basic human needs met by religion, such as answers to our big questions, ways to know right from wrong, and a connection to something greater than ourselves.

ACTIVITY 1: TAO TE CHING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Random Tao Te Ching Chapters](#) (included in this document) (enough copies for each participant to have two or three chapter slips)

Preparation for Activity

- Cut individual chapters into strips, making sure that the chapter numbers are included with each chapter.
- Optional: Choose chapters from different translations. Some of the many websites with well-accepted translations are [Brooklyn College of the City University of New York](#) (at acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/taote-v3.html) (the Stephen Mitchell version is respected, and accessible) and [Sacred Texts](#) (at www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm) (translated by J. Legge). You could also purchase copies of the Tao Te Ching in book form.

Description of Activity

Participants are introduced to a Taoist holy book, the Tao Te Ching. Tell the youth this activity involves reading from the Tao Te Ching. Share the name of the translator of the text you are using. Pass out slips, giving no more than three to each participant. Allow the youth a few minutes to read their slips, then ask them to select their favorite.

Have participants each read their favorite to the group and share their interpretation of it. Invite the group to offer other interpretations.

Note that everyone may hear different things and find different meanings in any given reading. Ask them:

- Does the sparseness of the writing leave the text more open to interpretation?
- Does it make it harder or easier for you to find meaning?
- What do you think this tells us about Taoism? Is it a religion that has hard-and-fast rules, or one where individuals are responsible for exploring and developing their own faith? How is this similar to or different from Unitarian Universalism?

Affirm that Taoists believe that there are many different paths that can lead to a happy, moral, spiritual life and that everyone is expected to find their own path.

Ask participants what values and beliefs they heard in these chapters. How do these relate to what they know already about Taoism? What new beliefs are suggested?

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — A CUP OF TEA (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[A Cup of Tea](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "A Cup of Tea" so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Introduce the story "A Cup of Tea" by saying, in these words or your own:

In every religious tradition, stories are essential to teaching about the faith. Sometimes they are presented as historical, as in, "Such-and-such prophet did this at this time," but more often they are intended to make you think and to illustrate things that that faith finds supremely important to the human journey. "A Cup of Tea" is such a story. See if you can tell what it is saying to us.

Tell or read the story. Ask participants:

- What do you think this story is saying?
- How does that relate to what you already know about Taoism and its values?
- Where does your cup fall on the full-to-empty continuum? Is it pretty full or is it pretty empty? Do you think that is good?

- If you think your cup is really full, so full it is hard to let anything new in, what can you do to empty your cup?

ACTIVITY 3: SO LITTLE, SO MUCH (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Chapter 10](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Leader Resource 3, Chapter 10, and cut it into strips, one translation per slip.
- Optional: If you wish to use more, or different, translations of the Tao Te Ching, visit the [Daoism Depot](#) (at www.edepot.com/cgi-bin/main.pl), where you can find [17 translations](#) (at www.edepot.com/taosplith.html). This site also allows you to split the screen in two and then re-split each section, so you can see four translations simultaneously.

Description of Activity

Participants compare different interpretations of a sacred text.

Give one slip to each participant. Ask participants to read their slip silently and think about what it means to them. After a few minutes, have them read each slip aloud. Participants may quickly realize that they are reading different versions of the same chapter. Ask:

- What are some ways in which the translations are alike?
- Why do you think there are differences?
- Can you think of other holy texts from other religions that exist in more than one translation?

Record their responses on newsprint.

Say, using these words or your own:

Translations of holy text can differ so radically that it can seem like they did not even come from the same source. This is much more than inconvenient; conflict over scriptural interpretation has led to violence, even to a new sect breaking away from the original faith. However, for seekers of truth, the abundance of translations of every sacred text can provide clarity and depth. This is also one way that religions change over time. Remember that religions exist to help fulfill basic human needs. As those needs change,

religions change, and translations and interpretations of sacred texts change, too.

Translations differ for many reasons, including the time and place that the translator lived, the translator's level of skill with the source language, and what the translator was trying to accomplish with the translation. One especially important influence is the personal spiritual path of the translators, because the aspects that speak to them most strongly in the original will be the ones they emphasize in their translations. For this reason, it is important to sample several translations of the Tao—or any other religious text you intend to study—if you are not reading it in its original language. Some translations will speak strongly to you and sustain and empower your spiritual growth, while others might say almost nothing to you.

The process of sampling several texts to see which works best for you will seem familiar and is also a Taoist undertaking: Taoists, like Unitarian Universalists, are required to reflect on their own experiences and observations and identify the truth for themselves.

Some scholars say you have to learn Chinese to really be able to understand the Tao. Others say that the teachings of the Tao are broad enough to survive translation without losing much. Do you think there is enough content in what you have heard to be a valuable tool in your own search for truth and meaning—our Fourth UU Principle? Do you think your own process would benefit from using more than one translation? Why?

ACTIVITY 4: EQUAL AND OPPOSITE (12 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 2, [Yin/Yang Symbol](#) (included in this document)
- Solid-color scarves or scrunchies in complementary color pairs, for example, two red and two green, two black and two white,

two orange and two blue, and two purple and two yellow—enough for each participant to have a set of two of the same color

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange the space so pairs of participants can be arms-distance apart.
- Decide how you will compose the pairs. The activity is easier if partners are of roughly equivalent body types.
- Copy the yin/yang symbol from Handout 2, Yin/Yang Symbol, on newsprint and post it where all participants will be able to see it.
- Be prepared to demonstrate the Equal and Opposite game with your co-facilitator, if needed.

Description of Activity

This game embodies the philosophy of yin/yang. Group participants in pairs. If there is an odd number of participants, a facilitator can pair with a participant. Give a set of scarves or scrunchies to each pair. Each participant will "be" a particular color by putting a scarf or scrunchie around each wrist. Partners should represent complementary color pairs—for example, a "red" person is paired with a "green" person, and so on.

Say, using these or your own words:

You may have played a game called Mirror. In Mirror, you face your partner and do not touch each other. One person starts moving slowly, and the other person tries to match their movements exactly. You keep changing leaders so both people get to lead and to follow.

We are going to do a variation on Mirror called Equal and Opposite. You will notice that you and your partner are wearing complementary colors. That is because the Yin/Yang (refer to the newsprint), the symbol of Taoism, is frequently represented in colors opposite to each other. Opposite colors are called "complementary" because if they are added together, they contain all the colors. In Equal and Opposite, you and your partner are a living Yin/Yang.

In Equal and Opposite, you will share weight and energy and find balance together. Instead of always doing the same thing as your partner, you will seek to do exactly the opposite, all the while staying in constant close contact

with your partner and keeping your balance together.

Here's how it works: Begin by facing your partner and placing your palms together. Decide who will be the first leader. The leader will only move one thing at a time, because any movement the leader makes prompts an equal and opposite response from their partner. The leader will never control everything. When the leader pushes gently forward with one hand, the other will respond equally and oppositely by gently pushing their own hand forward. If your partner pushes with their left hand, you will push also with your left hand, thus receiving in one hand and giving with the other. Experiment for a moment with just your hands and arms.

Give participants 30—60 seconds to try the game. Say, in these words or your own:

Change leaders now. Start adding the experience of level change. Leaders, move one hand up; the partner's other palm should move down. If the leader's torso moves left, the partner responds with the equal and opposite motion, also to their left, so the partners' torsos move away from each other. Keep your palms together, relaxed and flat. Feel the energy flowing between your palms with the movement, your bodies moving as one balanced whole. Stay aware. Be careful not to move in a way that would make your partner lose balance; it is the whole you seek to balance, and your partner's balance is as essential to the whole as your own. Work with all parts of your body.

Give participants another 30—60 seconds. Say, in these or your own words:

Change leaders. Separate your palms a little so that you are no longer touching, but keep your palms close to each other, so you can still feel the energy flowing between you. Continue moving—with equal and opposite motion—but pay close attention so you can keep the balance and flow even without the physical contact.

This is the metaphysical dance we do in our lives, every day. We are Yin and Yang, giver and receiver, leader and

follower—feeling the flow, keeping our balance by balancing with others.

Give participants another 30—60 seconds. Say, in these words or your own:

Change leaders. Gradually slow your motion, keeping the connection through your energy and your attention. Continue responding with equal and opposite motion, keeping the balance and harmony, but going a little slower. Gradually bring your movements in, closer to home, closer to the heart, closer to where you began. When it feels right, when you have come to a point of natural ending, touch palms again and stand quietly as you began.

Wait for all pairs to finish.

Invite the youth to share what they felt during the game. If time allows, process the activity further by asking:

- Did this activity remind you of anything?
- Was it hard to stay focused?
- What made it easier or harder to maintain your balance?
- What does this game have to do with Taoism?
- Point out that within the Yin there is a circle of Yang, and within the Yang there is a dot of Yin. What does that mean?
- Why is the yin/yang symbol a circle?

End with the following blessing:

Bless all our interactions with such flow: opposition without resistance, tension without discord, positive and negative without conflict. We have felt it in our bodies. We know the possibilities. We know it can be done. May it be so.

Including All Participants

This activity is perfectly suitable for those with physical limitations, because what is required is maintaining balance and harmony, not doing gymnastics: sensitive teamwork and other-awareness are the point. A modification can be made for a participant in a wheelchair by having the partner sit in a chair as well. If they cannot match both their palms, have them match just one palm. The equal and opposite motion still works, perhaps even more effectively, since the partner's less common circumstances will heighten awareness of and increase sensitivity to their capabilities. The requirement to maintain balance and harmony remains.

ACTIVITY 5: FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint with youth's questions about Taoism (from Opening)
- Handout 1, [Taoism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Yin/Yang Symbol](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 3, [The Seven UU Principles](#) (included in this document), or a poster of the Unitarian Universalist Principles

Preparation for Activity

- Post the newsprint sheet of questions where all participants will be able to see it.
- Optional: Post the Unitarian Universalist Principles poster where all participants will be able to see it.

Description of Activity

Youth discuss a fact sheet on Taoism.

Tell participants you have a riddle for them. Read aloud the riddle at the bottom of Handout 1, Taoism Fact Sheet, and give participants time to think about it. Someone might get it right away, but usually only very little children solve this riddle immediately, so probably it will take some time or they will not be able to figure it out.

When the youth are ready to hear the answer or after they have guessed it, reread the riddle and tell them (or confirm) the answer. Ask why this riddle would be included in a workshop on Taoism. Welcome all responses. Read aloud the explanation following the riddle. Invite discussion by asking:

- Would your life benefit from more Nothing? In what area or areas?
- Is there any part of the riddle you disagree with or find discordant?

Distribute Handout 1, Taoism Fact Sheet, and Handout 2, Yin/Yang Symbol, and review them with the group.

Ask:

- Can you identify aspects of Taoism that engage with the basic human needs met by religion?
For example:
 - Answers to big questions
 - A connection to something larger than ourselves
 - Knowing right from wrong
 - Giving one's life meaning and a sense of purpose
 - Creating a feeling of belonging
- What beliefs do UUs and Taoists share?

Distribute Handout 3, The Seven UU Principles, or refer to the poster of the Principles. Ask:

- If you believe every one of these principles, is Taoism a good fit for you? (Allow participants to answer.) Why or why not?
- Do any of the principles here conflict with Taoism? Do you think any of them encourage living or thinking in ways that are not Taoist?
- How does knowing about Taoism influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

Acknowledge that in Taoism, as in all religions or philosophies, beliefs are not necessarily uniform from one participant to another. What they have discussed today are some of the most universal tenets of Taoism. However, some Taoists believe in different manifestations of gods and demons, and some Taoists used to believe it is possible to achieve immortality through alchemy. In China, many people's beliefs are a mixture of Taoism and Buddhism, with some Confucianism thrown in, too. Just as in other religions, much diversity exists among believers, so no individual's faith can be predicted simply by saying, "They are Taoist." Additionally, we know religion is not static—religions change and grow as human needs change.

Revisit the questions generated in the Opening. Point out the answers that have emerged so far during this workshop. Note the questions that remain unanswered, and tell the group that you will do your best to find answers before their next meeting.

If you will be engaging with a Taoist community (Alternate Activity 1), give participants any information they need.

ACTIVITY 6: TIME LINE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line from Workshop 1
- World map or globe
- Sticky notes and fine-point marker

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Religions Time Line where all participants will be able to see it.
- Write a sticky note saying "Taoism, 550 BCE."

Description of Activity

The Religions Time Line is updated to include Taoism. Ask participants if they remember where Taoism was born. Mark China on the map or globe with a sticky note.

Ask who remembers the founding date of Taoism. If they do not remember, ask them to guess. After they have finished guessing, put the "Taoism, 550 BCE"

sticky note at the appropriate spot on the Religions Time Line.

Say, in these or your own words:

There are almost a thousand years between the founding of Judaism and the birth of Taoism. But then, something amazing happens right here in history: the birth of three major world religions in only fifty years' time. Between 550 BCE and 500 BCE, we see the birth of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, all of which are still major world faiths, and together represent almost 400 million people.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for each participant.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: SIMPLY DO IT (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Clean-up materials, including rubber or work gloves, trash bags, spray bottles, and/or rags (depending on the activity chosen)

Preparation for Activity

- Decide where you will go and what you will do for the clean-up activity.

Description of Activity

Participants practice simplicity while doing a clean-up activity.

Say, in these words or your own:

We are now going to put our faith into action, a part of our faith that resonates with Taoism. This is an exercise in awareness, presence, spontaneity, and nonattachment. We have mentioned how Taoism and Unitarian Universalism are alike in requiring a great deal of their practitioners. One thing required by both that sounds so simple is presence—simply being aware of what is going on around you. Taoists need to be present and aware at all times to stay balanced and in harmony with the Tao. Awareness is a simple idea, but it requires constant effort to put into daily practice. We are going to make that effort today.

Ask participants to get into a comfortable position and close their eyes. Read the following to the group:

Start with the breath. Your breathing keeps your body alive and connects you with the air, the wind, the sky. Feel that easy, natural connection.

Give participants a moment to focus on their breathing. Continue:

Widen your awareness now; rise up through the air that you connect with in every breath—rise up, widen, and find that you are one with the sky. You are the wind, flowing through the treetops, swimming in the grass, blowing children's hair, stirring the flowers. Rush and ebb and flow. You are one with the wind.

Give participants a moment to focus on this imagery. Continue:

Whoosh! Whoosh down now, flow easily through the sky and across the earth and over the sea. Blow over the sea foam, brush ridges across the surface, feel at every moment your connection to the water.

Give participants a moment to focus on this imagery. Continue:

Move onto the very skin of the water now; move with it as you blow, become one with the water—wind and water, one. Now move into the water, the

motion the same, only the cool medium is different, whooshing, swimming, stirring, flowing. Feel the flow around plant and sand bar, tiny pebble and glacier alike. There is no difference here. You are your body, you are the wind, you are the water—not separate, the same, flowing with the same motions, rising to the same urges, and sharing the dance of life.

Give participants a moment to focus on this imagery. Continue:

Return—gently—now, to awareness of your body, to this room. Here, there is peace. Outside our door, there is much to be done. There is always much to be done. But we know we can carry peace into the world by remembering—remembering that our breath, the wind, the water, the earth, all flow together. Sometimes we choose the work that is to be done, and sometimes the work lets itself be known. We soon will venture out for the work, which will tell us what needs to be done. At the end of this meditation, we will rise and go together into our church grounds [or building]. We will move slowly, feeling our connection to the earth under our feet, the breath in our lungs, and the light to our eyes. We will see work—and we will simply do it. A picture will need straightening, a piece of trash will need throwing away, a person will need help. Simply do it. Nothing is too small. No discussion is necessary. Ask for help if you need it. No calling attention to yourself. No expecting praise or recognition—we will simply see something that needs doing, and do it. Do not look for the next thing while you are doing this one—do only one thing at a time. Know that with your calm, and your presence, and your hands, doing one tiny thing at a time, you are bringing peace to your heart—and this is what will bring peace to the world. Open your eyes now. We seek utter simplicity. Purity. As you do each thing, however small, keep your mind on it only. The acts themselves are meditation.

Stand and lead the group out of the room to the area or areas chosen for the activity. Keep the group's energy as calm and focused as possible.

Once the activity is completed, collect the participants and return to your room. Allow participants to sit in silence for a few minutes if they seem inclined to do so. Invite participants to share their reflections on the experience.

Including All Participants

Make sure the area you have chosen is accessible to all participants and that each participant will be able to perform a meaningful task.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader:

- How did the activities work for participants?
- Did participants engage the subject with respect?
- Were the youth engaged by the examination of another religion?
- Did they seem to grasp the fundamental concepts of Taoism?
- Was the suggested timing for each activity accurate?
- Which activities worked well with your group? Which were less successful?
- How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

Plan for any adjustments that could make future sessions run more smoothly, and decide who will seek answers to the remaining questions about Taoism that arose in the workshop.

Workshop 9, Activity 3, involves hearing from a UU Buddhist guest. Make sure that you have the details arranged for this guest speaker.

TAKING IT HOME

Thirty spokes are joined together in a wheel,
but it is the center hole
that allows the wheel to function.
We mold clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that makes the vessel useful.
We fashion wood for a house,
but it is the emptiness inside
that makes it livable.
We work with the substantial,
but the emptiness is what we use. —
Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we discussed Taoism and the concepts of simplicity, spontaneity, a realistic understanding of your world, being present, "going with the flow," being peaceful within ourselves, and having a peaceful influence on our world.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is your family's cup full to overflowing?
- Is there a tendency to be so busy, so involved and preoccupied and full of thoughts, day in and day out, that there is little room for new thoughts, or even for appreciating what you have right now?
- In our relentless busy-ness, what are the implications for individual growth, understanding, and peacefulness? What about the implications for families? For our faith community?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Lao Tzu (570-490 BCE), author of the Tao Te Ching, wrote:

If there would be peace in the world,
There must be peace among nations.
If there would be peace among nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there would be peace in the cities,
There must be peace among
neighbors.
If there would be peace among
neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there would be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

Read this quote to some of your family members and friends. Do they agree with it? Do you? If this quote is true, and there must be peace in individuals' hearts before there can be lasting peace among people, how is the individual's peace to be nourished? What small changes can we make to feel more peaceful in our lives?

Here are some activities you might try:

- **Do One Thing at a Time.** This activity nurtures peace in the heart. We multitask habitually, doing and thinking about many things at once. This might be efficient, but it is definitely scattering and can feed our anxiety. Instead, make the effort, at least once a day, to do only one thing at a time: Do the dishes without thinking about the day's To Do list. Brush your teeth without thinking about where your shoes are. You may find this new approach to be significantly more peaceful.

- **Make Space for Peace.** To help create peace at home, together with your family or friends, plan a moment of peace in your week, where you deepen your connection to each other, appreciate things as they are, and just slow everything down for a bit. Whether you do it with many people or just two, structure into your week a peaceful time together—of silence, a quiet walk, sitting and reading a bit of the Tao Te Ching or some other meditative work and talking or just thinking about it together, a shared meal when you can set everything else aside—a time when you can just be together.
- **Practice Feng Shui.** This Taoist practice (pronounced fung SHWAY) is translated as "the way of the wind and the water." It means to bring harmony to your surroundings through a balanced, intentional use of space and materials, which will contribute to peace in the home. Visit [LifeScript](http://www.lifescrypt.com/Soul/Horoscope/Feng-shui/7_Tips_from_a_Feng_Shui_Expert_Feel_Calm_and_in_Control_Instantly.aspx?trans=1&du=1&gclid=Cilii5yt85gCFQlfswodKle6zw&ef_id=1350:3:c_e7e7a2024b9643b5de7dc54aea_d8630b_2540034455:04Yir0GvMUIAADUpWF_EAAAAI:200) (at www.lifescrypt.com/Soul/Horoscope/Feng-shui/7_Tips_from_a_Feng_Shui_Expert_Feel_Calm_and_in_Control_Instantly.aspx?trans=1&du=1&gclid=Cilii5yt85gCFQlfswodKle6zw&ef_id=1350:3:c_e7e7a2024b9643b5de7dc54aea_d8630b_2540034455:04Yir0GvMUIAADUpWF_EAAAAI:200) to read "Seven Tips from a Feng Shui Expert" and learn some Feng Shui basics for Western living. To maximize positive energy flow and create a peaceful environment, rearrange your bedroom, or enlist family members and collaboratively make some changes in your home.
- **Stop Wanting, Just for a Minute.** Plan with a friend or family member to make a regular practice of intentionally setting aside desires, ambitions, and aversions for a brief time, at the same time every day, even if it's literally just for a minute. (It may sound strange, but try setting a timer!) Then schedule a time to compare notes: How did it feel to release those feelings? Was it hard—or even possible? Was it weird? Did you feel more peaceful and more relaxed afterward? If so, did that feeling last?
- **Say "You May Be Right."** This activity nurtures peace. When you find yourself in a disagreement with someone, make the effort to really listen to their point of view. Then, before voicing your own, tell them, "You may be right"—and *believe* it. Authentically recognize that there are always aspects to someone else's point of view or experience that we cannot understand.
- **Strive for Peace.** Research organizations on the Internet which build peace in cities, our

nation, and the world. (A good list can be found at [Love Earth Network](http://www.loveearth.net/peaceorganizations.htm) (at www.loveearth.net/peaceorganizations.htm.) Identify one that supports an aspect of peace-building that is especially meaningful to you, for example, animal rights, poverty programs, or peace in the Middle East. Participate in the work of that organization, whether by writing letters, sending money, joining a march, organizing a demonstration or email campaign, or doing something else entirely. Involve friends and family if you can, to maximize your impact.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- For pre-engagement preparation
 - Handout 1, [Taoism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)
 - Leader Resource 1, [Taoism Background](#) (included in this document)
- For the engagement
 - Blankets, beach towels, or yoga mats, one for each person
 - Food for sharing, such as bread, cheese, and grapes, and bottles of water
 - Serving platters, one for every three or four participants
 - Napkins and other supplies needed for serving the food you have chosen
 - Attractive tablecloth
 - A copy of the Tao Te Ching or copies of selected chapters (2, 8, 16, and 32)
- For post-engagement discussion
 - Newsprint, markers, and tape
 - A copy of the Tao Te Ching or a copy of Chapter 11, one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- See general suggestions on Engagement in the program Introduction under Implementation.
- Review the fundamental ideas of Taoism as outlined on Handout 1, Taoism Fact Sheet, and Leader Resource 1, Taoism Background.
- Invite a guest to the workshop who is knowledgeable in Tai Chi. An actual Tai Chi instructor is ideal, but any knowledgeable practitioner could guide this activity.
- Instruct participants to wear weather-appropriate, comfortable clothing and closed shoes.
- Identify an outdoor location in a place of quiet beauty, preferably with a lovely view and where

you will be undisturbed. If no place really "away from it all" is available, an option is to choose an accessible location and go at a time of day when few people are likely to be there. Early morning is particularly suitable, if you can entice your participants out of bed! Of course, wherever you go, be aware of the safety of the group.

- Plan and purchase (or arrange to have provided) supplies for sharing some simple food during your outing.
- Optional: If you have access to a Taoist temple, you might choose to visit the temple instead of doing this activity. If that is the case, contact the temple well ahead of time. Ask if a member of the temple would be available to talk to the group beforehand to prepare them for the visit. Make sure you know what preparations are necessary before the guest speaks to the group; consider gathering guidelines in a handout for the youth. If the temple member belongs to your congregation and/or is a youth, that would add benefit.

Description of Activity

Pre-engagement

Participants prepare to engage more fully with Taoist practices.

Tell participants the group will now take its explorations into the field in order to better understand the kind of experience that Taoist practitioners seek to create. It is important that participants understand this will be a "Taoist kind of experience" rather than actually "practicing Taoism."

Tell them the group will go to a beautiful location where they will be led in Tai Chi by an instructor, share some food together, then sit in quiet contemplation of the beauty around them before returning.

Remind participants of the fundamental ideas of Taoism. Ask participants which they recall as some of the important basic beliefs. In the ensuing discussion, help bring out the importance of nature, balance, harmony, flow, and chi, the energy force that imbues and connects all living things. Suggest that participants, during the engagement, allow themselves to feel connected with their natural setting, release themselves to feeling the harmony of the lovely setting, and notice the flow of energy that Taoists call chi (chee), which connects them to the earth and to each other.

Engagement

Remind participants that tranquility and harmony are important to this activity, so all are expected to maintain a contemplative tone. At the site, gently instruct participants to set up their mats, towels, or blankets,

spaced far enough apart that their Tai Chi can be done without limiting movement. Set up the food.

Have all participants stand calmly on their mats, close their eyes, and simply breathe for a moment. Read aloud Chapter 2 from the Tao Te Ching.

After the reading, the Tai Chi instructor will take the group through a Tai Chi exercise for at least 20 minutes.

At the conclusion of the Tai Chi segment, suggest that the group move quietly to the location where the food is waiting and sit in groups of three or four. When everyone is settled, read aloud Chapter 16 of the Tao Te Ching. Sit in silence a moment.

Distribute the serving platters to the center of each group. Suggest that instead of serving themselves, each person serve others and allow themselves to be served, and that, aside from courtesies, the food be shared in silence. Participate in this sharing, or at the very least do not provide a distraction; any organizing or chores can wait.

When all have finished, indicate that everyone should help clear away the food, supplies, and trash, with as little disturbance as possible.

When clean-up is completed, have participants move back to their Tai Chi mats. Suggest that they sit comfortably, facing a view they like. Say, in these words or your own:

One of Taoism's fundamental teachings, which it shares with Unitarian Universalism, is that humans are part of the natural world, described in our seventh Principle as "the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part." Taoism also teaches that if we act in accordance with the natural order of things and don't fight with the way things really are, then we can accomplish much without toil, worry, or strain. Here in this beautiful place, let us release our customary stresses, expand our awareness to all that is around us, feel our place in the interconnected web, and relax into its vast embrace. This is one way we can be at one with the Tao.

Read aloud Chapter 32 of the Tao Te Ching.

Sit down with the other participants, and contemplate the peaceful surroundings. Allow about 10 minutes for this contemplation.

Stand and say, in these words or your own:

Thank you. This has been a [choose an appropriate adjective, such as thoughtful, serene, helpful, intriguing, or important] time for me, and I hope it has been beneficial for you as well.

Ask participants to help shake off and neatly stow the mats and other supplies in the vehicles, and to then rejoin in a circle for the closing reading.

Say, in these words or your own:

Taoism is full of seeming opposites—active and passive, judging and nonjudging, open to the universal and attentive to the minutest. May we be successful in finding balance in our own opposites and in nurturing peace in our lives and in our hearts.

Read aloud Chapter 8 of the Tao Te Ching. Return to the vehicles together.

Post-engagement Discussion

Open by mentioning that the group recently engaged in a Taoist-like experience. Ask for reactions; note participant responses on the newsprint. Thank contributors. Add one or two of your own responses to the list, if you wish.

Ask youth if they enjoyed the experience. Ask if it made them feel closer to God, or the divine, or the Tao—however they define those terms.

Say, in these words or your own:

Taoism, like Unitarian Universalism, leaves the discernment of truth up to the individual—and, also like Unitarian Universalism, it requires much: great energy, discipline, and application from an individual who earnestly quests for the truth. We are charged with a great responsibility—and in order to accomplish that charge faithfully, we must keep not only our eyes and ears but also our hearts and minds open and ready.

Listen to this chapter from the Tao Te Ching.

Read aloud Chapter 11 from the Tao Te Ching. Ask participants what the passage says to them. Does the message they hear seem true to them? If so, what does it imply they should do? What will make that happen?

Thank participants for their contributions to the discussion. Tell them that this concludes our group exploration of Taoism, but if any of the youth would like

to discover more, you can provide them with additional resources outside the workshop time.

Including All Participants

Be sure the location you choose is accessible to all your participants.

If any members of the group have physical challenges, discuss with the Tai Chi instructor ahead of time how to ensure that all the youth can participate in Tai Chi in a meaningful way.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: TAI CHI (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Mats, blankets, carpet, or other surface covering recommended by the guest instructor
- Other supplies the instructor requests

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange for a Tai Chi instructor to visit your space.
- Prepare your space as needed, according to the guest instructor's recommendations.
- Plan with the instructor how you will make the activity accessible and meaningful for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants experience Tai Chi, a Taoist practice.

Introduce and welcome the guest instructor. Allow the guest instructor to briefly explain Tai Chi's relationship with Taoism. If the instructor prefers for you to do the introduction, say something like:

Tai Chi grew out of Taoism to fill the need for exercise that would strengthen the body and also keep it supple, responsive to its own messages, and free from blockages for the flow of chi, or spiritual energy, throughout the body. Smooth control of the muscles mirrors the smooth flow of chi through the body. Calm, steady concentration helps practitioners develop the awareness needed to be attentive to maintaining balance in all areas of their lives.

Assist the instructor as needed.

Including All Participants

If any participants have limitations in regard to movement, plan with the Tai Chi instructor ahead of time how you can ensure all are able to participate in the activity in a meaningful way.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 8: STORY: A CUP OF TEA

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era, welcomed into his home a university professor who had asked to see him. The professor arrived, answered the master's simple, polite greeting with a brusque, arrogant reply, and strode past him into the house. The old man followed his guest quietly into the sparsely furnished living space and watched, his customary peaceful expression undisturbed, as the professor seated himself without being asked.

"Will you honor me as my guest for tea?" Nan-in asked the professor.

"Yes, I'd like tea," was the blunt reply. "And I want to ask you some questions," the professor continued with a self-satisfied smirk. "They say you are very wise, and I would learn what you have to teach."

"Certainly," Nan-in replied. "I will gladly share all I know. But first, let us have tea."

The professor frowned at Nan-in, then sighed impatiently. "Very well," he said, his voice curt. He rearranged his silken coat. "After tea."

Nan-in focused on his task. He prepared the tea to the perfect temperature, steeped it just long enough but not too long, and set the simple, lovely dishes in an orderly arrangement on the cloth. The professor cleared his throat and adjusted his coat again. Nan-in at last finished all his preparations and was ready to pour.

The master held the pot over his visitor's cup and began to serve him tea. The professor impatiently reached for the cup before it was half-full, but Nan-in continued filling the cup. He poured his visitor's cup three-quarters full and then kept on pouring. When the cup was full to the brim, Nan-in kept pouring, and the tea ran over the edge of the cup into the saucer. Nan-in, gazing calmly at the cup, continued to pour, and the tea overran the saucer and began to run over the table.

The professor watched the overflow until he could no longer restrain himself. "The cup is full. No more will go in!"

"So it is," said Nan-in contentedly, and he stopped pouring tea into the cup. He looked at the professor with his kind, steady gaze, and said, "Like this cup, you are full to the brim with your own opinions, your own importance. How can you learn anything unless you first empty your cup?"

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 8: HANDOUT 1: TAOISM FACT SHEET

Founded/Created: It is estimated that the Tao Te Ching (DOW duh jing) was written in China in 550 BCE; however, the origins of Taoism go back hundreds of years before that.

Adherents: 20 million—predominately in Asia but distributed worldwide.

Ranking: Seventh in size, behind Christianity, Islam, Atheism/Agnosticism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

Prophets: Lao Tzu (LAU tsuh), who is often considered the father of Taoism because he authored its primary text; also Chuang Tzu (JWONG tsuh) and Chang Tao-Ling.

Texts: There are many, but three key texts are the Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu by Chuang Tzu, and The Art of War by Sun Tzu.

Symbols:

- *Yin/Yang:* The yin/yang (shown on Handout 2, Yin/Yang Symbol) depicts a seamless interconnectedness of opposites, the perpetual flowing together of the elements of existence. Each is necessary to create the whole; each part flows into the other, equal in strength and influence. Each is contained within the heart of the other.
- *Water imagery:* These images remind us that humans are part of Nature; water illustrates the concept of flow and of great power deriving from softness, adaptability, responsiveness, and balance.

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

- *Tao:* This translates as "the Way" or "the Path."
- *Balance:* This is maintained by accepting what is—flowing with reality rather than fighting it.
- *Emptiness:* The ideal internal state to maintain in order to be ready for truths as they present themselves. This pertains to ego as well as ideas: If people are full of their own ideas or importance, they will not be able to recognize or absorb truth as it emerges around them.
- *Chi:* The natural energy of the universe that permeates all things, including the human

body. A key concept associated with chi (chee) is harmony.

- *Harmony:* Most difficulties in the universe, or in the heart, from the largest to the smallest scale, are caused by imbalance and disharmony and will be aided or resolved by restoring harmony and attaining equilibrium.
- *Nature:* Human beings are part of the natural order and will be guided in their spiritual growth and personal harmony by paying attention to and experiencing nature and by recognizing their own energy—their chi—that flows with that of all living things.

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- One's personal responsibility for their spiritual journey—no dogma or set of fixed beliefs that people must accept without question
- The importance of nature and human beings' place in the natural order
- The interconnectedness of all things (the interdependent web—the seventh UU Principle)
- Acceptance of all people and all occurrences (acceptance of one another—the second UU Principle)
- Many songs and readings—for example, in *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), Readings 600—604 and 606 and Hymn 186 are from the Taoist tradition.

A Taoist Riddle

What is greater than God, more evil than the devil, the poor have it, the rich need it, and if you eat it, you die?

Answer: Nothing.

Why can this riddle be seen as Taoist? Because the "nothing" in this riddle is an active principle, not a passive one. It speaks not to the absence of something but to the presence of Nothing. It is not that the rich do not want for anything; it is that people who have too much could use more emptiness and would benefit from embracing the idea of Nothing. They need to empty their cups.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 8: HANDOUT 2: YIN/YANG SYMBOL

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/yinyang.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/yinyang.pdf) for printing.



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 8: HANDOUT 3: THE SEVEN UU PRINCIPLES

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

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 8: LEADER RESOURCE 1: TAOISM BACKGROUND

Taoism is a faith practiced by more than 20 million people around the world. The name comes from the word "Tao," which means "the Way." In this case, "the Way" means a way of living in balance and at peace with all that is.

Taoism is very old. We know that it existed before 550 BCE and that it originated in China. Many Chinese today consider themselves Taoist, although they might also say they are Buddhist or Confucianist as well—believing in Taoism does not preclude engaging in other religions. Some would say that Taoism, like Buddhism, is more a philosophy than a religion because of its emphasis on how you live your life rather than on worshipping gods or goddesses. However, Taoism takes many different forms, and some Taoists do worship deities—and some do not.

Taoism is not a popular religion outside of China. In this country, not many people consider themselves Taoists. However, popular culture has embraced a few Taoist practices and beliefs, such as the exercise Tai Chi, the decorating principles of Feng Shui, and the yin/yang symbol. A popular book is *The Tao of Pooh*, which compares Taoist principles with the lives of characters from *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

For this workshop, we will focus on the most common and crucial tenets of the religion. While there are several ideas central to Taoism, or, following the Way, we will focus on these three:

- Balance is key to peace and happiness. Troubles of various kinds are the result of imbalance.
- We are part of Nature. Being healthy and at peace with our physicality is essential to mental and emotional clarity and health. Everything must be in balance. The art of Tai Chi—a system of slow, meditative physical exercise designed for relaxation, balance, and health—grew out of Taoism.
- There is a flow of energy through all things, which Taoism refers to as chi. Recognizing and moving with this natural flow of energy will make life joyful and easy; resisting it will make life a struggle.

Taoism is like Unitarian Universalism in that the search for truth is the individual's responsibility. Taoism tells you that balance will lead to peace and happiness, but it will not tell you what balance looks like in your own

life. That you must discover for yourself. For all of its followers' appearance of peace and stillness, Taoism requires a great deal of energy and discipline to implement fully into practitioners' lives.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 8: LEADER RESOURCE 2: RANDOM TAO TE CHING CHAPTERS

Written by Lao Tzu. Translated by J.H. McDonald,
1996.

1

The tao that can be described
is not the eternal Tao.

The name that can be spoken
is not the eternal Name.

The nameless is the boundary of Heaven and Earth.

The named is the mother of creation.

Freed from desire, you can see the hidden mystery.

By having desire, you can only see what is visibly real.

Yet mystery and reality
emerge from the same source.

This source is called darkness.
Darkness born from darkness.

The beginning of all understanding

2

When people see things as beautiful,
ugliness is created.

When people see things as good,
evil is created.

Being and non-being produce each other.

Difficult and easy complement each other.

Long and short define each other.

High and low oppose each other.

Fore and aft follow each other.

Therefore the Master
can act without doing anything
and teach without saying a word.

Things come her way and she does not stop them;
things leave and she lets them go.

She has without possessing,
and acts without any expectations.
When her work is done, she take no credit.

That is why it will last forever.

81

True words do not sound beautiful;
beautiful sounding words are not true.

Wise men don't need to debate;

men who need to debate are not wise.

Wise men are not scholars,
and scholars are not wise.

The Master desires no possessions.

Since the things she does are for the people,
she has more than she needs.

The more she gives to others,
the more she has for herself.

The Tao of Heaven nourishes by not forcing.

The Tao of the Wise person acts by not competing.

11

Thirty spokes are joined together in a wheel,
but it is the center hole
that allows the wheel to function.

We mold clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that makes the vessel useful.

We fashion wood for a house,
but it is the emptiness inside
that makes it livable.

We work with the substantial,
but the emptiness is what we use.

18

When the great Tao is abandoned,
charity and righteousness appear.

When intellectualism arises,
hypocrisy is close behind.

When there is strife in the family unit,
people talk about "brotherly love."

When the country falls into chaos,
politicians talk about "patriotism."

36

If you want something to return to the source,
you must first allow it to spread out.

If you want something to weaken,
you must first allow it to become strong.

If you want something to be removed,
you must first allow it to flourish.

If you want to possess something,
you must first give it away.

This is called the subtle understanding
of how things are meant to be.

The soft and pliable overcomes the hard and inflexible.

Just as fish remain hidden in deep waters,

it is best to keep weapons out of sight.

40

All movement returns to the Tao.

Weakness is how the Tao works.

All of creation is born from substance.

Substance is born of nothing-ness.

42

The Tao gave birth to One.

The One gave birth to Two.

The Two gave birth to Three.

The Three gave birth to all of creation.

All things carry Yin
yet embrace Yang.

They blend their life breaths
in order to produce harmony.

People despise being orphaned, widowed and poor.

But the noble ones take these as their titles.

In losing, much is gained,
and in gaining, much is lost.

What others teach I too will teach:

"The strong and violent will not die a natural death."

43

That which offers no resistance,
overcomes the hardest substances.

That which offers no resistance
can enter where there is no space.

Few in the world can comprehend
the teaching without words,
or understand the value of non-action.

44

Which is more important, your honor or your life?

Which is more valuable, your possessions or your
person?

Which is more destructive, success or failure?

Because of this, great love extracts a great cost
and true wealth requires greater loss.

Knowing when you have enough avoids dishonor,
and knowing when to stop will keep you from danger
and bring you a long, happy life.

54

That which is well built
will never be torn down.

That which is well latched
can not slip away.

Those who do things well
will be honored from generation to generation.

If this idea is cultivated in the individual,
then his virtue will become genuine.

If this idea is cultivated in your family,
then virtue in your family will be great.

If this idea is cultivated in your community,
then virtue will go a long way.

If this idea is cultivated in your country,
then virtue will be in many places.

If this idea is cultivated in the world,
then virtue will be with everyone.

Then observe the person for what the person does,
and observe the family for what it does,
and observe the community for what it does,
and observe the country for what it does,
and observe the world for what it does.

How do I know this saying is true?

I observe these things and see.

62

The Tao is the tabernacle of creation,
it is a treasure for those who are good,
and a place of refuge for those who are not.

How can those who are not good be abandoned?

Words that are beautiful are worth much,
but good behavior can only be learned by example.

When a new leader takes office,
don't give him gifts and offerings.

These things are not as valuable
as teaching him about the Tao.

Why was the Tao esteemed by the ancient Masters?

Is it not said: "With it we find without looking.

With it we find forgiveness for our transgressions."

That is why the world can not understand it.

64

Things are easier to control while things are quiet.

Things are easier to plan far in advance.

Things break easier while they are still brittle.

Things are easier hid while they are still small.

Prevent problems before they arise.

Take action before things get out of hand.

The tallest tree
begins as a tiny sprout.

The tallest building
starts with one shovel of dirt.

A journey of a thousand miles
starts with a single footstep.

If you rush into action, you will fail.

If you hold on too tight, you will lose your grip.

Therefore the Master lets things take their course
and thus never fails.

She doesn't hold on to things
and never loses them.

By pursuing your goals too relentlessly,
you let them slip away.

If you are as concerned about the outcome
as you are about the beginning,
then it is hard to do things wrong.

The master seeks no possessions.

She learns by unlearning,
thus she is able to understand all things.

This gives her the ability to help all of creation.

67

The world talks about honoring the Tao,
but you can't tell it from their actions.

Because it is thought of as great,
the world makes light of it.

It seems too easy for anyone to use.

There are three jewels that I cherish:
compassion, moderation, and humility.

With compassion, you will be able to be brave,

With moderation, you will be able to give to others,

With humility, you will be able to become a great leader.

To abandon compassion while seeking to be brave,
or abandoning moderation while being benevolent,
or abandoning humility while seeking to lead
will only lead to greater trouble.

The compassionate warrior will be the winner,
and if compassion is your defense you will be secure.

Compassion is the protector of Heaven's salvation.

71

Knowing you don't know is wholeness.

Thinking you know is a disease.

Only by recognizing that you have an illness
can you move to seek a cure.

The Master is whole because

she sees her illnesses and treats them,
and thus is able to remain whole.

78 Water is the softest and most yielding substance.

Yet nothing is better than water,
for overcoming the hard and rigid,
because nothing can compete with it.

Everyone knows that the soft and yielding
overcomes the rigid and hard,
but few can put this knowledge into practice.

Therefore the Master says:

"Only he who is the lowest servant of the kingdom,
is worthy to become its ruler.

He who is willing to tackle the most unpleasant tasks,
is the best ruler in the world."

True sayings seem contradictory.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 8: LEADER RESOURCE 3: CHAPTER 10

Excerpt A is a 1939 translation by Dwight Goddard. Excerpt B is a 1995 translation by [Peter Merel](#). Excerpt C is from a translation by [Charles Muller](#), revised in 2009. Excerpt D is a translated by James Legge, 1815—1897; used with permission. Excerpt E is from *Tao Te Ching: Annotated and Explained* (c) 2006. Translation, annotation, and introductory material by Derek Lin. Permission granted by [SkyLight Paths Publishing](#), Woodstock, Vermont.

A.

During the daytime, our senses are kept busy in activities, but if we keep our minds concentrated, we will better preserve their potentialities. If, in our practice of concentration, we preserve humility and tenderness and retain our natural breathing, we will become like a little child. If, in our practice of concentration, our minds retain their purity, we will be kept free from faults.

If the perfect Sage truly loves his people and wishes to bring his state into peace and order, he must practice wu-wei. If in our practice of concentration our heavenly eye is suddenly opened and we gain enlightenment, thenceforth we shall be free from lust and greed. If we attain transcendental intelligence, our minds penetrating into every corner and into everything, then our minds will lose their self-consciousness.

A father begets children and sustains them while they are growing, nevertheless his children are not to be considered as his personal property, nor is his care of them to be done for any hope of reward, nor should his parental authority continue after they have reached manhood. This is the profoundest virtue of TAO.

B.

"Harmony"

Embracing the Way, you become embraced;

Breathing gently, you become newborn;

Clearing your mind, you become clear;

Nurturing your children, you become impartial;

Opening your heart, you become accepted;

Accepting the world, you embrace the Way.

Bearing and nurturing,

Creating but not owning,

Giving without demanding,

This is harmony.

C.

"Pacifying the agitated material soul..."

Pacifying the agitated material soul and holding to oneness:

Are you able to avoid separation?

Focusing your energy on the release of tension:

Can you be like an infant?

In purifying your insight:

Can you un-obstruct it?

Loving the people and ruling the state:

Can you avoid over-manipulation?

In opening and closing the gate of Heaven:

Can you be the female?

In illuminating the whole universe:

Can you be free of rationality?

Give birth to it and nourish it.

Produce it but don't possess it.

Act without expectation.

Excel, but don't take charge.

This is called Mysterious Virtue.

D.

When the intelligent and animal souls are held together in one

embrace, they can be kept from separating. When one gives undivided

attention to the (vital) breath, and brings it to the utmost degree of

pliancy, he can become as a (tender) babe. When he has cleansed away

the most mysterious sights (of his imagination), he can become without

a flaw.

In loving the people and ruling the state, cannot he proceed

without any (purpose of) action? In the opening and shutting of his

gates of heaven, cannot he do so as a female bird? While his

intelligence reaches in every direction, cannot he (appear to) be

without knowledge?

(The Tao) produces (all things) and nourishes them; it produces

them and does not claim them as its own; it does all, and yet does not

boast of it; it presides over all, and yet does not control them.

This is what is called "The mysterious Quality" (of the Tao).

E.

In holding the soul and embracing oneness

Can one be steadfast, without straying?

In concentrating the energy and reaching relaxation

Can one be like an infant?

In cleaning away the worldly view

Can one be without imperfections?

In loving the people and ruling the nation

Can one be without manipulation?

In the heavenly gate's opening and closing

Can one hold to the feminine principle?

In understanding clearly all directions

Can one be without intellectuality?

Bearing it, rearing it

Bearing without possession

Achieving without arrogance

Raising without domination

This is called the Mystic Virtue.

FIND OUT MORE

A website on Taoism is [Taoism](http://www.taoism.net/) (at www.taoism.net/). *The Tao of Pooh* by Benjamin Hoff (NY: Penguin, 1982) is an excellent and accessible introduction to Taoism.

Hoff's follow-up book, *The Te of Piglet*, may also be of interest.

The Mayo Clinic has information on the health benefits of [Tai Chi](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/tai-chi/SA00087) (at www.mayoclinic.com/health/tai-chi/SA00087), as does the [International Taoist Tai Chi Society](http://www.taoist.org/content/standard.asp?) (at www.taoist.org/content/standard.asp?).

WORKSHOP 9: BUDDHISM 1—WAKING UP

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

When you begin to touch your heart or let your heart be touched, you begin to discover that it's bottomless, that it doesn't have any resolution, that this heart is huge, vast, and limitless. You begin to discover how much warmth and gentleness is there, as well as how much space. — Pema Chodron, American teacher of Tibetan Buddhism

This workshop introduces Buddhism, an ancient faith whose great number of adherents makes it the fifth largest religion in the world. Buddhism is founded on rational principles rather than faith. Instead of focusing on their souls, practitioners seek to harness, focus, and expand their *minds* through discipline and practice.

Activity 3, UU Buddhists involves a guest speaker from the congregation who practices Buddhism. If none is available, make alternate arrangements.

Alternate Activity 2 involves showing a two-hour video, *The Buddha*. If you think this might be a useful activity for the group, read the Preparation for Activity for ways to include it in the program.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce youth to fundamental concepts of Buddhism
- Relate Siddhartha Gautama's life and the emergence of Buddhism from his teachings
- Explore parallels between Buddhist concepts and Unitarian Universalism
- Identify the elements of the Eightfold Path.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand and discuss fundamental tenets of Buddhism
- Identify similarities between Buddhism and Unitarian Universalism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story – The Life of the Buddha	20
Activity 2: The Eightfold Path	25
Activity 3: UU Buddhists	25
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	5
Activity 5: Time Line	5
Faith in Action: Right Mindfulness, Right Action, Right Here	25
Closing	3
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: The Buddha, a DVD	120
Alternate Activity 3: Right Livelihood Continuum	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Reading some sections of the Buddhist scripture, [The Dhammapada](#) (at www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/), could be a useful endeavor. Read to find verses that particularly speak to you. Copy the verses for future meditation and thought.

Prepare for the workshop a few days ahead, so you will have time to think about the material and so you do not feel rushed the day of the workshop.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the Dhammapada
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Description of Activity

Participants engage with the most ancient and fundamental of Buddhist texts.

As participants enter, invite them to look through the copy of the Dhammapada, find quotes meaningful to them, and write them on newsprint to share with the group.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1, [Buddhism Background](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Books with images associated with Buddhism

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1, Buddhism Background, so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Youth learn some basic information about Buddhism.

Answer any questions you could not answer from the last workshop.

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Allow the circle to sit in silence for a moment. Ask if anyone knows which religion uses the Dhammapada. Say, "For check-in, say your name and any experience you have had with Buddhism. If you are a Buddhist, great; if you're not, perhaps you know a Buddhist or someone who is studying Buddhism."

If you obtained any books, display them or pass them around during the opening discussion. Ask what questions the group has about Buddhism, and write their questions on newsprint. Answer the ones you can.

Tell the group that during this workshop, many of their other questions will be answered. After the workshop, you will seek answers to any remaining questions, which you will share at their next meeting.

Read or share in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 1, Buddhism Background. On newsprint, list important terms from the resource.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Life of the Buddha](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 2, [Images of the Buddha](#) (included in this document) , and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "The Life of the Buddha" so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Print two copies of Leader Resource 2. Use one copy to cut apart the images so you can display them at the end of this activity. Keep the other intact to use while telling the story.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the life of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, founder of Buddhism.

Tell or read the story, displaying Leader Resource 2, Images of the Buddha, as you speak.

Ask participants for their initial reactions. Prompt further discussion with questions such as these:

- The king supplied his son with everything he needed and wanted. Why do you think Siddhartha left the palace in the first place?
- Encountering sickness and death can be unsettling. Do you remember some of your first encounters with sickness and death? What happened and how did you feel? Did it change the way you looked at the world?
- Siddhartha left a life of luxury to become a penniless wanderer in search of the Truth. He left his wife and baby son behind. Do you think he felt like he had to do it? Why? Is that a choice you respect?
- Siddhartha would have become king. Do you think he might have helped as many people by being a good king as he helped by becoming the Buddha? Keep in mind: Buddhism is more than 2,500 years old. During these two and a half millennia, there have been billions of Buddhists. Currently, 360 million people practice Buddhism.

- What does the term "the Middle Way" mean? What do you think the Buddha saw as the benefits of the Middle Way? Do you think he has a point?
- What Four Noble Truths did the Buddha realize?
- Do the Four Noble Truths mean that we should never desire anything? Is it wrong to desire air? To desire justice? What about desiring enlightenment?
- How does the Buddha differ from the Hindu and Jewish gods? Is he different from the Jewish prophets?

Say, in these words or your own:

It might look as if people in Buddhist temples are worshipping the Buddha, but they are not. They do honor the Buddha for his teachings, which can help anyone reach enlightenment. In this way, he is similar to other prophets. However, the Buddha did not claim that God spoke through him. He was a human, like you and me. Though he may have reached the divine state of nirvana, you and I are just as capable of reaching that state as he.

Make sure that all participants have had a chance to see Leader Resource 2, Images of the Buddha. Say, in these words or your own:

It is interesting that images of the Buddha differ by culture. For example, the so-called "Happy Buddha" is unique to Chinese culture; it is only one of many representations. Do you think these images say something about the cultures that created them? Do you like one of these images best, and if so, why? Do any of you have your own image of the Buddha? Does it resemble any one of these?

Thank the youth for their participation. Have volunteers tape up the Buddha images from Leader Resource 2 in the meeting space.

ACTIVITY 2: THE EIGHTFOLD PATH (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [The Eightfold Path](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Long strip from a roll of drawing paper, or several pieces of poster board

- Art supplies, such as poster paint, paint brushes, markers, or pastel crayons
- Newspapers or drop cloths to cover work surfaces
- Rags and spray bottles for clean-up

Preparation for Activity

- Review the material in Leader Resource 3, The Eightfold Path, so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Write the eight elements of the Eightfold Path on newsprint, and set aside.
- Identify work space for participants. Protect the work surfaces with newspaper or drop cloths. Get art materials ready to set out for youth to share.
- Be prepared to help the youth stay focused during their brainstorming, as freeform creative projects can easily go off track.

Description of Activity

Youth create an art project to illustrate and help them remember the elements of the Eightfold Path.

Say, in these words or your own:

The story "The Life of Buddha" mentions two learnings that are foundational to an understanding of Buddhism—two tools to help you reach enlightenment. One is the Four Noble Truths. Do you remember the name of the other one?

Pause for the youth to answer. Say:

The Eightfold Path was mentioned in the story as a way the Buddha saw to attain enlightenment. It enumerates eight aspects of life that a person should pay attention to in order to advance in spiritual growth toward enlightenment.

Display the prepared newsprint. Say:

The eight aspects of the Eightfold Path are:
 Right Knowledge
 Right Aspiration
 Right Speech
 Right Behavior
 Right Livelihood
 Right Effort
 Right Mindfulness
 Right Absorption

Interestingly, there is another that is not listed—one so important it is treated as a presupposition, something you are supposed to do before you are even ready to start. It is called Right Association.

Right Association means surrounding yourself with people who are healthy and supportive of your spiritual work, preferably those who are also on a spiritual path. According to Buddhist teaching, you do not have to be around people, but if you are going to be with people, you should choose your companions wisely.

In our faith tradition, Right Association is important, too. This is a good reason to seek out a congregation and go to it as regularly as you can. When you attend regularly and start to become part of the congregation, you are engaging in Right Association by making the effort to spend time with people who are good for you and who nurture your spiritual growth.

Review the meaning of each aspect of the Eightfold Path, referring to Leader Resource 3, The Eightfold Path, as needed.

Tell participants, in these words or your own:

Trying to achieve consistency throughout a person's life is very important to Buddhism. But how are you supposed to remember all eight things, so you can remember to practice them? One way is by creating a visual reminder.

First, we are going to brainstorm some fun and creative visual ways to remember the eight elements of the Eightfold Path. For example, you might use images, or do something with the first letter of each element. You can then illustrate your ideas on newsprint.

Post newsprint. Take notes as the youth brainstorm.

Once youth choose ideas to commit to paper, have them create their artwork.

Help them display the completed artwork in the room, someplace prominent. If possible, arrange for the artwork to remain displayed for a week, or longer.

If a guest will be coming to talk about Buddhism, ask participants' permission now to show the guest their artwork.

Save time for a group clean-up.

Including All Participants

Choose work surfaces that will be accessible to everyone. Participants with sensory issues or OCD may have trouble with paint spills or other messes, so be sure to have plenty of clean-up materials on hand.

ACTIVITY 3: UU BUDDHISTS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A poster of the UU Principles
- Newsprint with the eight elements of the Eightfold Path, from Activity 2
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- At least three weeks before the workshop, invite a member of your congregation who identifies as Buddhist or is a student of Buddhism to be a guest. Ask them to prepare a short introduction that includes how they became affiliated with both religions, what the two have in common, how they differ, and what it is like to live both faiths in the world.
- If such a person is not available, prepare to discuss with the group the commonalities and differences between the two religions.
- Obtain or make a poster that lists all seven UU Principles. Display the Principles poster and the newsprint with the elements of the Eightfold Path where both will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants compare and contrast the seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism with the Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

Referring to the poster and newsprint, briefly review both the seven Principles and the Eightfold Path with the youth. Say, in these words or your own:

Both these documents are guideposts for living. The Principles appear within a document that defines the parameters of the Unitarian Universalist Association; in other words, they are part of an organizational document. The Eightfold Path was recorded specifically as a teaching tool. However, both are presented and used as guidelines for living well and growing as an individual and in community. With that in mind, take a moment to look over the two lists.

Lead the group to discuss the two religions, using these questions:

- What are some similarities between the two sets of guidelines for living?
- What are some differences? Why do you suppose the religions differ in these ways?

- The Eightfold Path has not changed in 2,500 years. This version of the UU Principles was adopted in 1985, and, in accordance with our bylaws, we review the Principles for revision periodically. Where do you think the staying power of the Eightfold Path comes from? Do you think the seven UU Principles could have the same staying power?
- Which set of guidelines resonates with you more personally? Which inspires you more? Which do you feel spurs you more to action for personal transformation? Which do you feel spurs you more to action in the world?

For the sake of your guest, keep this conversation within 10 minutes or less. Use newsprint for a "parking lot," a place to record any topics that emerge that the group would like to discuss but which are not pertinent to the immediate discussion.

Inform the group that a guest will enter shortly, someone who is both Unitarian Universalist and a student of Buddhism. Tell the group, in these words or your own:

Did you know that quite a few UUs identify themselves as Buddhist? Some of them belong to the Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship, a community of UU Buddhists from all over the world. Our guest has been invited to talk specifically about the intersection of Unitarian Universalism and Buddhism. What other questions would you like to ask our guest?

Ask a youth to write down suggested questions from the group. If the group needs prompting, suggest they might like to know if the guest's Buddhist beliefs encourage them toward social action, or if the guest attends a Buddhist temple in addition to the UU congregation.

Invite the guest in and make them comfortable. Let the guest and participants talk. If the youth run out of questions, refer them back to their list or suggest they share some of their earlier observations about the similarities and differences between the Eightfold Path and the UU Principles. If you have the youth's permission, show the artwork created earlier.

Thank the guest for spending time and sharing stories with you.

Conclude the activity with the observation that constant reflection and examination of what best furthers our spiritual work—what we have been doing with this exercise—is part of both Buddhism and Unitarian

Universalism, one strong parallel between the two faiths.

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Buddhism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

Participants go over some basic tenets of Buddhism.

Distribute the handout and review any unfamiliar concepts or terms. In particular, discuss "nirvana" and "reincarnation."

Ask the youth if they have heard the term "nirvana." Some will have, because of the rock group by that name. Ask what it means to them. Let them explore this idea a bit.

Ask the youth what they know about reincarnation. Ask if they believe in it. Their answers might surprise you!

Before moving on to the next activity, let the youth share their knowledge of and thoughts about Buddhism. If you will lead a second workshop on Buddhism, let participants know that. If you will be engaging with a Buddhist community, give participants any information they need.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (from Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Post the Religions Time Line where it will be visible to all participants.
- Place the map or globe where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

The Religions Time Line is updated to add Buddhism.

Ask participants if they remember from the story when—meaning, during what time period—Siddhartha Gautama lived, or if they remember how old Buddhism is. If they do not remember, ask them to guess. After they have guessed, write "Buddhism" on a sticky note and place it at 531 BCE on the Religions Time Line. Tell participants that this is the estimated year of the Buddha's enlightenment. Note that Buddhism was born only a few years after Taoism, so Lao Tzu and the Buddha were contemporaries, living and teaching at the

same time in different parts of the world. Locate India and China on the world map or globe.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for each participant.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to form a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: RIGHT MINDFULNESS, RIGHT ACTION, RIGHT HERE (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster of the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles
- Notepads and writing implements

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Seven Principles poster where everyone can see it.
- If you will tour the building as part of this activity, make sure the areas you plan to visit are available when the group meets and accessible for all participants. If needed, plan a good alternative that will work for participants with mobility issues.

Description of Activity

Youth examine their own religious community for members' consistency in living the seven Principles.

Gather the youth around and say, in these words or your own:

Buddhism is a religion of consistency. It propels the seeker's spiritual growth by encouraging attention to all aspects of the person's life. Consistency is important for a community, as well—if our shared values are really important to us, then we want to be sure we're living them.

Review each of the Principles of Unitarian Universalism. For each Principle, discuss briefly its implications for the community—in other words, what would it look like if a congregation truly lived that Principle?

Ask the youth if they think the people in their congregation keep the Principles in mind when they engage in the work of the church. Ask:

- Does our congregation use the Principles as a guideline for making decisions? How? Do we engage in the Buddhist practice of Right Aspiration?
- Is the work of our congregation, in the local community and in the greater world, in accordance with our own UU values? Do we engage in the practice of Right Behavior?
- Do our congregational members acknowledge each other's inherent worth and dignity? Do we encourage each other's spiritual growth, thus engaging in the practice of Right Association? Do we practice Right Speech with each other?
- Does our congregational family give its energy to things that reflect its values? Do we engage in the practice of Right Absorption?

Distribute notepads and writing implements. Invite participants to think of specific examples of the congregation acting according to the Principles.

If it would be helpful and practical, let the group walk through the building. Keeping the Principles in their thoughts, ask them to mindfully look around the church, both for good examples of consistency and instances where perhaps the community could improve its adherence to the Principles. Keep the group together as you move through the building.

Once participants return to the room, invite them to share their observations and discuss what changes could help the church community more consistently live its values. Which could youth offer to do, individually or together, for their community? If there are some actions the youth could take as a group, suggest they choose one. Help the youth offer to serve the community in this way by going through the channels appropriate to your congregation, and then doing it!

Including All Participants

If any areas of your building are not accessible to all participants, either plan to avoid those areas or offer an alternate tour accessible to everyone.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review the workshop with your co-leader:

- Did the activities work well? Which were less successful?
- Could everyone participate? *Did* everyone participate?
- A great deal of information was conveyed in this workshop. Did the youth seem to grasp the concepts involved? Were they able to keep pace?
- Did participants engage the subject with respect?
- How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

Acknowledge that Buddhism is complex and vast—it is a good thing you have two workshops to explore it!

If it is necessary to remove the images of the Buddha and the Eightfold Path artwork that participants created, store these items safely and plan enough time to put them back up before the next workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

When you begin to touch your heart or let your heart be touched, you begin to discover that it's bottomless, that it doesn't have any resolution, that this heart is huge, vast, and limitless. You begin to discover how much warmth and gentleness is there, as well as how much space. — Pema Chodron, American teacher of Tibetan Buddhism

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we started our exploration of Buddhism by hearing the story of the life of the Buddha. We looked at the Four Noble Truths and the elements of the Eightfold Path and compared the latter to the seven Principles.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How does the above quote relate to what we discussed today about Buddhism?
- Could you imagine hearing the same words come from the mouth of a Unitarian Universalist?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Right Association Journal

Keep a journal about your relationships. Record significant events, both good and bad, and how they make you feel. Take special notice of any times you behaved in ways that in hindsight you did not like. How did others react to your behavior? Did they encourage you, drawing you further from your values, or did they discourage you? See if there are any patterns. Are there people who consistently move you toward your higher self? Are there others who consistently provide encouragement in the direction you do not want to go? You do not have to dump your friends if you recognize they are not as good for you as some other people. But, you could consider adjusting the time you spend with them so you give more of your time to people who help you move in the direction you want to go.

Say It Right

All families have their own styles of interacting: some tease, some are funny, some are serious, some are loud, and some are very quiet. But when you are with people a lot, it is easy to become careless or disrespectful—sometimes less respectful than we are to total strangers. How strange is that, to speak less respectfully to someone we love than to someone we do not even know? If, as in many families, this is something that is going on in your family, by doing something about it you can create a more loving environment.

Since knowledge is power, the first thing to do is recognize the situation and talk about it. If you and your family decide this is something you would like to pay attention to, make an agreement. You can call it a covenant, contract, pact—whatever appeals to you. Be specific. For example, your agreement might be:

- No name calling.
- No yelling.
- No lying.
- No sarcasm during important conversations.

Be sure everyone is clear that this is not about having more rules; it is about living your values of kindness and generosity. Be kind when people break the agreement, but remind them about it, as gently as you can. Do not treat this as a chance to tell someone they failed, but rather an opportunity for better relationships.

The Mindful Community

Is there something you could do to remind your town or city of its higher values? Perhaps the recycling program could be expanded or made mandatory. Perhaps homeless shelters could have longer hours, or, if there's no shelter in your town, perhaps a shelter could be built—an existing, unoccupied building could be made over to use very inexpensively, for example. Or, does the animal shelter offer free or low cost spaying and

neutering, the best way to keep homeless animals off the streets to begin with?

Identify something your wider community could do more of or do better, and advocate for it through the proper channels. For example, you could write to elected officials and employees, create a formal petition and collect signatures, create an organization to support work you think is important for your community to do to live its values, blog about it, enlist friends to help, conduct an e-mail campaign—even stage a protest, if you feel strongly enough! (But make sure you involve your parents and find out all the pertinent local regulations.)

Reading and Writing

There are many Buddhist writers and many good Buddhist readers. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Tibetan monk, is very popular. Try his book *Peace Is Every Step* (New York: Random House, 1995). His Holiness, The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, the world's foremost Buddhist leader, has also written many books; his latest is *How to See Yourself As You Really Are* (New York: Atria, 2007). American Alan Watts has produced a few classics, including *The Way of Zen* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999) and *The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are* (New York: Vintage, 1989).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- See the general suggestions on Engagement in the program Introduction, under Implementation.
- If there is a Buddhist center or temple nearby, arrange to attend a regular service. These might include meditation sittings or teachings from the Dharma. If this option is available, ask your contact:
 - What should your group know for the visit: how to dress, how to behave, and what might be asked of them. Share these guidelines with the participants before the day of the visit.
 - Are youth frequently in attendance? If the Buddhist youth meet at a separate time, ask if the two youth groups can meet together.
 - Can there be an opportunity for a question-and-answer session, perhaps after the service?
- Optional: Prepare a handout of questions for the youth to keep in mind during the service, for example: What does the worship space look

like? Is there an altar? If so, what is on it? Is there music? What instruments, if any, can you hear? Is the music live or recorded? Is there singing? Is there other art? Is anyone wearing special clothing? If so, what is it like? Do you know why they are wearing this? Do people participate differently because of their gender or age? What languages can you hear?

- If there is no appropriate venue for the group to visit, arrange with a Buddhist center, Buddhist monk or nun, or Buddhist practitioner to host a meditation session for your group. To prepare:
 - Arrange to use an off-site location or a quiet room in your congregational building where the group will be undisturbed.
 - Discuss the parameters of the session with the practitioner. Since it's likely that the group is inexperienced in meditation, more than 15 minutes will seem long to them. Suggest the practitioner aim for a 5–10-minute "talking them in" and then a 2–5-minute "talking them out."
 - Make the practitioner aware of any mobility constraints among the participants.
 - Ask if the practitioner is willing to stay and answer questions after the meditation.
 - Instruct participants to wear comfortable clothing that is appropriate to the kind of meditation they will be doing.

Description of Activity

Youth visit a Buddhist temple or center or participate in a meditation session.

Visiting a Buddhist Temple or Center

Remind participants beforehand that they will be visitors in other people's sacred home. They come not as observers, but as people of faith worshipping with other people of faith. Some things will be unfamiliar and surprising; they should save their observations for discussion later. This is a learning opportunity and a privilege.

At the site, support the host in whatever ways you can.

After the service, if you've pre-arranged a question-and-answer session, guide the youth and host through the questions you've prepared and any questions that arose for youth during the service.

Before leaving, be sure to thank your host.

Participating in a Meditation Session

Remind youth that they are about to engage in a spiritual practice and should treat it with the same respect they would accord any other spiritual practice.

Depending on which form of meditation your practitioner leads you in, there may be talking, intoning, or walking throughout the meditation. Participate or actively observe, and take note of your own experiences to guide the post-engagement discussion.

If you pre-arranged a question-and-answer session following the meditation, guide the youth and host through their questions.

Be sure to thank your host.

Concluding Either Type of Engagement

When the engagement is done, process the experience. Ask participants for their immediate responses. Prompt them with guiding questions, as needed.

The questions you ask will vary depending on which engagement option you chose. For the temple visit, you might ask:

- What do you remember most about the service?
- Was there a sermon? If so, can you imagine the same sermon being given at a UU congregation? Why or why not?
- Were there readings from the Dharma or other Buddhist teachings? Did you understand the readings?
- How was this engagement unique from other visits?

For the meditation session, you might ask:

- Was it difficult to sit still for so long?
- Was it difficult to keep your mind focused and clear while trying to walk slowly? Did you find your thoughts wandering? What did you do when that happened?
- Was the music distracting?
- Were the instructions clear?
- Would you like to try it again?
- What benefits do you see in engaging in regular meditation?

Ask participants:

- Do any of you have a regular spiritual practice—reading from some spiritual literature, thinking, journaling, walking your dog, running?
- Would you consider that a form of meditation? Does it serve the same purpose—clearing, calming, and focusing the mind and feelings?
- Why do you consider this a spiritual practice? How does it make you feel?

Thank the youth for their thoughtful participation.

Including All Participants

If the group will go to a temple or center, visit it ahead of time to determine any accommodations needed for youth with disabilities. If the group will participate in a meditation that involves movement, discuss with the leader how participants with mobility challenges can participate in a meaningful way.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THE BUDDHA, A DVD (120 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the film *The Buddha*
- DVD player, television, or monitor
- Paper and pencils
- Optional: Snacks, such as popcorn and drinks

Preparation for Activity

- Rent or purchase a copy of [The Buddha](http://www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=3969505) (at www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=3969505) (2010), a PBS documentary directed by David Grubin and narrated by Richard Gere.
- Test any electronic equipment you plan to use.
- *The Buddha* is a two-hour film, which may be a challenge to fit into the workshop time you have available. Here are some options:
 - Show the film in two installments. If you choose this option, preview the film and find a good place to stop the first showing.
 - Replace some workshop activities with the film. If you choose this option, make sure you still cover the Eightfold Path.
 - Hold a special showing at an alternate time that works for all participants. If you choose this option, show the film before starting the workshop, and skip Activity 1, Story – The Life of the Buddha. You might also turn this activity into a multigenerational experience by inviting the youth's families (though the video would probably not be of much interest to children younger than 10) and others in the congregation.
 - Hold a special showing of the film and make it an engagement opportunity by inviting members of the local Buddhist community. You might ask if a Buddhist practitioner is willing to open the showing with a prayer. Make sure that any snacks served will not be offensive to guests. After the film, hold a short,

informal discussion, and end with a UU benediction.

- Optional: Prepare snacks.

Description of Activity

Participants learn the story of the Buddha's life and major teachings.

Indicate paper and pens/pencils; invite participants to use them if they want to take notes.

Show the film.

Hold a discussion. Use questions from Activity 1, Story – The Life of the Buddha, especially:

- How does the Buddha differ from the Hindu and Jewish gods? Is he different from the Jewish prophets?
- What does the term "the Middle Way" mean? What do you think the Buddha saw as the benefits of the Middle Way?
- What Four Noble Truths did the Buddha realize?
- Does this mean we should never desire anything? Is it wrong to desire air? To desire justice? What about desiring enlightenment?

Make sure youth take away an understanding of the Four Noble Truths.

You might also ask, in these words or your own:

In the film, many people give their interpretations of what the Buddha meant. Are these creedal statements—do all Buddhists believe exactly the same thing? Or is Buddhism similar to Unitarian Universalism, in that responsibility rests with individuals to follow their own spiritual path?

Including All Participants

Make sure the room where you will show the film is accessible to all participants. Arrange for closed-captioning or use the subtitles feature to assist any participants with hearing impairments.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: RIGHT LIVELIHOOD CONTINUUM (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [Occupations](#) (included in this document)
- Large index cards, a handful for each participant
- Markers

Preparation for Activity

- Using Leader Resource 4 and other resources, create a list of occupations, from many walks of life. Make copies of the list for participants to share.
- Make a set of 10 index cards for yourself, writing one occupation on each card, ranging from what you would consider the most principled work you could do to the least.

Description of Activity

Participants consider various professions or occupations they might pursue in light of the effects those occupations might have on their spiritual welfare.

Pass out index cards and markers and set the lists of occupations where everyone can get to them. Say, in these or your own words:

Most young people think from time to time about what they want to do for a living when they are adults. These cards are for writing down some of your ideas. On each card, write something you have thought seriously about doing when you are an adult, or anything you think would be really appealing to do. Do not worry about whether it is practical or not, just how attractive it seems to you. Fill out as many cards as you like, but write only one occupation on each card. If you are drawing a blank, you can look at this larger list of occupations.

Let participants know the cards are not private and will be seen during the activity.

Allow participants a few minutes to write occupations on their cards. Tell them it is fine if there are duplications.

When they are finished writing, invite youth to join you in the center of the room. Explain that for this activity, one end of the room will represent "Best Expresses My Values" and the other end will represent "Least Expresses My Values." Their task is to place the cards they have written face up on the floor wherever they belong on the continuum. For example, a card listing an occupation that would be deeply life-affirming, one that is in keeping with their highest values, would be placed at the "Best" end of the continuum. Note that most cards will probably range somewhere in the middle, and very few are likely to be at the extreme "Least" end. Use some of your prepared cards to illustrate.

Invite youth to place their cards along the continuum now, face up. It is okay if they overlap a little, as long as they can still be read.

When all the cards are placed, ask if any youth would like to read a few of their cards aloud and explain why they placed them where they are.

When everyone who would like to share has done so, allow a little time for the group to examine the continuum and the placement of the various cards before returning to their seats. If some of the same occupations appear at different places along the spectrum, be sure to point this out.

Have participants return to their seats, and distribute occupation lists to any participant who still needs one. Ask the youth to look over the list. Ask:

- Which occupations are the "worst," from your point of view, that is, most in conflict with your own values? (You might want to note that the Buddha would say, "Butcher, prostitute, and weapons vendor.")
- Which are the "best" occupations from an ethical standpoint?

Celebrate the thoughtfulness of their comments.

Remind the youth that religions do not exist in vacuums. They are in our lives not just when we come to a church for worship. Religions help us evaluate what is important to us and then live our lives accordingly. Most people are not very happy performing jobs that go against their values—in other words, if they are not practicing Right Livelihood. The continuum shows that you do not have to be a minister or a saint to be a productive member of society *and* live your values—but you do need to give it some thought!

Including All Participants

Make sure all participants will be able to lay down their cards (some may need another youth's help) and see the entire continuum of cards.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 9: STORY: THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

The name "Buddha" means "enlightened one" or "awakened one." However, the founder of the Buddhist religion was not born enlightened. He was born Siddhartha Gautama, son of King Suddodana and Queen Maya, rulers of Kapilavastu, India, in the foothills of the Himalayas in 566 BCE. When Siddhartha was born, a wise man predicted, "If the prince remains in the royal household, he will become a great king. But if he leaves the household, he will find Truth and become a great holy man." King Suddodana envisioned Siddhartha as a holy man: giving up all worldly possessions, a wandering teacher with a begging bowl. That was not the life he wanted for his only son, so he surrounded his son with everything he would ever need or want.

Sadly, the queen died seven days after Siddhartha's birth. Her sister moved to the palace to raise the baby. The days passed quickly, and Siddhartha grew. Despite having his every whim catered to, he was a sensitive and meditative boy. At age 16, he married his cousin, Princess Yasodhara. The king hoped that married life would keep the prince happy and at home. And so it was for the next 13 years.

One day, when he was 29, Siddhartha asked his friend and charioteer, Channa, to take him for a ride far away from the palace. On their journey, they encountered an old man. Siddhartha wondered what was wrong with this person. "Nothing is wrong," replied Channa. "He is just old. We will all be old one day." Siddhartha was very disturbed and asked to be taken home, where he could not stop thinking about the old man. "What good is youth if you will get old?" he wondered.

The next day, he asked Channa to go out again. On the way, they encountered another sight new to the prince. When he asked Channa about it, Channa replied, "That man is very sick. We are all vulnerable to sickness." Siddhartha reflected on this all day and all night, thinking, "What good is health if you will eventually get sick?"

In the morning, they went riding again. This time, Siddhartha witnessed a body being carried through the streets. Channa explained, "That man is dead. Death comes to all men, even princes." Siddhartha asked himself, "What good is life if you will someday die?"

Once more Channa and Siddhartha rode out into the city. There they saw a holy man in saffron robes. The prince asked, "Who are you?" The man replied, "I am a monk, a seeker of Truth, of life over death. To find it, I

have given up everything on this earth." Siddhartha decided he must do the same if he was to find peace.

That night, Siddhartha crept out of the palace, regretfully leaving his father, his wife, and his newborn son. For a while, he traveled with monks. But he did not feel any closer to the Truth.

He spent the next six years living as an ascetic. Asceticism taught that the way to Truth was to deny the body. Ascetics denied themselves food and comfort and lived as hermits. Yet, after six years, Siddhartha felt no closer to the Truth. He decided that Truth was not to be found in extreme circumstances or by denying the body, but through the mind and the heart. From that day forward, he chose to follow a middle path of moderation.

After six years of seeking, one day Siddhartha came to a bodhi tree and sat down beneath it, vowing not to leave until he knew the Truth of how to conquer suffering and death. While meditating and searching his heart, he came to understand how he was connected to all life, and how to conquer suffering and death. He had become the Buddha—the awakened one.

He expressed what he had learned in the Four Noble Truths:

- Life is suffering.
- The cause of suffering is selfish desire.
- The end of selfish desire will end suffering.
- The way to end selfish desire is through the Eightfold Path.

The Buddha shared his insights with many disciples across the land, including his father, wife, and son, who joined him in practicing the Middle Way. At the age of 80, he lay down and entered permanently into nirvana, the state of eternal peace without rebirth or death.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 9: HANDOUT 1: BUDDHISM FACT SHEET

Founded/Created: 531 BCE (more than 2,500 years ago).

Adherents: 360 million, primarily in the East but growing worldwide.

Ranking: Sixth.

Prophets: Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha ("the Awakened One"), for whom the faith is named. The Buddha, while revered, is not considered divine.

Texts:

- [The Dhammapada](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/), (at www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/) direct teachings of the Buddha.
- Tripitaka, or Pali Canon, teachings of the Buddha that were handed down orally and not recorded until 1st century BCE.
- [The Sutras](http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/sutras.html) (at online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/sutras.html), collections of brief explanatory scriptures intended to be used for teaching or for committing to memory. There are dozens of sutras.
- Tibetan Book of the Dead, an ancient text with instructions for the dying and their caretakers.

Holidays: Many local celebrations exist in different countries. Some of the more common are:

- Buddha Day, the celebration of Buddha's birthday, commonly celebrated during the first full moon in May
- Bodhi Day, an acknowledgement of the day the Buddha sat down under the bodhi tree to achieve enlightenment, celebrated on December 8
- Nirvana Day, celebrating the day the Buddha reached nirvana, usually celebrated on February 15

Many Buddhists celebrate all three holidays together as Wesak, in May.

Symbols:

- Wheel of Dharma – eight-spoked for the Eightfold Path. Also called the Wheel of Enlightenment, the Wheel of Truth, and the Wheel of Law.
- Bodhi Tree (also called Bo Tree) – the tree under which the Buddha achieved enlightenment. "Bodhi" translates as "enlightenment."
- Lion – the symbol for the Buddha, associated with royalty, strength, and power. Sometimes

the Buddha's teachings are called the "Lion's Roar."

- Stupa – an architectural form representing all the elements and often used to store important relics or documents.
- Lotus – the open flower represents enlightenment or fulfillment, and the bud or partially open flower represents the Dharma, being on the path to enlightenment. The fact that the lotus grows out of mud symbolizes the possibility of purity, beauty, and clearness of purpose arising from the most humble of origins.

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

- The Three Jewels – refers to the Buddha, the Dharma (the teachings), and the Sangha (the community)
- The Buddha – the "Awakened One" or "Enlightened One"
- Delusion – the state of not seeing things with utter clarity, as they are, and of being confused or driven by desires, aversions, or responses to the senses
- Dharma – literally "truth" or "law," the path to enlightenment
- Impermanence – that everything in the universe is in a constant state of change; the only constant is change itself; "This too shall pass"
- Mahayan – one of the two most popular schools of Buddhist thought; it focuses on compassion and giving service to others
- Nirvana – the state of freedom from limitations of the physical body and sense desire
- Sangha – the community of nuns and monks who are transmitters of the Dharma to lay Buddhists, in the tradition of the Buddha
- Theravada – one of the two most popular schools of Buddhist thought; it focuses on solitary reflection for spiritual enlightenment

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- No requirement for belief in God or a divine being
- The idea that personal effort is necessary for spiritual advancement
- A belief in personal responsibility for spiritual journey
- (With many UUs) Valuing empirical evidence over intuitive understanding
- Many songs and readings—for example, in *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), Readings 505, 596–598, and 679, and Hymns 181, 183, and 184, are from Buddhist sources

Other connections between Unitarian Universalism and Buddhism:

- Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, a UU activist for abolition, suffrage, education, Native American rights, and world peace, and founder of the kindergarten movement in America, published the first English translation of a Buddhist text in the transcendental journal *The Dial*.
- Many Buddhists are also UUs, and vice versa. The [Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship](http://www25.uua.org/uubf/) (at www25.uua.org/uubf/) is an organization of Buddhist UUs.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 9: LEADER RESOURCE 1: BUDDHISM BACKGROUND

Buddhism is a religion based on rationality, objectivity, personal experience, and practice. It does not say anything about God. In fact, whether a person believes in any divine power at all is immaterial to Buddhism. What does matter? The mind. Delusions of the mind are what Buddhism seeks to eliminate. Opening and purifying the mind is its process, and freedom of the mind—nirvana—is its ultimate goal.

The term "nirvana," the way Buddhists use it, is not the same as the idea of heaven. Nirvana is the state of liberation from the dictates of the senses. While the Buddha said, "Bliss is nirvana," this absolutely does not mean a dreamy, insensible state—indeed, the closer to nirvana one becomes, the more fully present and aware they are. Truth cannot be sought or expected anywhere but here.

Buddhism is also a faith of great compassion. The Buddha himself was a man of enormous compassion, not judging others by appearance or caste, welcoming women and outcasts as students and training them as teachers, and ministering to those less fortunate with his own hands. The Buddha's strength in both head and heart has allowed Buddhists through the ages to choose a path to follow that speaks best to them, and major divisions of Buddhism have formed as a result—

some focused on the mind, others on the heart. Happily, and instructively, the constant emphasis in Buddhism on being at peace within oneself and with other people has meant that these spiritual divisions have not resulted in significant conflict among their followers, contrasting sharply with what we will see later in Islam and Christianity.

The Buddha grew up in the Hindu society of India, and he believed in reincarnation. However, he did not believe in a physical soul that transmigrated to the next body. Rather, he likened a person's selfhood to a wave in the sea: As a wave moves along, its substance changes completely and constantly, but we can still recognize it as the same wave. The Buddha believed that a person's essence was like the wave, completely changing physical form but continuing on its path. He taught that achieving nirvana or full awareness could release someone from having to return in a physical body.

According to Buddhist philosophy, the only constant in the universe is change itself—impermanence. The Buddha said:

Life is a journey; death is a return to earth.

The universe is an inn; the passing years are like dust.

Another Buddhist phrase, "This too shall pass," has become popularized in recent years, and is a succinct statement of this fundamental Buddhist tenet.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 9: LEADER RESOURCE 2: IMAGES OF THE BUDDHA

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/buddhas.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/buddhas.pdf) for printing.

The first image is of the reclining Buddha; second image is of the Chinese Buddha; third image is of the Japanese Buddha by Jim Mills; fourth image is the Korean Buddha.









BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 9: LEADER RESOURCE 3: THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Before Beginning the Eightfold Path: Right Association

Since we are influenced by our companions, it is very important to have people around us who are supportive of our spiritual goals and on spiritual paths themselves. They do not need to be doing exactly what we are doing, but they have to support our spiritual work, and not deflect us by encouraging us to do things against our conscience. They should also be trying to live with some degree of awareness themselves.

1. Right Knowledge

The first step is to become aware of the path. In Buddhist terms, this means recognizing the Four Noble Truths:

- Life is suffering.
- The cause of suffering is selfish desire.
- Selfish desire can be overcome.
- Selfish desire can be overcome, and suffering eased, by following the Eightfold Path.

2. Right Aspiration

This consists of wanting things that will help us be healthy and strong and achieve mental and spiritual growth. First, we recognize what we need to do, then we decide that is what we want.

3. Right Speech

This element and the next two are about learning new habits. Right Speech begins with noticing our speech: how honest we are, the tone of our communications, and our intent. Once we are aware, the next step is to make positive changes: to speak more truthfully, more gently, and more generously.

4. Right Behavior

The details that the Buddha provided about Right Behavior almost exactly reproduce the last five dictates of the Ten Commandments. The Five Precepts, as they are called, are:

- Do not kill.
- Do not steal.
- Do not lie.
- Do not engage in sexual misconduct.
- Do not take drugs or drink alcohol.

(Note: In Judaism and Christianity, Commandments six through ten are:

- Thou shalt not kill.
- Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- Thou shalt not steal.

- Thou shalt not bear false witness [lie].
- Thou shalt not covet [want] . . . anything that is thy neighbor's.

5. Right Livelihood

This element pertains to how a person makes their living. The Buddha believed that what a person did to support themselves had echoes throughout their lives, and that personal growth could be supported by some occupations but rendered impossible by others. For example, some livelihoods regarded by the Buddha as very harmful were butcher, prostitute, and weapons vendor.

6. Right Effort

Sustained effort is seen as exceedingly important in Buddhism. The Buddha likened the work it takes to make spiritual progress to an ox straining to pull a cart through the mud. Although weary, the ox never looks aside or stops trudging until it is past the muddy section of the road. This steady exertion demonstrates the consistent effort required to tame the mind and attain enlightenment.

7. Right Mindfulness

The Dhammapada, a collection of the Buddha's teachings, begins with the words, "All we are is the result of what we have thought" (as translated by Viggo Fausboll). Because of this, Buddhism urges constant examination of our own thoughts. We must have perfect awareness of our own thoughts to see all things as they really are. Urges or aversions must also be examined until they no longer control us and what remains is loving kindness toward all things.

In one ancient story, a Buddhist student reports to his teacher that his studies are done: He has attained enlightenment. His teacher asks, "What foot did you use to step over the threshold?" The student thinks for a moment, then turns and leaves without a word, aware that since he does not know which foot stepped over the threshold, his awareness is not yet complete.

Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned Zen Buddhist master, considers mindfulness the single most important element of greater peace and understanding. He has written many books on the subject of mindfulness, including *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* (New York: Random House, 1995). Henry David Thoreau, of our own faith lineage, placed a high value on mindfulness as well.

8. Right Absorption

Ralph Waldo Emerson, a giant of 19th-century Unitarianism, wrote:

A person will worship something, have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark

recesses of our hearts, but it will out.
That which dominates our imaginations
and our thoughts will determine our
lives, and our character. Therefore, it
behooves us to be careful what we
worship, for what we are worshipping,
we are becoming.

The Buddha shared this conviction with Emerson: that
the things we fill our thoughts with determine who we
become. The Buddha also believed in self-
determination: With proper preparation and
perseverance, immersing our thoughts in what will
further our spiritual journey, we can all move toward
enlightenment, lessen the bonds of selfish yearnings,
and become happier and more fulfilled as the Wheel of
Dharma turns.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 9: LEADER RESOURCE 4: OCCUPATIONS

Lawyer, butcher, trash collector, thief, corporate executive, full-time parent, lobbyist, hair stylist or barber, grocer, graphic artist, hardware store clerk, baker or chef, computer programmer, stockbroker, animal trainer, jeweler, actor, rapper, stunt-car driver, college professor, engineer, cab driver, teacher, doctor, dump truck driver, comedian, used car salesperson, dentist, professional gambler, human resources director, telemarketer, writer, waiter, pickpocket, movie or theatre critic, athlete, video game designer, dog walker, babysitter or nanny, psychologist, psychiatrist, architect, secretary, photographer, loan shark, realtor, farm laborer, construction worker, street musician, medical technician, rocket scientist, laser technician, brain surgeon, researcher, fry cook, hit man, slumlord, gofer, chauffeur, golf caddy, longshoreman, personal trainer, retail salesperson, produce stocker, president of the United States, butler, factory worker, glassblower, birthday party clown, circus roadie, plumber, judge, bar owner, publicist, news anchor, mail carrier, flight attendant, pilot, police officer, bureaucrat, fisherman, wine connoisseur, brewer, magazine editor, animal control agent, spy, motivational speaker, drug dealer, physical therapist, launderer, fashion model, songwriter, matador, maid, foley artist (sound effects designer), veterinarian, small-business owner, con artist, TV ad script writer, baseball coach, gardener, minister, metalworker, electrician, convenience store clerk, janitor, ship captain, nonprofit organization director, peace activist, politician, book illustrator, clothing designer, doll dresser, insurance adjustor, carpet cleaner, antiques appraiser, launderer, talk show host, light bulb tester, firefighter

FIND OUT MORE

[The Religion Facts](http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/index.htm) (at www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/index.htm) website is a good, objective source of information about many religions, including [Buddhism](http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/) (at www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/). Various artistic representations of the Buddha are explored at [Buddha Mind](http://buddhamind.info/leftside/artty/bud-style.htm) (at buddhamind.info/leftside/artty/bud-style.htm).

A very good collection of links about Unitarian Universalism, Buddhism, and Buddhist practice can be found at the Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship [website](http://www25.uua.org/uubf/links.htm) (at www25.uua.org/uubf/links.htm). The University of Minnesota also offers articles and links pertaining to the relationship between Unitarian Universalism and Buddhism on its [website](http://www.tc.umn.edu/~parkx032/CY-BUDD.html) (at www.tc.umn.edu/~parkx032/CY-BUDD.html).

WORKSHOP 10: BUDDHISM 2—RIGHT LIVING

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Don't use what you learn from Buddhism to be a Buddhist; use it to be a better whatever-you-already-are. — His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso

This workshop continues the exploration of Buddhism. Participants learn additional fundamental concepts of Buddhism. They also learn about Zen, a major branch of Buddhism. They experience more deeply how Buddhist precepts appear in people's lives and further explore Buddhism's ties to Unitarian Universalism.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Reinforce fundamental concepts of Buddhism introduced in Workshop 9 and introduce new ones
- Familiarize participants with some aspects of Zen Buddhism
- Illustrate how Buddhist concepts can be applied to our lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Achieve an understanding of some basic elements of Zen Buddhism
- Examine the Buddhist concept of the *bodhisattva* and relate this to their own lives
- Appreciate Buddhist concepts of service and sacrifice and how these concepts could enrich their lives
- Understand more deeply the connection between spirituality and activism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story – The Man and the Tiger	15
Activity 2: Bodhisattvas	15
Activity 3: Kuan Yin	30
Activity 4: Loving Kindness	15
Faith in Action: Peace All Around Us	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Peace Practice	30
Alternate Activity 2: The Banyan Deer	15
Alternate Activity 3: Buddhist Board Game	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

This workshop is both serious and playful. Ready yourself for the flexibility to move from enjoyment of the humor to a serious discussion of topics that incorporate humor.

Read "The Man and the Tiger" as well as other Zen texts, such as one of the many koans (teaching stories) posted on the [Zen Koans](http://www.ashidakim.com/zenkoans/zenindex.html) (at www.ashidakim.com/zenkoans/zenindex.html) website. Stay open to the absurdity. It is said that the most outrageous koans make complete sense only to those who have attained enlightenment.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Participants' Buddha and Eightfold Path artwork from Workshop 9
- A 5x7-inch index card or piece of card stock
- A small sand garden kit, or a wooden tray or terra cotta flower pot tray and sand
- Optional: Materials for the sand garden, such as small stones of varied color and texture, a small Buddha, and a small pagoda or other structure, such as the kind found in aquariums
- Optional: Tools or utensils for creating patterns and textures in the sand, such as forks, combs, or toothbrushes

Preparation for Activity

- Post the images of the Buddha and the Eightfold Path artwork that participants created.
- Fold an index card or piece of card stock into a tent shape, and make a small sign to put in front of the garden that reads, "Create a garden perfect in its simplicity."
- Collect materials for the garden. Tiny sand garden kits can be purchased for low cost, and they include tools for creating pleasing patterns in the garden. All materials to be part of the garden should be natural, neutral colors—nothing bright, everything serene. You can also create your own garden, using the materials listed above.
- Decide whether to have participants assemble a garden or to assemble it yourself and simply let the group experience it.

Description of Activity

Participants create or enjoy a small Zen sand garden.

As they enter, invite participants to the sand garden. Depending on how you have structured the activity, have them put it together or simply experience it. Invite them to work quietly or in silence. Demonstrate how to peacefully create patterns in the sand so youth understand how to enjoy the garden in a respectful way.

Including All Participants

Make sure the garden is accessible to all participants.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint list of future discussion topics from Workshop 9

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Optional: A copy of The Dhammapada

Description of Activity

Have everyone sit in a circle or semicircle around the chalice. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and to build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Wrap up any topics you put in the "parking lot" during the last workshop's comparison of the seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism with the Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

Remind participants that in the previous workshop, the group discussed the way Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha and the Four Noble Truths he realized on becoming enlightened. Ask the group if they can repeat the Four Noble Truths.

Discuss with the youth how all branches of Buddhism share a belief in the Four Noble Truths and the teachings of the Dhammapada but take different approaches to attaining enlightenment. Today, the group will look at Zen Buddhism.

Say, in these words or your own:

Most of the world's most populous religions have branches that differ in their approach. Buddhism has two main schools: Theravada and Mahayana. Theravada teaches that the best path to walk involves a solitary life of contemplation, while the Mahayana school emphasizes living in community to learn compassion and how to give service to others. Zen belongs to the Mahayana school.

Part of Zen's approach is humor. While studying with an individual teacher, peaceful surroundings, and very structured meditation are important elements of Zen Buddhism, humor, surprise, and absurdity are also essentials of Zen. Absurdity serves the purpose of surprising us out of our set point of view and opening our eyes. A Zen monk once said, "If you're not laughing, you're not getting it!" A famous instruction from a Zen master

that demonstrates the use of surprise is, "If you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha!" If this makes you stop short and ask yourself "Why?!" you are on the right track.

The goal of Zen is to surprise us out of our complacency—to strip away our old, stale assumptions and habits to make way only for what really is.

A koan—pronounced "KOE-ahn"—is a nonsensical or paradoxical question or story used for teaching in Zen. A famous koan is, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" Although koans like these seem ridiculous, they are intended to have an answer or resolution that the seeker will realize if their thinking is truly free.

- Buddhists might say it is important not to cling too hard to life because life is impermanent. Buddhists might also say we should strive to be mindful and truly experience every moment of our life. Are these two ideas in conflict?
- What in the world is the point of that strawberry?!
- Why would the story specify one white mouse and one black mouse?

Tell the group humor and surprise often appear in Zen literature. They serve a spiritual purpose—a relatively painless way to jolt the reader or listener out of their usual perspective so they can see things a different way, which is central in the Zen pathway to enlightenment. Zen masters, or teachers, are famously eccentric, bizarre, and sometimes seemingly cruel, but their goal is always to knock people a little closer to the truth. The combination of energetic humor—as in koans and the eccentric, even bizarre behavior of Zen masters—and serenity—as in exceedingly calm meditation, simple surroundings, and austere gardens—is unique to Zen practice.

If participants say they cannot figure out the point of the story, ask if not having a point could be the point.

Essential to Zen, and to all Buddhist practice, is the discipline to recognize when something is incomprehensible and to then *just let it be*. Say:

Be at peace with not understanding it; accept it exactly as it is. Whatever is, is perfect.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – THE MAN AND THE TIGER (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Man and the Tiger](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read "The Man and the Tiger" so you will be comfortable presenting it. Prepare to read it expressively, conveying the drama of the situation, but without attempting to interpret the ending—simply read it as it is written.

Description of Activity

Participants hear a classic Zen koan and discuss its meaning.

Tell the story or read it aloud.

Wait a few moments before inviting discussion; allow the group to think and process the story. Take note of participants' puzzlement, but do not feel you need to do anything about it. Being puzzled is part of the point.

Ask for initial responses. What do the youth think the story means?

Encourage them to explore the story further using questions such as:

- Did you like the ending? Why or why not?
- Do you know what happens next? Are you sure? Why do you suppose the writer left the ending that way?
- Ambiguity—having several possible meanings or an uncertain meaning—is often used in Zen teaching stories. Why do you think that is? What purpose does ambiguity serve?

ACTIVITY 2: BODHISATTVAS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: A recording of the Steely Dan song "Bodhisattva" and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Cue up the song and test your equipment ahead of time. Note: If you can access the Internet in your meeting space, you can listen to the song on Rhapsody, which allows a certain number of free plays before requiring you to purchase music.

Description of Activity

Participants learn the Buddhist concept of the bodhisattva and consider the scope and gravity of the choice implied by that concept.

If possible, play Steely Dan's "Bodhisattva." Ask if any of the youth have heard this song and if any have an idea what it is about. Note that while there are few lyrics, the song does refer to an important Buddhist concept: the bodhisattva.

Tell participants that a *bodhisattva* is a special kind of sacred teacher. In some Buddhist traditions, a bodhisattva is anyone who is wise and generous and who dedicates their life to helping other people on their spiritual paths. Most commonly, though, a bodhisattva is a person who has reached enlightenment—someone who is free from the Wheel of Dharma, but who chooses not to accept nirvana. Instead, a bodhisattva chooses to continue in a human body, helping other people, until everyone is free from bondage and all people are enlightened. Does this concept remind you of anything? [Try to elicit the Universalist concept that none will receive salvation until all receive salvation.]

Ask how many of the youth have heard of the Dalai Lama. Tell them that Dalai Lama means "Oceanic Teacher." Say, in these words or your own:

The Dalai Lama is considered to be a bodhisattva. He is also known as His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso. He is called the "Fourteenth" Dalai Lama because he is believed to be the fourteenth reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion. The Dalai Lama lives in exile now, primarily in the United States. He is in exile because Tibet, where he was the spiritual ruler, was invaded by China in 1950, and he had to flee in 1959 because the government feared his influence on the Tibetan people. More than 50 years later, Tibet is still under occupation by the Chinese government. If the Dalai Lama were to return, he would be arrested.

Bodhisattvas are seen as beings of infinite compassion because they could be free of all the discomforts, disturbances, and suffering of human life, but they choose to continue living so they can help others find enlightenment.

Ask the youth what they think of the bodhisattvas' choice. Ask:

- Do you think it is worth all the difficulties of human life to help other people?
- Would you make that choice if you could?
- Is there something important enough to you that you would endure endless hardship to make it happen?
- Without thinking of personal gain, is there some change you could make in the world that would be worth many lifetimes of effort? Protection of children? Environmental sustainability? World peace?

- What is worth not the work of one lifetime, but many lifetimes?

Turn the question around and ask youth if they have encountered people in their life who fit the first definition of bodhisattva: someone who is wise and generous and has taught them important life lessons. Have the youth pair off and spend a few minutes sharing stories and acknowledging these special people.

Including All Participants

If you play the song "Bodhisattva" and the group includes youth with hearing impairment, provide written lyrics to the song.

ACTIVITY 3: KUAN YIN (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Image of Kuan Yin](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A variety of drawing materials such as crayons, pastels, and glitter pens
- Optional: Music and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1, in color if possible.
- Optional: Find some inspiring, suitable music to play during the art activity. Test your equipment and cue the music so it is ready to play.

Description of Activity

Youth envision and draw a physical embodiment of compassion and healing.

Show Leader Resource 1, Kuan Yin, and ask participants if it is a picture of the Dalai Lama. When they answer "No," explain that it is a picture of Kuan Yin.

Say, in these words or your own:

Some people say Kuan Yin is an earlier reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion—the same bodhisattva that was reincarnated in the Dalai Lama. Martin Palmer, director of the International Consultancy on Religion, Education, and Culture, said, "The divine feminine cannot be suppressed for long. In China, it emerged by the transformation of the male into the female."

That is only one version of the story. Many legends exist about Kuan Yin. She is the bodhisattva of compassion and healing. She is seen in temples and art throughout Asia, but she is a particular favorite in China, where she

is the most popular divinity of all, and her birthday is celebrated annually. In China, Kuan Yin is represented in art more frequently than any other deity, yet she does not always look the same.

Ask: Why might there be multiple representations of Kuan Yin? What does it mean, that artists might visualize her differently?

Say you will give more information about Kuan Yin. Have a co-leader or youth volunteer. Post blank newsprint (you may need two sheets), write "Kuan Yin" across the top, and briefly note key words and phrases as you say them:

She is known by many names, including "Divine Mother" and "The Pearl in the Lotus," but a literal translation of her name is "One Who Hears the Cries of the World." She symbolizes a love for all humankind that is so great, it can only be compared to the love a mother has for her child. Sometimes she is pictured holding a child.

It is said that as Kuan Yin reached nirvana and was about to leave the earthly world, she heard a human cry out in despair, and she turned back to become a bodhisattva.

Sometimes she holds a willow branch. Weeping willows illustrate compassion. They have thin branches that bend easily in the wind but are strong enough not to break. Willow trees are associated with both Lao Tzu—the author of the Tao Te Ching—and Confucius. Kuan Yin's image appears in both Taoist and Confucian temples. Sometimes she holds a vase, symbolizing her infinite outpouring of compassion.

Sometimes she is pictured with a thousand arms, an eye in the center of the palm of each hand: a thousand arms to help, a thousand eyes to see all who need her.

You might see her holding a peacock feather, which, of course, also has an eye.

She might be depicted sitting on a lotus blossom or wearing white, to symbolize purity.

Ask participants to look at the list of items and images associated with Kuan Yin. Have them close their eyes and invite them to imagine what a bodhisattva of

compassion and healing would look like to them, as you read the key words aloud.

After you read the list, invite participants to open their eyes, and use newsprint and the art supplies you have provided to capture their image. Tell the group they will have 15 minutes to work on their artwork. Optional: Play music, while the youth work.

Give a two-minute warning; then gather the group.

Allow volunteers to share about their artwork. Ask participants if they think meditating on the image they have created would remind them to be compassionate and loving.

Suggest they name their image, which was inspired by Kuan Yin, yet is not Kuan Yin. Invite them to take their image home and use it as a tool to help them live a more compassionate life.

Share the quote for this workshop:

Don't use what you learn from Buddhism to be a Buddhist; use it to be a better whatever-you-already-are. — His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso

Then, say:

May it be so.

ACTIVITY 4: LOVING KINDNESS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Eight Verses for Training the Mind](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

Participants learn about and discuss an important Buddhist tool to teach loving kindness.

Tell the group, in these words or your own:

The Dalai Lama, the spiritual head of the Buddhism, was identified at the age of two as the 14th reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. At that age, he and his family went to live with monks so his preparation and instruction could begin. While still a small boy, he was introduced to the ancient Buddhist text Eight Verses for Training the Mind, written by Buddhist Master Langri Tangpa (1054-1123). This text has been part of his daily meditation since then.

Distribute Handout 1, Eight Verses for Training the Mind. Invite the youth to take a few minutes to read it to themselves.

Then, ask for initial observations. Prompt discussion of the handout with questions such as these:

- Westerners in general, Americans in particular, and maybe especially Unitarian Universalists value the individual—but so does Buddhism. How do you respond to the idea "think of myself as lowest of all?" Does that rub you the wrong way? What purpose could this serve? [It affirms nonattachment to pride, i.e., humility.]
- How do you respond to holding beings of "wicked natures" "dear...as...a rare and precious treasure"? What spiritual purpose does this serve? [Everyone can teach us something; everyone has value.]
- If people treat you badly, do you think about them with gratitude? Is this a good idea? Why or why not?
- What is meant by "secretly take upon myself the harmful actions and suffering of my mothers"? Does this suggest we should take responsibility for wrongdoing as well as pain committed by others? If you could succeed at this, what state of mind would it put you in?
- For most Americans, the idea of responding with generosity when someone mistreats us—to "suffer the loss and offer the victory to them"—is challenging. What's the value of this response? Is the "victory" referred to here a real one? Is the "loss" real? What is the value of detachment from such concepts as winning and losing?
- Would this be a useful meditation tool for you to practice loving kindness? What barriers do you feel to embracing the teachings of the Eight Verses?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster with closing words
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for each participant.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite the youth to form a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: PEACE ALL AROUND US

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint or drawing paper
- Markers and other drawing utensils

Preparation for Activity

- Talk to your congregation's religious educator and/or Facilities Manager to find out what changes to the workshop space would be acceptable.

Description of Activity

Participants plan changes in their meeting space to enhance its function, beauty, and peacefulness. Ask youth if they are familiar with the children's book *The Big Orange Splot* by Daniel Pinkwater. Tell them that in that book, Mr. Plumbean does things to his house that his neighbors do not understand, and when they ask him about it, he says, "My house is me and I am it. My house is where I like to be, and it looks like all my dreams." Mr. Plumbean is behaving in a very Buddhist fashion! Making his house look "like all [his] dreams" is a way of practicing Right Absorption, by keeping his mind focused on the things he really wants to do and be.

Share with participants that Buddhists generally try to establish simple, beautiful, meaningful surroundings. This is purposeful: Clutter can detract from focus, and disorder pulls energy from worthy efforts. Beauty contributes to feelings of calm and peacefulness. Displaying items with special meaning to us can remind us of people we love or goals we are working toward.

Ask the youth:

- If you could do anything you wanted with our workshop space, what would you do to make it lovely, peaceful, and forward-looking, while remaining functional?

Encourage them to dream big. Playful is fine! Colorful is fine! Point out that a space need not resemble a Zen garden to be peaceful. Ask:

- Would you introduce draping fabrics?

- Would you add objects that remind you of certain things—a chalice, a Buddha, a cross, or a nature altar?
- Would you remove objects that are cluttering the space or that "say" something that doesn't belong in our faith home?
- Would you rearrange the furniture?

Give youth a few minutes to sketch and describe their ideas on newsprint or drawing paper.

Ask a few volunteers to share their ideal visions for the space.

Ask the youth which ideas they would like to try to implement. Are any ideas possible to implement right now? What plans do they wish to make? Offer what information you can on budget, timing, and coordination with the wider congregational community. Be encouraging and helpful. Even small changes can make a big difference in the feeling, functionality, and inspirational quality of a room.

Create a plan for what you and the youth can implement for the space within the next few weeks. Include the tasks which need to be done and who is responsible for each task. Plan how you will follow up and follow through.

Once the group has transformed their workshop space to the best of their ability, they may wish to help others in this way. If so, look for a site in the community that could use some sprucing up, such as a day care center or a shelter. Guide the youth to talk with supervisors and residents about what they want to absorb from their surroundings. Then, lead youth to help the site plan and implement a change.

Including All Participants

Make sure participants with mobility, visual, or other limitations have a meaningful role in the redesign of their meeting space. Make sure any location you will visit is accessible to all participants.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review the workshop with your co-leader:

- How did participants cope with the complexity of this workshop?
- Did the youth seem to grasp the concepts involved?
- Did their Western sensibilities get in their way? Did yours?
- Did the material itself prove useful in dealing with difficulties that arose?

- Did your effort to stay levelheaded during the workshop help you review the concepts of a faith that teaches a peaceful heart?
- How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

Continue to assess how particular activities work with your group—which worked well and which were less successful. Would you recommend one of the Alternate Activities instead of a core activity for a future group?

TAKING IT HOME

Don't use what you learn from Buddhism to be a Buddhist; use it to be a better whatever-you-already-are. — His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we discussed Buddhism, in particular, Zen Buddhism. We wrestled to obtain meaning from a koan that was both serious and funny. We talked about the concept of a bodhisattva, and thought about ways we could bring more compassion and loving kindness into our lives.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- Where and when do you feel most peaceful?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Taming the Monkey Mind

The tendency of the human brain to flash from one idea to another is often referred to in Buddhism as the "monkey mind." Most of us understand this immediately: Even when we try to concentrate on something we really like, our thoughts can be unmanageable, leaping around like a monkey. Today's media reinforce short attention spans, and our monkey minds grow more ungovernable by the day. The Buddhist answer? Meditation.

Bringing focus and stillness to our minds on a regular basis, even for short periods, will increase our attention spans over time and allow us to give energy to whatever is most important to us, escaping the tyranny of the monkey mind.

Try a sitting meditation for just 10 minutes a day. If you miss a day, just take it up again the next day. Overall consistency is what is important. Set a timer or an alarm clock so you do not have to check the time. Sit comfortably with your back supported, or lean against a meditation pillow, so you can completely relax. Try to relax your body totally. Clear your thoughts and concentrate only on your breathing. In... out ... in... out. Do not force anything. Do not change anything. Just observe. If your thoughts wander (and they will!), gently bring them back. After a few sessions of this brief time

meditating, see if you are feeling calmer and more centered.

Eight Verses for Training the Family

Review the Eight Verses for Training the Mind. While they may seem foreign to us in some respects, these teachings support peaceful relationships, especially among people who fundamentally trust each other. Perhaps you can apply the precepts of the Eight Verses to your own life. They may also prove beneficial to your family.

With members of your family, or with a group of friends, undertake to rewrite the Eight Verses in language that makes sense to you. Paraphrase the ideas in a way that might help you frame how to think about, live in harmony with, and benefit each other. When you have the verses in a form you like, post them in a shared place in your home, so you all can be reminded.

Peace in the World

When you have undertaken something so important and valuable, why not share it with others? Once you have the Eight Verses in a form that is powerful and useful to you, share it! If you have an email account, use an especially wonderful fragment of your version of the Eight Verses as your email signature. If you have a Facebook page or a blog, post it there. Write about it for a school assignment. Send it to a newspaper as a letter to the editor, or to a website promoting world peace. Spread your own message of peace, love, and understanding!

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: PEACE PRACTICE (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A timepiece (minutes) and a chime, or a timer that rings
- Handout 2, [Scenes of Prospective Conflict](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Learn more about Roshi Bernie Glassman. The [Zen Peacemakers](#) (at www.zenpeacemakers.org/about/) website is a good resource.

Description of Activity

Participants learn that a peaceful spirit is compatible with fervent activism, and practice keeping their cool in difficult situations.

Tell the youth, in these words or your own:

Bernie Glassman, who was given the honorific title "Roshi" by his students, is a sweet, peaceful man, an advanced Zen practitioner and instructor—and a

tireless activist for social justice. His meditation and reflection have ultimately led him to raise millions of dollars, create an organization with a 34-acre central campus and 54 affiliate centers worldwide, and travel the world fighting poverty, AIDS, homelessness, and lack of education.

Roshi Bernie says, "When you realize the wholeness and interdependence of life, you have to take care of everyone, and to do that, you have to work with every ingredient of life."

Bernie Glassman is not the only Buddhist whose work carries him into the world. The most famous Buddhist in the world is the Dalai Lama. He has traveled all over the world working for causes of peace and justice. How can these Buddhists continue to be so peaceful when they meet injustice and opposition everywhere they go?

One answer is meditation. While meditation can seem very passive, it can bring people to realizations that allow them to understand themselves enough to stay calm in any situation. The ability to remain calm helps them stay very active indeed.

We are going to meditate for just a few minutes. Then we are going to practice staying calm in challenging situations—since, as we remember from Taoism, if there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the heart.

Encourage participants to make themselves comfortable but not to lie down. Sitting up shows respect for the process and helps keep the mind focused. Remind the youth to simply breathe and to observe their breathing. Suggest they concentrate on feeling their breath going in and going out. If a thought comes into their minds, they should acknowledge the thought, then let it go and return their focus to breathing. Set a timer for five minutes, or watch the time and sound the chime gently when five minutes have passed.

Distribute Handout 2, Scenes of Prospective Conflict. Say, in your own words:

Anger usually results from some form of attachment, or desire—for example, embarrassment springs from a desire to be respected. Awareness of how your desires create your anger can help diffuse a bad situation. If you

recognize that your bad feelings are the result of your own internal situation and do not have anything to do with anyone else, you will be much less likely to lash out at other people and more empowered to make the world a more peaceful place.

Allow the youth to choose a few scenes to act out—you will not have time for all of the scenarios. Two or more youth can participate in each scene. Make sure all youth who wish to take a role have a chance.

You might suggest actors do each scene twice, first with the protagonist getting very mad and then with the protagonist staying peaceful—whether or not the other people in the scene act peacefully.

Process each scenario. Allow the youth to make suggestions. Encourage them to share strategies for and benefits to staying calm in difficult situations. Remind the youth that these are scenes of *prospective* conflict—conflict is never inevitable. Ask if there are times when youth "blew up" in their own lives and wish they had behaved differently. See if any youth will share their story for volunteers to act out, this time envisioning how things could have gone a different way.

Say, in these words or your own:

Whether or not we are Buddhists, we can recognize that being peaceful inside ourselves does not mean being inactive. Rather, if we know how to stay happy and peaceful within ourselves, we can work effectively to make the world a better place, even in distressing circumstances.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: STORY – THE BANYAN DEER (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Banyan Deer](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Youth hear a Buddhist story about compassion.

Tell or read the story.

Then, ask participants what quality the story exemplifies. Say it is the quality of compassion.

Tell the group "The Banyan Deer" is one of the Jataka tales, which comprise more than 500 short stories.

Similar to the parables of Jesus, these stories are said to have been told by the Buddha to illustrate great truths to his listeners. Unlike the parables of Jesus, however, most of the Jataka tales have as protagonist an animal (or, less often, a human) that is a previous incarnation of the Buddha himself.

Invite the youth to briefly share stories of a time in their own life when they witnessed or showed compassion.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: BUDDHIST BOARD GAME (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A Buddhist board game

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a Buddhist board game such as [Karma Chakra](#) (at www.karmachakragame.com/) or [Buddhist Knowledge Quest](#) (at www.brelief.org/bkq/announce.html). Karma Chakra goes into more depth than Buddhist Knowledge Quest, but is more expensive. You may be able to find a used version of either game online. You will need one game board for every four participants.
- Review the rules of your chosen game(s). Play it yourself, if possible, to anticipate any issues that may arise.
- Decide how you will divide the group, for example by having them count off, choose a color poker chip from a bowl, or form groups based on first or last name initials.

Description of Activity

This activity is intended as the last element of this workshop before the Closing. Participants play a Buddhist board game to solidify their understanding of Buddhist terms and concepts in a fun way.

Form groups of four and help the youth set up to play the games. As they play, be available to answer questions that come up.

Give the youth a five-minute warning before their time is up. Have everyone help put away the games and reset the room.

Ask which of the Buddhist concepts they explored in the workshop(s) were included in the games they just played.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

10: STORY: THE BANYAN DEER

A traditional Jataka tale from the Buddhist tradition.

Note: The banyan tree is also known as the *bodhi* tree.

Kings come in all shapes and sizes. A true king, however, is known not just because of the crown on his head, but because he is compassionate and rules in the best interest of his subjects.

In one kingdom, there lived a human king who loved to hunt. Every day, he rode out from the palace, through fields tended by farmers, into the woods, where he killed a deer for his nightly meal.

During their hunt, the king's horse and those of his hunting companions ripped up the earth with their hooves, destroying the crops the farmers depended on for their livelihood. The farmers grew desperate. They decided that since having the king go to the deer was destroying their fields, they would instead bring the deer to the king.

They built a large park next to the palace, filled with grass and ponds—everything the deer needed to live. Around it, they built a high fence. Then the farmers surrounded the forest, creating a thick wall, and beat the bushes and grass to drive most of the deer out of the forest and into the constructed park, through a gate they then closed. They said to the king, "O, great king. We have built a special park for you, much closer than the forest. We have stocked it with grass and water and filled it with the deer you love to hunt."

The king was thrilled. Daily, he hunted in his new park.

Over time, he became familiar with the deer there and noticed that two stags seemed different from the rest. They had golden horns and a regal bearing. He named these the two kings and told his hunting companions that they were not to be hunted.

The two stags were indeed kings. One was named "Branch" because his antlers branched out mightily, and he was head of a herd of 500. The other, also head of a herd of 500, was named "Banyan," perhaps because his antlers resembled the banyan tree.

Remember: It was underneath the banyan tree that the Buddha reached enlightenment. And in fact, this deer was a Buddha, in deer form. Both deer kings watched as their fellow deer were killed each day. Yet, the killing was not the worst of it—after all, we all must someday die. But in the new park, when deer ran away from the hunters, they often ran into the fence or into each other and then hurt themselves. And always, when they were hunted, they were filled with fear. Their suffering was hard for Branch and Banyan to witness.

One day, Branch came to Banyan and suggested that instead of being hunted, each day one deer should present itself to the king's butcher block to be killed. Since one deer a day would die anyway, Banyan agreed. From that day forward, that is what happened: One day, a deer from Branch's herd would present itself to be slaughtered; the next, a deer from Banyan's herd would do the same.

One day, a young doe from Branch's herd was the intended kill. She pleaded with Branch, "Please do not send me to die yet. My baby is too small to care for itself, and without me, it will die. Let me go, and I promise to go at a later time, when my baby is older." But Branch said no.

Desperate to keep her baby alive, the young mother approached Banyan with her dilemma. Banyan said, "Go home to your baby. Another deer will die today." That day, Banyan presented himself at the butcher's block.

When the butcher saw that it was one of the golden deer, he ran to get the king. The king approached Banyan and said, "Why are you here? Don't you know that I ordered that you would never be killed? Go home!"

"I cannot," Banyan replied. "A young doe was scheduled to die today, but without its mother, the baby will die. A replacement is needed. How can I ask another deer to die unexpectedly today instead? It is my decision. Therefore, I will die."

"I cannot kill you," said the king. "For your bravery and compassion, I promise never to kill any of the deer in the park again."

"That is good for us," said Banyan. "But what of the deer in the forest?"

"I promise never to hunt them again."

"What of the other four-footed animals, our friends?"

"I will not hunt them."

"What about the birds in the sky?"

"I will not hunt them."

"What of the fish in the sea?"

"I will not hunt them."

All of the people in the kingdom followed suit. The animals were happy to be hunted no more. Now that the kingdom depended on the harvest from the fields, the farmers' land was respected. The park was now a special place where the king could stroll and seek guidance from Banyan, which he did for many years to come.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

10: STORY: THE MAN AND THE TIGER

A man walking across a field encountered a tiger. The man fled, running as fast as he could go, with the tiger chasing fiercely after him. The man came to the edge of the field. It was a cliff! He leaned over the edge of the cliff, grabbed a vine, and swung down against the cliff face. The tiger appeared above him, sniffing and pawing and never taking its eyes from him as it paced above his head. Terrified, the man looked down, far below to the bottom of the cliff, to see if there might be some means of escape that way. But what was this? Another tiger had appeared and was looking up at him, swishing its tail and licking its chops, waiting for him to fall! Just then, two mice—one black and one white—emerged from cracks in the cliff face. The mice skittered about, sniffing, and then, with tiny bites, began to gnaw away at the vine the man was hanging from. A little distance away, the man spied a beautiful, ripe strawberry growing on the cliff face. Grasping the vine in one hand, he reached over, plucked the strawberry, and popped it into his mouth. It was delicious!

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 10: HANDOUT 1: EIGHT VERSES FOR TRAINING THE MIND

A highly revered text from the Mahayana Lojong (mind training) tradition, composed by the Buddhist Master Langri Tangpa (1054–1123).

(1)

With the determination to accomplish

The highest welfare of all sentient* beings,
Who excel even a wish-granting jewel,
May I at all times hold them dear.

(2)

Whenever I am with others,
May I think of myself as lowest of all,

And from the depth of my heart

Hold the others supreme.

(3)

In all actions, may I search into my mind,

And as soon as delusions arise
That endanger myself or others,

May I confront them and avert them without delay.

(4)

When I see beings of wicked natures,

Oppressed by violent misdeeds and afflictions,
May I hold them dear

As if I had found a rare and precious treasure.

(5)

When others out of envy treat me badly

With slander, abuse, and the like,

May I suffer the loss and

Offer the victory to them.

(6)

When one whom I have helped

And benefited with great hope

Hurts me badly, may I consider him
With gratitude, my supreme guru.

(7)

In short, may I directly and indirectly offer
Benefit and happiness to all creatures, my mothers.
May I secretly take upon myself the harmful actions
And suffering of my mothers.

(8)

May all this remain undefiled by the stains of
Keeping in view the eight worldly principles.**

May I, by perceiving all as illusory,
Unattached, be delivered from the bondage of
samsara.***

Notes:

**Sentient* means having the power of perception by the senses or consciousness.

**The eight worldly principles, or Eight Worldly Winds, are these four pairs: pleasure and pain, loss and gain, obscurity and fame, praise and blame. They are called "winds" because they move us about and can determine our actions if we do not cultivate consciousness and control of them.

****Samsara* is the Buddhist concept of the process by which we continually build our world of suffering. When we learn to stop this process, we reach enlightenment.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

10: HANDOUT 2: SCENES OF PROSPECTIVE CONFLICT

Here are some situations where you might have trouble keeping your cool.

- You drop your cell phone and somebody steps on it, destroying it.
 - Someone hits your compact car with their SUV.
 - You are a clerk in a store and a furious customer brings back a defective product.
 - Two of your friends have a fight, decide they hate each other, and insist you take sides.
 - Your parent has had a bad day and takes it out on you with constant criticism.
 - Your sibling will not leave you alone.
 - A friend asks you for the five millionth time to loan them something you know you will never get back.
- Your boyfriend or girlfriend breaks up with you with an email or text.
 - A slacker at work messes something up, blames it on you, and you get fired.
 - A friend borrows your car and gets in a wreck, totaling your car. Your friend was at fault.
 - A shipping company lost the package your brother sent you. When you call, they treat you disrespectfully, tell you there's nothing they can do, and warn you not to call again.
 - When you call tech support for your computer, you get a technician whose accent makes it hard for you to understand what they are saying. You cannot tell if this person understands what you are saying, either.
 - You've been in line for a long time. When you finally step up to the counter, the cashier closes the line.

**BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 10:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: IMAGE OF KUAN YIN**

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/kuanyin.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/kuanyin.pdf) for printing.



FIND OUT MORE

Zen Flesh, Zen Bones, compiled by Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2008), is among the best brief, accessible introductions to Zen Buddhism.

Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism by Steven Heine (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 2005) is a scholarly text.

[Garden Digest](http://www.gardendigest.com/zen/ten.htm) (at www.gardendigest.com/zen/ten.htm) is an excellent website of Zen fundamentals, including ethical precepts and philosophical tenets.

Find a nice collection of koans can be found on at the [AshidaKim](http://www.ashidakim.com) (at www.ashidakim.com/zenkoans/zenindex.html) website.

Looking for Zen garden supplies? Try [To Port](http://www.toport.com/) (at www.toport.com/), which carries both whole kits and individual supplies.

[The Dalai Lama](http://www.dalailama.com) (at www.dalailama.com/teachings/training-the-mind) website offers a translation of Eight Verses for Training the Mind, with lovely elaboration and explanation.

The pamphlet "[Faith of a UU Buddhist](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=504)" (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=504) is available from the UUA Bookstore. The author, James Ishmael Ford, also wrote [In This Very Moment: A Simple Guide to Zen Buddhism](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=590). (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=590)

WORKSHOP 11: CHRISTIANITY 1

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. — John 3:16 (KJV)

This workshop introduces Christianity, the largest religion in the world. A branch of the Abrahamic line, Christianity includes nearly a third of the people on the planet. Core teachings of love and faith, forgiveness and generosity, are profoundly affirming; however, the doctrines that have evolved over centuries, the efforts to convert people for their salvation, and the variations of behavior inherent in billions of human beings have created a very mixed historical record and contemporary practice. It can be difficult to, in biblical terms, separate the grain from the chaff. It is important to help Unitarian Universalist youth to a greater understanding of the complexities and challenges of Christianity.

Some of the challenges of this exploration include:

- The tendency to lump all Christians together rather than make important distinctions among sects and practices and among individuals
- The tendency, as with any religion, to think that if you know someone's religion, you know what they believe and what their social or political opinions are
- The influence of negative attitudes on the part of some Unitarian Universalists who have had bad experiences with Christian religions
- For some Unitarian Universalists, who are surrounded by evangelical and fundamentalist Christians, the feeling of being misunderstood, disrespected and even attacked. This can set up a defensive reaction in which participants' protective feelings for their own religion leave them less than open to Christianity
- Finally, the challenge of all exploration of differences: the ability to bring an open mind and open heart to the journey.

NOTE: This workshop focuses on the life and teachings of Jesus. For how the early Christian Church evolved into the Catholic Church, see the text in Alternate Activity 3: From Minority to Majority, which describes the institutionalization of the Church in the Holy Roman

Empire and explores the Crusades. Workshop 12 continues the Christian story with the Protestant Reformation.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce participants to some core beliefs of Christianity
- Present essential excerpts of Christian scripture
- Explain Pentecost and its importance to Christians
- Compare and contrast Christianity and Unitarian Universalism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Hear and discuss the life and words of Jesus of Nazareth
- Deepen their understanding of Christian scripture and doctrine
- Understand Pentecost and the founding of the Christian church
- Learn how Christianity fits into religious history.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story — The Life of Jesus of Nazareth	20
Activity 2: Jesus, Storyteller	25
Activity 3: The Sermon on the Mount	15
Activity 4: The Good News is Spread	10
Activity 5: Fact Sheet	5
Activity 6: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Catholic Charities	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90

Alternate Activity 2: The Jefferson Bible	20
Alternate Activity 3: From Minority to Majority	20
Alternate Activity 4: A Pentecost Play	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Spiritual preparation for the two workshops on Christianity may be challenging, particularly for those with Christian "baggage." It is important to be at peace with your own history in order to fairly present this

material and effectively facilitate youth's understanding of Christianity.

This workshop begins with the teachings of Jesus, whose theology and world view started a new religious view, but not a new religion. Others started the institutions of the Christian Church. All the complications around his teachings and the creation of the elaborate trappings surrounding them began after his death. As one of our UU Sources, the teachings of Jesus are part of the historical foundation of Unitarian Universalism, and continue to have meaning for many UUs today. Reflect on what you find of value in the teachings of the rabbi, Jesus.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Several copies of Leader Resource 1, [Patron Saints](#) (included in this document)
- Scissors
- Safety pins, straight pins or clips

Preparation for Activity

- Print a copy of Leader Resource 1, Patron Saints, for every two or three participants.

Description of Activity

Participants examine a sampling of patron saints and choose one or more.

As participants enter, invite them to review Leader Resource 1, Patron Saints. Invite them to choose one (or more) they feel relates to an area of their lives that is important to them. Prompt discussion about why they chose the one/s they did. Ask if they would have chosen different ones for their friends than their friends chose for themselves.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 2, [Christianity Background](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Post two sheets of newsprint visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Answer questions from the last workshop.

Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly sharing something they know or have heard about Christianity. Point out that members of this group may identify as Christian. If youth who so identify are comfortable, they might share some tenets of their faith. Ask what questions participants have about Christians.

Write the questions on newsprint. The questions might be answered by activities in this workshop. If not, answer the ones you can and seek answers to any you cannot. Bring the answers to the next workshop.

Read or share in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 2, Christianity Background. Use newsprint to list important terms from the resource.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Life of Jesus of Nazareth](#) (included in this document) "
- Blank rubber or silicon wristbands, available online at [RubberBracelets](#) (at [rubberbracelets.com/](#)), [TheAristocrat](#) (at [www.thearistocrat.com/](#)), [WristbandWarehouse](#) (at [www.wristbandwarehouse.com/?src=google](#)), and more
- Fine point markers or ballpoint/gel pens
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "The Life of Jesus of Nazareth" until you are comfortable presenting it.
- Test markers or pens on wristbands.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss a story of Jesus of Nazareth.

Tell or read the story. Ask participants for their initial reactions. What did they think of the story? How familiar was it to them? Were there details they had not heard before?

Familiarize yourself with the following and share with participants in your own words:

Jesus of Nazareth is one of the most influential figures in history. While the doctrines of Christianity have developed greatly in complexity and specificity during two thousand years of existence in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and eventually Protestant forms, its foundation is the teachings of Jesus.

Contemporary Christianity has moved far from Jesus' teachings as contained in the Gospels or Christian Scriptures ("New Testament"). Interpretations of what Jesus meant in his time, and what

Jesus' words should mean for our time, vary greatly. Differing, and even opposite conclusions are drawn from the very same texts by different people. However, these differences—and conflicts—do not diminish the influence of these historic writings.

In traditional Christian doctrine, Jesus is represented as the Son of God (and therefore divine) and the savior of humankind (write "messiah" on newsprint) through his death and resurrection. Unitarians and other liberal Christians of the 19th century began to question the divinity of Jesus, and saw him as a man who was a great teacher who offered inspiring lessons for humankind about compassion, generosity, forgiveness, and love for one another. Today, UUs who identify as Christians focus on Jesus' teachings and seek to live more closely to the values he taught. Many UUs who do not identify as Christian also value the teachings of Jesus.

So what were some of Jesus' teachings? Ask for input and write on newsprint. At first mention of the word "Love," write it in large letters at the top. Contribute information participants do not offer.

- Love God with all your heart and soul and strength (write "Love God")
- Love your neighbor as yourself (if this is done fully, one fulfills all other commandments) (write "Love neighbor as self")
- Refrain from judging people, just as you do not want them to judge you ("Judge not")
- If you repent your sins and ask for forgiveness, God will forgive you ("Repent, be forgiven")
- Be kind and forgiving with each other, as God through Jesus Christ forgave you ("Forgive others since you are forgiven")
- God's love is infinite ("God = infinite love")
- The opposite of love is not hate; the opposite of love is selfishness ("Opposite of love = selfishness")

Ask, "What impression does this give you of God? What is the God of Christian scripture like?" "How does this God differ from the God of the Hebrew Bible (the God that demanded sacrifices, destroyed the earth with a flood and turned people to pillars of salt)?"

Continue discussion with the following questions:

- Was Jesus a troublemaker? Why did he defy authority?

- Does the brutality of his death affect the way you think of his teachings? The Bible suggests that Jesus knew what would happen to him, and chose to go through with it. Why would he do that?
- Are you familiar with the letters "WWJD?" It means "What Would Jesus Do?" and it is intended to remind someone, before they act or speak, to think about what Jesus would have done if he were in their place. What do you think of this reminder? If a person did it consistently, what would it achieve?

Distribute blank wristbands and fine point permanent markers or ballpoint pens. Invite youth to create bracelets of their own. Suggest they inscribe them with any symbol, image, or letters which remind them of their highest values, in the way that Christians wear the WWJD bracelet to remind them to treat others well. "WWJD" is an option!

ACTIVITY 2: JESUS, THE STORYTELLER (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Parables](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Box of costumes

Preparation for Activity

- Cut apart the parables.
- If your congregation has a box of miscellaneous costumes, make it available.
- It is best if groups have private space to rehearse. Investigate spaces that are open to them beforehand.

Description of Activity

Participants analyze and enact parables. Matthew 13:34 says, "Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing." Ask who can define the word "parable." [A short, story that uses symbols to convey abstract ideas and teach a moral.] Why do youth think Jesus spoke in parables?

If the following reasons are not given, share with the group that storytelling has been an important teaching tool throughout human history. We understand and remember information we receive as narratives. Ask if participants had favorite stories that they wanted to hear or read over and over when they were children. Point out that people of all ages love stories: soap operas, movies, music videos, books... even blogs.

Jesus told stories to help people understand big concepts. If he was a good storyteller, people were more likely to listen, too. His stories were about people

they could identify with: kings, farmers, beggars. They were about activities the populace engaged in: weeding, weddings, wars.

The first part of the 27 books of the New Testament—the Christian Scriptures—is the Gospels. The four Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Historians say none of these authors actually knew Jesus: all the books were written many years after Jesus' death. So the stories they tell have been handed down orally by others until these authors wrote them down.

Tell participants that on the slips of paper are some of the dozens of parables of Jesus. Explain that they will divide into groups of three or four, read the parable, decide what the moral is, and create a short skit to illustrate the parable. The skit can be very literal with the same time, place, and characters as the parable, or it can be re-cast in another time or place using different characters, as long as the moral teaching is the same.

Form small groups, distribute parables, tell groups which spaces they can use to rehearse and that they have 10 minutes to work. If costume pieces are available, let them know. Give a two-minute warning before reconvening the whole group.

Let each group perform. After each performance, someone in the small group should read the parable and say what they decided the moral means.

Discuss the tone of the parables. What feelings did they invoke? Were they all the same? Were any scary? Moving? As a group, discuss the morals. Ask if the youth know other parables, like the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son.

Point out that you do not have to be a Christian to find value in these stories, and the wisdom stories from other religions and cultures.

ACTIVITY 3: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [Beatitudes](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Lord's Prayer](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Cut the chart in Leader Resource 4 into pieces by cutting along all the lines. Keep the slips from Column A separate from Column B.

Description of Activity

Participants read the Beatitudes and Lord's Prayer from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and process their meaning.

Distribute the pieces you have cut from Leader Resource 4 and invite participants to match the words from Column A with their counterparts in Column B. Leaders can use the bottom part of the leader resource to check participant's work and give suggestions. Once all parts are matched correctly, read the Beatitudes aloud. Discuss with the following questions:

- What did you think of the Beatitudes? Had you heard them before? These are among the most famous scriptures from the Christian Bible, and considered the distillation of Jesus' teaching.
- Which beatitude (blessing) is most meaningful to you? Why?
- Are there any that do not seem to make sense? Which ones? Is there a way of looking at them, thinking about Jesus' overall message of love, forgiveness, and equality, that they can be better understood?
- One item in Eight Verses for Training the Mind (studied by the Dalai Lama every day) reads: "When others out of envy treat me badly with slander, abuse, and the like, may I suffer the loss and offer the victory to them." Compare this with, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." What are the similarities? The differences?

Tell participants that the Beatitudes are part of The Sermon on the Mount, a sermon in which Jesus also taught the people a prayer. Invite the group to read the Lord's Prayer aloud together.

After reading, share that well into the 20th century, the Lord's Prayer was said in unison to start the day in nearly every public school classroom in the United States, along with the Pledge of Allegiance. Ask:

- Does this surprise you?
- Was this practice a good idea? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 4: THE GOOD NEWS IS SPREAD (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 5, [Pentecost and Damascus](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 5, Pentecost and Damascus, until you are comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Youth explore the importance of Pentecost and Saul's conversion as acts that established Christianity.

Brainstorm Christian holidays. Ask youth which of the holidays named are the most important. Participants will know that Christmas and Easter are important. If they do not name it, say that Pentecost is one of the three most important holidays. The events of Pentecost are particularly important for Christians who believe in the Trinity (God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit: three distinct entities that may act as one). It is an important story that helps explain how Christianity spread from a dozen apostles to billions of people worldwide.

Ask youth to listen while the story of Jesus continues. Read or seek volunteers to read Leader Resource 5, Pentecost and Damascus.

Process with these questions. Ask:

- Have you ever heard of the saying "The Road to Damascus?"
- Have you ever experienced such a turning point? Can you imagine how such an event as Saul experienced could lead one to devote your life to being a disciple?
- Why did the Holy Spirit enable people to speak to each other in native tongues? Ask if anyone knows the story of the Tower of Babel from the Hebrew Scriptures. If not, tell them that in the beginning, everyone spoke the same language because they were all descendants from the first humans. But because people started to think too much of themselves, God struck them, and afterward people spoke in many different tongues and no longer understood each other. This caused fracture and separation into different tribes and nations. Here, the Holy Spirit—a gift from God—unites tribes by enabling people to hear members of different nations in their own native tongues. Through the Holy Spirit, people are reunited into one tribe—the followers of Jesus.
- What was it about the Holy Spirit that enticed people to become baptized?
- Though the Bible never explicitly professes a Trinity, the Holy Spirit, which is manifest here, is the third member of what Trinitarian Christians today believe is the Trinity. Explore how the three parts interact: God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Acknowledge that the Holy Spirit can be confusing. Not all Christians even agree on its nature and much is still written about the way the Holy Spirit is manifest and what exactly it embodies. Also, note that though the vast majority of Christians believe in the Trinity, not all do. Some denominations, such as Jehovah Witnesses, believe in God in one form.

ACTIVITY 5: FACT SHEET (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [Christianity Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)
- A poster of the Principles

Preparation for Activity

- Note that in this workshop, the group has a short time to review the fact sheet. In the second Christianity workshop, they will have more time. Leave the fact sheet in the meeting space to make sure participants will have it at the next workshop.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 3, Christianity Fact Sheet. Review the handout. Review any unfamiliar terms and answer any questions. Tell participants that they will engage more fully with the fact sheet in the next workshop. Mention that the Christian tradition is one of our Unitarian Universalist sources.

If you will be engaging with a Catholic community, give participants any information they need for the experience.

ACTIVITY 6: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line
- Sticky notes and fine point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Hang Religions Time Line visibly in the meeting space.
- Have map or globe.
- Create sticky note saying, "Christianity, 30 CE." Keep it out of sight.

Description of Activity

The time line is updated to add Christianity. Ask participants if they remember the years Jesus lived. If they do not remember, offer that best estimates are that Jesus was crucified in 30 CE and the Christian Church was by tradition created on Pentecost, after Jesus' resurrection. (Place marker on timeline.) Ask if participants remember in what part of the world Christianity was birthed. Point out Israel on the map. Ask if participants remember how many Christians there are in the world. (Over 2 billion.) So where is Christianity practiced now? Everywhere! (Indicate entire map.)

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster with closing words
- Chalice
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Reproduce Taking It Home.
- Put up poster visible to all participants if needed.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to form a circle, join hands, and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Materials for Activity

- Paper and pens
- A list of Catholic service agencies in your area
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- If you have a computer and Internet access in the meeting space, set up and test the equipment before the activity. If you do not have access, print out relevant material from the website of [Catholic Charities](#) (at www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/), especially information on the "Catholic Tradition" and the "Local Agency Directory."
- If you attend Mass before this activity, pick up a church newsletter.

Description of Activity

Participants work with Catholics to help people.

Tell participants that the Catholic Church has a long tradition of justice and charity work. If you have a church newsletter, look through it for examples.

Catholic Charities USA is an umbrella organization that is the national office for over 1,700 Catholic agencies and organizations that offer services in communities. If you have access to a computer and the Internet, visit their [website](#) (at www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/). If not, show the group the pages you have printed.

Catholic Charities is currently involved in a campaign to end poverty in America. If you have Internet access, watch a [six-minute video](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=paV8oAREdHI) on YouTube about the campaign. Ask youth:

- The video on YouTube about the campaign is called "Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good." How is poverty a threat to the common good? Why does poverty hurt all Americans?
- Sometimes people quote Jesus saying, "The poor you will always have with you." Does that mean poverty is inevitable and we should not try to eliminate it? There are many passages in both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures that say we will be blessed for taking care of the poor.
- What is the difference between "poor" and "poverty?"
- Is ending poverty in America a goal UU support?
- Why would we want to work with Catholics on this campaign?

Locate a Catholic agency near you. Contact them and ask how you can help. If possible, ask leaders at the agency to talk with the group about why this is the work of people of faith. Youth can explain why their faith leads them to this work.

After the visit, ask youth if it was easy to explain how their faith supports justice work. Youth might have worked on writing credos, statements of faith, or elevator speeches about their UU faith. Invite youth to write a social justice elevator speech that speaks directly to why their UU faith calls them to do good works. After 10 minutes, have them pair up to share the speeches. Suggest that they practice further with family and friends, until their words come naturally.

Including All Participants

If you go out into the community to serve, make sure the site is accessible to everyone in the group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

How did the workshop run? Did the activities work well with your group? Was there reluctance to participate in certain types of activities? Did the youth seem to grasp the concepts involved? Were they able to overcome any bias they may have been feeling about Christians or Christianity and give the topic fair consideration? How will the answers to these questions affect preparation for subsequent workshops?

If you are leading Workshop 12, plan ahead: Activity 3: For All Regions might require more preparation time than usual.

TAKING IT HOME

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
— John 3:16 (KJV)

DURING TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we started our exploration of Christianity by talking about Jesus: his life and words. We acted out parables and read the Beatitudes. We discussed the Holy Spirit, Pentecost and the spread of early Christianity.

REFLECTION QUESTION

The word "catholic" means universal. What, in your opinion, is universal about Catholicism or Christianity?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS FURTHER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

Christian UUs

Talk with Christian members of your congregation about being a Christian UU: What is hard? What is easy? What do they love about it?

Jesus and Parables

- Two famous musicals are based on the life and words of Jesus: *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Rent the movies or, if you can, attend a live performance.
- Search "parables of Jesus" on YouTube to find many clips of parables, including an animated series by Nest Learning. This one is based on the [House Upon the Rock](#) (at www.nestfamily.com/built-upon-the-rock-video-on-interactive-dvd_p43413.aspx).

Catholicism

- Check out [Life Teen](#) (at www.lifeteen.com/), a website for Catholic youth, which has movie reviews and advice on topics (like what to do if you did not keep your promise during Lent) and answers to questions on church doctrine. It even has a video game: *Vatican Ninja vs. Pirates*.
- Visit [A Nun's Life Ministry](#) (at anunslife.org/) to find out about the life of modern day nuns.
- Many UUs like to talk about famous UUs. Being such a large faith, there are many famous Catholics. Here is one list of [the famous](#) (at www.adherents.com/largecom/fam_catholic.html).
- Have you read the books or seen the movies in *The Chronicles of Narnia*? The author, C.S. Lewis was an influential Catholic. His official website includes a [biography](#) (at

www.cslewis.com/us/about-cs-lewis). Can you identify the Catholic imagery in *The Chronicles*? Some is explained in this article "[The Wardrobe as Christian Metaphor](#)" by Don. W. King (at cslewis.drzeus.net/papers/wardrobe_metaphor.html).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange with a Catholic or Orthodox Church for your group to attend a Mass. Find out if services are in Latin, English, or another language. Ask if there is anything they particularly think your youth should know before attending.
- Instruct participants to wear appropriate clothing.

Description of Activity

Youth attend a Catholic or Orthodox Mass and discuss the experience.

Meet beforehand to be sure participants are properly dressed and to review courteous behavior guidelines. Inform them that only Catholics in good standing are allowed to take communion. Suggest they look for elements specific to Catholicism: the crucifix, confessional booths, statues of the Virgin Mary or other saints, incense.

When the engagement is done, process the experience. Ask participants for their immediate responses.

What was the experience like for them? Did they find the less familiar elements (incense, for example) added to the experience or diminished it for them? How different was it from other visits they have made? Ask:

- What did you see?
- Was there an altar? If so, what was on the altar?
- Who participated in worship and in what way? Were genders treated differently?
- Were any special garments worn?
- Was there music? What was it like?
- What was the atmosphere like in the church? Was it more or less formal than your church? Did the atmosphere seem fitting to the worship service?
- Were there children present? If so, were accommodations made for them? If so, what kind? Did they notice any youth? Was the group respectfully treated?

- Were there familiar elements or themes in the sermon? Could it have been delivered from a Unitarian Universalist pulpit? Why or why not?
- Were the teachings of Jesus in evidence in the behavior of church members? For example: did people treat each other kindly? Did there seem to be social services available for the less fortunate? Did this seem like the kind of church Jesus would have wanted to spread his teachings? Why or why not?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THE JEFFERSON BIBLE (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Several copies of the *Jefferson Bible*, enough for everyone to look on and share—available through the [UUA Bookstore](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=229) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=229)
- Copies of a traditional Bible, such as the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1989)
- Writing paper and implements

Description of Activity

Participants learn about Thomas Jefferson's version of the Bible and examine how it differs from a traditional Bible.

Ask participants if they are familiar with a book called the *Jefferson Bible*. Tell them Jefferson did not name it the *Jefferson Bible*. He entitled his work *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, Extracted Textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French and English*. The work was not published during his lifetime, although his friend John Adams wanted him to publish this work. [*The Jefferson Bible* is published by the UUA's Beacon Press. Jefferson's original cut-and-paste copy is being restored at the Smithsonian museum.]

Jefferson considered himself a Christian, but he felt unease about portions of the Bible that seemed to him obviously inaccurate, created for some purpose other than transmitting the teachings of Jesus. After thinking about, studying, and corresponding with friends for many years, Jefferson finally undertook the work of separating the grain from the chaff—in other words, trimming the Bible back to only what seemed to be the fundamentals of Jesus' teachings. If Jefferson had published this work, it would have been very controversial.

Jefferson took out the virgin birth; he thought it was an elaboration, and that Jesus was just as divine without it. He took out the star shining over Bethlehem, took out the Magi. Jefferson also removed all of Jesus' miracles:

no water turned to wine, no walking on water, no calming storms, no healings or bringing people back to life, no loaves and fishes to feed 5,000. Most Christians have never heard of Jefferson's Bible, but would reject it for this alone—the miracles are considered essential proof of Jesus' divinity. Again, Jefferson thought they probably did not happen to begin with, and Christ did not need any proof beyond his exquisite life and work.

Jefferson's process was scholarly. He acquired the oldest texts he could find, sending to Europe for some. Being multilingual, he used ancient Greek, Latin, and French texts in addition to the Standard English Bible of his time. Then, page by page, he laid the verses out side by side and compared. Most sections with contradictions of fact he excised completely. Jefferson did not rewrite anything; he only edited, but his editing was radical. What resulted was a slim gem of a volume that he used for his personal devotions for the rest of his life, consisting almost entirely of the life and works of the human Jesus.

Distribute copies of the *Jefferson Bible*. Ask what participants notice right away. Jefferson utilized only the four Gospels (the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), then trimmed much of them, so even working with four versions it is much smaller than a standard Bible.

Ask for participants' thoughts. Were they aware of the *Jefferson Bible*? If so, what had they heard about it? Continue discussion with questions like the following:

- What do you think of Jefferson's decision to take out all the miracles? Does that change the message of Christianity? If so, how?
- Did it surprise you to learn Jefferson knew four languages well enough to do research in them? Could he have undertaken this project without knowing all those languages? What difference would that have made?
- What do youth think of Jefferson's process? Does it make sense to lay the versions side by side and remove areas where they do not agree? Is there another way one could undertake this project?

Distribute standard Bibles and ask youth turn to Matthew, the first Gospel. Distribute writing paper and implements. Invite youth to compare the text of Matthew as revised by Jefferson with the commonly used Bible text. Ask:

- Do you agree with Jefferson's changes?
- Would you have taken out more? Less? Different things?
- Do you see a pattern to what he removed?
- Do Jefferson's choices strengthen or weaken the text in your opinion?

- Often a *Jefferson Bible* is given as a High School graduation gift by Unitarian Universalist congregations. What message is the congregation offering when they give graduates this gift?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: FROM MINORITY TO MAJORITY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Brief Overview of the Crusades](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

The history of the early church is explained. Christianity begins with the birth and death of Jesus. Jesus was Jewish and the story of his life was played out primarily among the Jewish people. Following Jesus' death, his followers created a new faith, with Judaic roots. In the beginning, these believers were spread out and disorganized. Adherents were persecuted, sometimes even to the death. Still, the beliefs spread. Parker Palmer, a Quaker theologian, wrote, "In the early church, it was said of the Christians, 'See how they love one another.'" This message of love—as evidenced in the parables, Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, and many other words attributed to Jesus—was so strong, that this new faith gained great popularity in Rome, despite hundreds of other competing religious sects at the time.

It was around 318 CE, when the leader of the Holy Roman Empire, Constantine, converted to Christianity that the Catholic Church came into being. With Constantine's conversion, the Catholic Church began to attain more and more power. Remind participants of the Council of Nicea in 325 CE, that made disbelief in the Trinity blasphemy and turned other beliefs—including many, like the Trinity, not found in the Bible—into church doctrine. The word "catholic" means "universal" and for nearly 1,500 years, the Catholic Church was the dominant Christian church in the Western world.

In 1054, the Great Schism divided the Church into two major forms of Christianity. This East/West divide finalized differences in doctrine between the Western world and Eastern areas, creating the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox religions. No other Christian denominations—Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, etc.—came into being until after 1517 with the Protestant Reformation.

During the Middle Ages, as Christianity became the dominant religion in the Western world, the church and its doctrines and practices continued to change from its

origins in the early Church. Some significant changes included:

- The crucifix (cross with the figure of Jesus on it) did not exist for nearly a thousand years. The image appeared after 900 CE.
- There were women theologians and church leaders in the early church for several hundred years. It was a mid-first millennium change to exclude them from leadership in the Catholic Church. That has changed again over time.
- Early church teachings focused on abundant, joyful life on earth. Only later (second millennium) did the focus shift to Christ's suffering, and the human fate to endure this life and strive to be rewarded in heaven after death.
- The Eucharist (communion) originally was the embodiment of the living Christ and his living teachings. Again, after 900 CE the official explanation darkened, the Eucharist becoming the body and blood of the crucified Christ.
- As the Church's organization, centered in Rome, grew in size, complexity and power, corruption and abuse of power also grew. Popes had their own armies and engaged in military campaigns to acquire, preserve or extend their power and finances. Clerics sold fake "relics" and indulgences—promises of reduced punishment for sins after death—to believers.

Not only did imagery and doctrine become grimmer, the Roman Catholic Church became more militant. In 1095 CE, the Catholic Church leadership called for a military assault on Jerusalem to reclaim it from "the infidels"—the city was held by Muslims at that time. These religiously sanctioned military campaigns against Muslims—and at times, Greek Orthodox Christians—were called the Crusades. Between 1095 and 1291, a series of attempts to reclaim Jerusalem and what the Church considered the Holy Land were conducted with initial successes, but ultimate failures. The Crusades may have also served to distract people from the troubles at home and give them something to work on together. Distribute Handout 2, [Brief Overview of the Crusades](#).

Give participants time to look at the handout. Then lead a discussion with questions such as the following:

- What are your thoughts about the Crusades?
- Could the Crusades happen today?
- Could the Children's Crusade happen today—groups of tens of thousands of children traveling without adults, recruiting more children as they went, on a religious quest? Why or why not?

- How could Christians reconcile the pain and suffering caused by war with the teachings of Jesus?
- Have there been violent periods in any other faith histories we have explored?
- Do the Crusades have a legacy that is relevant today? In what way? (Christian/Muslim relations, territorial issues in the Middle East, the man in Norway who murdered over 80 people in 2011 in his private war against Muslims and a multicultural Norway, etc.)

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: A PENTECOST PLAY (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 6, [Acts 2](#) (included in this document)
- Red construction paper
- Optional: Costumes and props

Preparation for Activity

- Construct the "tongues of flame": these are sometimes symbolized as red rose petals. Cut rose petal shapes from the red construction paper.
- Construct any other props you think will be useful.

Description of Activity

Invite the group to act out the scene of Pentecost. One leader or participant volunteer should narrate from Leader Resource 6, Acts 2. One or two on-actors can be stagehands and help with props. Possible roles are: Peter, other Apostles (up to 11), Jesus' family members, other disciples; crowd members to be converted. "Crowd members" can align themselves into tribes, if you have enough. They may choose to be from Egypt, Rome, Libya, or any of the other lands named in the text. If you have costume pieces, ask tribe members to dress alike. If you have youth who do not wish to act, invite them to help as stagehands. Do not distribute the rose petals.

Give copies of Leader Resource 6 to actors. Basic instructions might be helpful. Tell the group that the tongues of flame will be represented by red construction paper rose petals. They should wait until touched by them before being filled with the Holy Spirit. Mourners (Apostles, family, disciples) might gather together and look sad, moan, hug each other, cry, etc. The actors playing bystanders may want to get in groups of 2 or 3 and decide what business they are taking care of in the city. Give the actors 10 minutes to make decisions and rehearse.

Before beginning the play, invite everyone to sit quietly, close their eyes (if comfortable) and listen to as you set the mood, saying:

Remember that this is an important and serious event to billions of people all over the world. This is a story about two groups of people. One group is composed of people who are in town, just going about their daily business: cooking, shopping, or trading. Some of these people live in Jerusalem; some are from out of town. They dress differently and speak different languages.

The other group is a group of mourners. The Apostles, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Jesus' brothers, and other men and women are gathered to comfort each other. Someone they loved has been taken from them: a son, a brother, a friend, a wise and gentle teacher. He was murdered, rose from the dead, but then ascended into heaven, saying they would hear from him again. But it has been ten days and they feel lost and sad.

The stagehands (leaders or participants) can make wind noises and drop the rose petals over the actors to represent the tongues of flame.

After the reenactment, invite everyone to discuss the story.

How did it feel to reenact their part? Could participants understand the grief of the followers?

Could they understand how the amazement as people began to communicating with each other in languages they did not understand? What does this mean—why did the Holy Spirit enable people to speak to each other in native tongues?

Ask if anyone knows the story of the Tower of Babel from the Hebrew Scriptures. If not, tell them that in the beginning, everyone spoke the same language because they were all descendants from the first humans. But because people started to think too much of themselves, God struck them, and afterward people spoke in many different tongues and no longer understood each other. This caused fracture and separation into different tribes and nations. Here, the Holy Spirit—a gift from God—unites tribes by enabling people to hear members of different nations in their own native tongues. Through the Holy Spirit, people are reunited into one tribe—the followers of Jesus.

What was it about the Holy Spirit that enticed people to become baptized?

Though the Bible never explicitly professes a Trinity, the Holy Spirit, which is manifest here, is the third member of what Trinitarian Christians today believe is the Trinity. Explore how the three parts interact: God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Acknowledge that the Holy Spirit can be confusing. Not all Christians even agree on its nature and much is still written about the way the Holy Spirit is manifest and what exactly it embodies. Also, note that though the vast majority of Christians believe in the Trinity, not all do. Unitarian Universalist Christians and other denominations, such as Jehovah Witnesses, believe in only one God.

Explain that this is considered the beginning of the Christian religion because those who experienced Pentecost became the core group of believers.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

11: STORY: THE LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

Adapted from Christian scripture, New Revised Standard Version.

Jesus of Nazareth, baby of a poor Jewish family, was born in a stable in Bethlehem in the region of Galilee. His parents, Mary and Joseph, had traveled there as required by law for the Roman census. Jesus learned the trade of his father, a carpenter. The Bible states that as a boy he was filled with wisdom.

He did not always follow the rules. The only Bible story of Jesus as a child tells of his going to Jerusalem with his family for a huge, week-long Passover festival. When the family began the journey home, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph thought the 12-year-old was with friends, and he wasn't missed until the end of the day. Frantic, they eventually found him back in Jerusalem. He had been in the great temple all day, discussing religious matters with the rabbis. Mary and Joseph were furious, but Jesus said to his parents, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2: 49) Jesus was not referring to Joseph; the scriptures suggest the father he was referring to was God.

Jesus returned home and lived a quiet life until he was about 31 years old. At that time, he traveled to the region of Judaea to seek John the Baptist, a revered holy man who preached that the messiah anticipated by Jewish prophets would soon arrive. Jesus asked John to baptize him in the River Jordan. John protested, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus said, "Let it be so now," so John agreed and baptized Jesus (Matthew 3: 14-15). After his baptism, Jesus fasted and prayed in the desert for forty days. When he emerged from the desert, he began his ministry. In the biblical chapter of Acts, the Apostle Peter describes Jesus in this simple way: "He went about doing good." Indeed, for the three years following his baptism—and three years was all that remained of his life—this is exactly what Jesus did: he traveled almost constantly, mostly on foot, around the region near Jerusalem, preaching and teaching the love of God.

Jesus taught differently from other rabbis. He taught that there was a higher authority than earthly law, even than Judaic Law, and that being true to that higher moral law was more important than anything else. He even delivered a New Commandment which he said superseded all others. While the core of the existing commandments could be said to be "Obey," the core of

the New Commandment was "Love." Jesus said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." Another time Jesus said: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (Mark 12: 30-31).

Some Jewish authorities were incensed that Jesus would presume to offer a new commandment and claim it outranked commandments they had lived by and transmitted loyally for thousands of year. They did not believe Jesus was the messiah that their faith had prophesied. They considered Jesus dangerous, a blasphemer, a charismatic charlatan who undermined the Jewish faith. They challenged his authority and told Jesus to stop, but he would not.

Jesus continued preaching and helping people. He fed them, healed them, and encouraged them to be kind and forgiving to one another. He also taught in simple stories called parables which made important ideas easy to understand. This endeared Jesus to the common people, but Jewish and civic leaders were suspicious of his influence and intentions.

In Jesus' first year of preaching, he gathered twelve loyal followers to travel with him, the Apostles. Jesus did not seek fame, but his fame grew. Crowds gathered and followed him wherever he went. Authorities became increasingly worried about his influence and concerned that people would defy their authority and follow Jesus. When they heard Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, some conspired to kill him.

Elders of the Jewish priesthood bribed Judas, one of the Apostles, with thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus. When Judas identified Jesus with a kiss, soldiers arrested Jesus and hauled him before Caiaphas the high priest for judgment. With very little evidence, Caiaphas condemned Jesus of blasphemy. They beat Jesus, cursed him, spat on him. Caiaphas did not have the authority to order an execution, however; only Pontius Pilate, the civil governor, could do that, so the following morning they took Jesus before Pilate. Pilate tried to talk the clamoring crowd out of their demand to see Jesus crucified—a gruesome and brutal form of execution that was common at the time. But the people "shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified.'" Pilate gave in to this pressure, but declared himself "innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matthew 27: 23-24). He had Jesus publicly whipped, then turned him over to the mob.

Jesus was tortured by the mob: jeered at, spat on, stabbed, made to wear a crown of thorns, made to walk to his own execution site carrying the huge cross on which he would be crucified. Finally, they nailed his

hands and feet to the cross and left him hanging in the sun to die. It took hours. At last he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and died (Mark 14: 34).

Throughout his life, Jesus never traveled farther than ninety miles from the place he was born. He preached for only three years. He taught love, forgiveness, and mercy, yet was treated with brutality. Perhaps the final abuse of him helped create the very result the authorities feared: in the end, this fervent, barefooted, itinerant preacher did change the world.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 11: HANDOUT 1: LORD'S PRAYER

Adapted from Christian scripture, various editions.

Matthew 6:9-13

9 This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread

12 And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 11: HANDOUT 2: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CRUSADES

The Crusades (1095-1291 CE) were a series of military campaigns by Christians primarily against the Muslims holding Jerusalem. The purpose was to regain control of Jerusalem—called the "City of God" by Christians—the city where Jesus had taught and was crucified. Muslims were equally determined to hold the city, where the Islamic prophet Muhammad had taught. This led to some of the most savage combat in human history, terrible atrocities by both sides, and the loss of millions of lives. The estimated population of Europe in 1200 was 60 million; however, since the average life expectancy was about 35 at that time, the deaths of 3-5 million adults could have meant the loss of almost a fourth of the adult population of Europe. Given that the Black Plague would develop in Europe in 1347, wiping out a third of the entire population in five years, it was a perilous time.

First Crusade	1095-1099
Second Crusade	1147-1149
Third Crusade	1189-1192
Fourth Crusade	1201-1204
Children's Crusade (see Note)	1212
Fifth Crusade	1218-1221
Sixth Crusade	1228-1229
Seventh Crusade	1248-1254
Eighth Crusade	1270

Note: The Children's Crusade consisted of two groups totaling 50,000 children. Neither group reached the Holy Land, so none died in battle. However, many died from starvation, exhaustion, or exposure, and when their boats never reached shore, it was presumed many were drowned or captured and sold into slavery. Almost none of the 50,000 returned home.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

11: HANDOUT 3: CHRISTIANITY

FACT SHEET

Founded/Created: 30 CE (crucifixion of Jesus)

Adherents: 2.1 billion — 1.13 billion Catholics; 225 million Orthodox; 970 million Protestants

Ranking: First; the most populous religion on earth. Catholicism alone would be second, behind Islam

Prophets: Jesus of Nazareth, called Jesus Christ

Texts: Holy Bible, a collection of books organized as Hebrew and Christian Scripture

Clergy: The Pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church; the Patriarch of Constantinople is the head of the Orthodox Church; Protestant denominations do not have comparable heads. Catholic and most Protestant denominations are typically but not universally hierarchical. Training, advancement, and selection/assignment of clergy vary widely among denominations.

Symbols: Cross, crucifix

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

Jesus is Divine, the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior—belief among traditional Christians in Jesus being the true Son of God, whose sacrifice made possible human salvation

Trinity—doctrine of one God in three parts: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not taught by Jesus but introduced by the Church in the third century CE. Historically, Unitarians were those who believed in the divinity of Jesus but rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, averring instead the unity of God

Virgin Birth—doctrine that Mary, mother of Jesus, became pregnant through an act of God, without her ever having sexual relations

Resurrection—doctrine of Jesus's return to life three days after his crucifixion and death

Easter—festival celebrating the resurrection of Jesus

Ascension—festival celebrating the physical rising of Christ's body to heaven, forty days after the resurrection

Pentecost—festival fifty days after Jesus' resurrection (ten days after Ascension) when the Holy Spirit descended into the disciples who preached in tongues (the language of whoever they were talking to, whether they knew the language before or not) and baptized thousands of new believers in one day

Eucharist, Communion, Lord's Supper—sharing of bread and wine, in worship, symbolizing the body and blood of Jesus Christ

Reformation—16th century events in Western Europe in with the Christian Church split into Catholic and Protestant denominations

Martin Luther—German monk and reformer who launched the Protestant Reformation in 1517

The Pope—Head of the Catholic Church. There has been a continuous succession of Popes since the Apostle Peter

Papal Infallibility—Roman Catholic doctrine that the Pope is incapable of error or deception in religious matters. Papal infallibility is considered a gift of God

Saints—(in Catholicism) people who led exceptionally holy lives and are believed to have performed miracles are canonized by the Catholic Church. Catholics pray to saints, especially Mary, mother of Jesus, as well as to God and Jesus

Intercessory Prayer—prayer which requests divine action or intervention. Catholics believe saints as well as God and Jesus respond to intercessory prayer

Satan/the Devil—the malevolent entity who seeks to lead humans astray and separate them from God

Sin—transgression of divine law, especially consciously

Confession—process whereby a Catholic confesses sins to a priest, expresses remorse, is assigned penance, and is absolved (forgiven) of the sincerely confessed sins

Grace—the freely given favor and love of God, especially the gift of forgiveness for sin. In Catholic and other Christian doctrine, humans are born with sin, and need God's grace to achieve salvation

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- Concept that individuals are responsible for their behavior
- Belief in the equal worth of every person
- Importance of treating others well, as one wishes to be treated
- Actively working to relieve suffering of the less fortunate
- In *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), many readings and hymns are from the Christian tradition.

Unitarian Universalist Christians:

Unitarianism and Universalism both started as Christian faiths. Most of the founding figures of Unitarian Universalism considered themselves Christian, although by definition at odds with traditional Christianity. Universalists—by not believing in eternal hell—and Unitarians—by not believing in the Trinity—were and are not considered Christian by doctrinaire Christians. See the [UU Christian Heritage](http://www.uuchristian.org/) (at www.uuchristian.org/) page.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 11: LEADER RESOURCE 1: PATRON SAINTS

One unique feature of Catholicism is its saints. Thousands of people have been sainted by the Catholic Church, meaning they are officially recognized as exemplars of Christian faith, having exhibited the power of God in their lives in remarkable ways. Saints are thought to be accessible to believers through prayer, and are considered to be guardians of specific groups of people. Often Catholics will have a patron saint whose life or works they feel drawn to, but they may also pray to other patron saints for certain reasons (for example, praying to St. Francis to help a sick pet). Here is a small sample of patron saints.

Accountants	St. Matthew	Actors	St. Genesius
Archaeologists	St. Helen	Animals	St. Francis of Assisi
Art	St. Catharine of Bologna	Athletes	St. Sebastian
Bee Keepers	St. Ambrose	Boys	St. John Bosco
Brides	St. Nicholas	Cancer Patients	St. Peregrine Laziosi
Children	St. Nicholas	Clergy	St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows
Comedians	St. Vitus	Cooks	St. Thomas the Apostle
Earaches	St. Polycarp	Falsely Accused	St. Raymond Nonnatus
Girls	St. Agnes, St. Maria Goretti	Grandparents	St. Ann, St. Joachim
Greetings	St. Valentine	Impossible Causes	St. Frances Xavier Cabrini
Internet	St. Isidore of Seville	Jewelers	St. Eligius
Journalists	St. Frances de Sales	Learning	St. Ambrose
Lost items	St. Anthony of Padua	Lovers	St. Valentine
Monks	St. John the Baptist	Painters	St. Luke
Philosophers	St. Catherine of Alexandria	Physicians	St. Luke, Sts. Cosmas, Damian
Pilots	St. Therese	Poets	St. Columba
Politicians	St. Thomas More	Poor	St. Lawrence
Race Relations	St. Martin de Porres	Savings	St. Anthony Claret
Scholars	St. Brigid of Kildare	Scientists	St. Albert the Great
Teachers	St. Gregory the Great	Teenagers	St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Maria Goretti
Television	St. Clare	Veterinarians	St. Eligius
Waiters, Waitresses	St. Martha	Workers	St. Joseph
Writers	St. Francis de Sales		

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 11: LEADER RESOURCE 2: CHRISTIANITY BACKGROUND

(Label a sheet of newsprint "Christian Beliefs.")

Ask participants what Christians believe. List their responses on newsprint. Remind participants if necessary that we are not critiquing the beliefs. Make sure the following are included:

- One God — the God of Abraham
- Trinity -- does not appear in the Bible; introduced by the church in the third century CE. One God in three parts: Father, Son, Holy Spirit/Ghost. Jesus was considered both wholly God and wholly man. The Trinity has been central to Catholicism and mainstream Protestant denominations since it was formalized.
- Sin — transgression of divine law for which people must be forgiven or punished
- Satan — the Devil is very real, a powerful, active being who tries to tempt and trick humans into sin.
- Heaven and Hell — doctrine holds that the good will go to heaven, the evil to everlasting hell. Some teach that all non-Christians will go to hell, some that baptism assures someone a place in heaven.
- Purgatory — (Catholic only) a post-death destination for those who have sinned but can be redeemed. In purgatory, souls suffer for a period of time to do penance for their sins, but then are forgiven and allowed into heaven
- Conversion — because traditional Christians are certain nonbelievers will suffer in everlasting hell, they feel it is urgent to convert people to Christianity. They believe they are offering eternal peace and happiness, and are saving people from a terrible fate.
- If youth name some beliefs that are Catholic, but not shared by all Christians, list them, but note the difference.

Say:

In this workshop, we will focus on Jesus: his life and some of the stories and words attributed to him. We will hear a little about the early Church. The second workshop on Christianity deals more closely with the establishment of the church, include the birth of Protestantism.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

11: LEADER RESOURCE 3:

PARABLES

From Christian scripture, New Revised Standard Version.

1. Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)

"He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

2. House upon the Rocks (Matthew 7)

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"

3. Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13: 36-43)

"Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field. He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!'"

4. The Physician (Mark 2: 15-17)

"And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax-collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax-collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax-collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard this, he said to them, 'those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'"

5. Light under a Bushel (Mark 4:21-23)

"He said to them, 'Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!'"

6. Dinner Guest (Luke 14: 16-24)

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, "Come; for everything is ready now." But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, "I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my apologies." Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my apologies." Another said, "I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come." So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." And the slave said, "Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room." Then the master said to the slave, "Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

7. A Friend at Midnight (Luke 11: 5-13)

"And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'"

8. The Lost Coin (Luke 15: 8-10)

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house,

and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost." Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

9. A King Plans for War (Luke 14: 31-33)

"Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."

10. The True Vine (John 15: 1-10)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear

more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 11: LEADER RESOURCE 4: BEATITUDES

From Christian scripture, New Revised Standard Version.

A	B
Blessed are the poor in spirit:	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn	for they shall be comforted
Blessed are the meek	for they shall inherit the earth
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness	for they shall be filled
Blessed are the merciful	for they shall obtain mercy
Blessed are the pure in heart:	for they shall see God
Blessed are the peacemakers	for they shall be called the children of God
Blessed are the peacemakers	for they shall be called the children of God
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.	Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

11: LEADER RESOURCE 5:

PENTECOST AND DAMASCUS

Part 1: Pentecost

The most sacred season of the Christian liturgical year surrounds the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Holy week, the week before Easter, chronicles Jesus' triumphant return to Jerusalem, his Last Supper with the Apostles, his betrayal by Judas, his trial and his execution on Good Friday. On Easter Sunday, the third day after his execution, Jesus rose from the dead and resumed teaching the Apostles for the following forty days. Forty days after Easter, he rose bodily to heaven as the Apostles watched. This day is known as the Ascension. Ten days after the Ascension, fifty days after Easter, is one of the most important days in the Christian calendar: Pentecost (meaning "fiftieth day").

In the liturgical calendar, Pentecost is as important as Christmas and nearly as important as Easter. Christmas was the birth of the Savior; Easter was his victory over death. Pentecost was the gift of faith, the power to believe and trust in God's preeminent love as expressed through sending to humankind his son, Jesus.

The family and friends of Jesus were together in Jerusalem. Jesus had risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and said they would hear from him again. But it had been ten days and they were feeling lost and sad.

Suddenly, the spirit of God descended into them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in unknown languages. Bystanders, people from many different countries, heard the disciples and understood them. They were amazed because everyone in the area was hearing the same story... but in their native tongues. It was as though a language translator program was being used. The disciples themselves were amazed. One of them, Simon Peter, realized this was the work of the Lord. He addressed a huge crowd gathered outside, speaking of Jesus Christ and the need to repent. Three thousand souls converted to Christianity in that public square in Jerusalem and were baptized in a single afternoon. This is an important milestone in the birth of Christianity. Many disciples went forth to preach about Jesus. Peter was important: he eventually went to preach in Rome and is considered the father of the Catholic Church.

Part 2: Damascus

It was also necessary to spread the word widely. In later chapters of Acts we hear of another important disciple. A man named Saul, who was persecuting Christians, was journeying to the city of Damascus to capture Christians and bring them before the courts. While on the road to Damascus, he had an encounter with Jesus that left him blind. After 3 days, Jesus spoke to a believer named Ananias and said he would work through him to cure Saul's blindness. Ananias was afraid because he knew Saul was searching for Christians to arrest, but he did as Jesus instructed and cured Saul in Jesus's name. Saul became a believer, was baptized, and started to preach about Jesus. He changed his name to Paul (remember prophets from the Hebrew Scriptures who changed their names after conversion?) and went on missionary trips to spread Christianity far beyond Jerusalem. Particularly, Paul felt inspired to convert Gentiles (non-Jews). Paul's actions were other milestones on the path to the founding of the Catholic Church. The phrase, "road to Damascus" has come to mean a dramatic, insightful turning point in someone's life.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 11: LEADER RESOURCE 6: ACTS 2

Acts 2: 1-24, 32-33, and 36-47, New Revised Standard Version.

Here is an excerpt of the scriptural story of Pentecost:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

"In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

'You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear...

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.'

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.' And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds* (at javascript:void(0);) to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home* (at javascript:void(0);) and ate their food with glad and generous* (at javascript:void(0);) hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

FIND OUT MORE

Study Jesus has [Christian stories and study guides](http://www.studyjesus.com/) (at www.studyjesus.com/).

[The Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship](http://www.uuchristian.org/) (at www.uuchristian.org/) is an organization for UU

Christians. Visit their website to get more information about the relationship between these two religions. Well researched commentary on what the Bible says about helping the poor can be read on [Zompist.com](http://www.zompist.com) (at www.zompist.com/meetthepoor.html).

WORKSHOP 12: CHRISTIANITY 2

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The more I examine Christianity, the more I am struck with its universality. I see in it a religion made for all regions and all times, for all classes and all stages of society. — William Ellery Channing, Unitarian minister

This workshop continues the exploration of Christianity with a focus on Martin Luther, the launching of the Protestant Reformation, and the continued spread of the religion all over the world. There are 970 million Protestants in the world. Christianity is the largest religion; however, if measured separately, Protestantism would be the fourth largest religion after Islam, Catholicism, and Atheism/Agnosticism.

While Unitarianism and Universalism both evolved from the opportunity the Protestant Reformation created for new religious organization and theology, our contemporary liberal faith is very different from the original dissident faiths. Youth will likely find it difficult to see the liberating effect of the Reformation when dogma and intolerance still characterized these reformers. Our distant theological ancestors, particularly the Calvinists, did not share the Unitarian Universalist view of human nature. "Total inherited depravity" has a decidedly different ring from "Inherent worth and dignity." Recognize that these smart, hardworking, brave people were trying to understand God and their world just as we are. They drew different conclusions from ours, but we may respect and relate to their courage, their refusal to follow a system that did not make sense to them, and their commitment to each other and the search for Truth.

Help participants appreciate the struggle of these reformers and the importance of this religious revolt to Western political and our own religious history.

Activity 3, Christian Diversity, requires advance planning and research.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Continue to explore fundamental aspects of Christianity

- Explore the Protestant Reformation and its relationship to the contemporary religious landscape
- Acquaint participants with some of the variety of doctrines in Protestant denominations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Hear and discuss the life of Martin Luther and his launching of the Protestant Reformation
- Learn the 25 largest Christian denominations in the United States
- Understand the origin of Protestantism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story — Martin Luther and the 95 Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences	30
Activity 2: U.S. Religions	15
Activity 3: Christian Diversity	20
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	5
Activity 5: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Second Greatest Commandment	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: Congregationalism	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

While the doctrine of redemptive suffering—that Christ died for the sins of humankind—is not meaningful to many Unitarian Universalists, it is essential to put this and other theological tenets in the context of the Protestant Reformation we are exploring. Of course, it is also true that most contemporary Protestant theologies embrace many of these tenets such as

original sin and heaven and hell. Many UUs find UUism after rejecting these elements of traditional Christian theology. Perhaps you are one such "come-outer."

It is important to put aside any resentment or defensiveness in examining the Christian beliefs in this workshop.

Perhaps it will be helpful to reflect on the core teachings of Jesus of Nazareth whose message of love, forgiveness and generosity can still inspire us to be our best selves. Whether or not he was divine, whether or not there is a Trinity, whether any of the other teachings that have grown up around his story over two thousand years speak to you, this message endures.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Copies of the Bible in as many different translations as possible, including other languages
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Seek as much diversity in versions as possible. It would be good to include at least a King James, New American, New Revised Standard Version, and at least one that uses common American English, such as the Common English Bible.
- If you have a computer and Internet access, youth can go to a website that shows the same verse in different translations, such as [BibleGateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com/) (at www.biblegateway.com/) or [Oremus Bible Browser](http://bible.oremus.org/) (at bible.oremus.org/).

Description of Activity

Participants examine different translations of the Holy Bible.

Invite youth to browse the different translations available of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures in the Bible. Say that these are only a few of the dozens of translations that exist. Most denominations have favorite translations. It has also been translated into over 2,000 languages. Youth might compare the translations by reading the same verse in different translations. Which do they prefer? Do they like the heightened formality of one version or the easy to read nature of another? What are the implications of the differences in translations for those who believe the Bible is the word of God?

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Leader Resource 1, [Christianity 2 Background](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- World map or globe

Description of Activity

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Answer questions remaining from the last workshop.

Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Read, or share in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 1, Christianity 2 Background. List important terms from the resource on newsprint.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — MARTIN LUTHER AND THE 95 THESES ON THE POWER AND EFFICACY OF INDULGENCES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Martin Luther and the 95 Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences](#)" (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Image of Theses](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Set and costume pieces

Preparation for Activity

- Make four copies of the story for volunteer readers.
- Make copies of Leader Resource 2, Image of Theses.
- Optional: If readily accessible, provide a few costume pieces (such as robes) and/or set pieces (desk, chair, pen, Bible or platform for speaking).

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the story and the creation of the Protestant movement.

Seek four volunteers to help tell the story. Assign parts (narrator, three readers who will personify Martin Luther), give them each a copy of the story and a few minutes to look over their lines. If you are creating a set, the non-speaking youth can put the props in place while the speakers look over their parts.

Have participants perform the story. Thank the volunteers.

Ask for participants' initial reactions. What did they think of the story? What was most interesting about it? What did they think was most important?

Pass around copies of Leader Resource 2, Image of Theses, for participants to see the original text.

Continue discussion with the following points:

- After he was declared an outlaw, Luther was kidnapped by a friend and taken to a castle where he hid for a year, wearing a disguise and going by an assumed name. Was this cowardly? Was it smart? He continued to write while he was in hiding, eventually returned to public life, preaching and writing prolifically, including rewriting the Mass and composing many hymns. In your opinion, would Luther have had more or less impact if he had allowed himself to be martyred—in other words, arrested, tried, and executed by the Church for being a heretic? Would his death have been more influential than his teachings? Could Jesus' impact have been even greater if he had hidden from authorities and continued teaching? Why or why not?
- Luther translated the Bible into German so ordinary people could read it. Before, it was printed only in Latin, meaning only the well-educated had access. The Catholic Church disapproved of his translation; for the Church, Latin was the official language of the Bible, which insured that people needed clergy to deliver and interpret the sacred text. What do you think about Luther's decision? Was his wish to make the Bible directly accessible to more people worth disobeying Church authority? Would making the Bible available in the common language encourage independence among people? Would it have the effect of undermining Church authority? Why or why not? In your opinion, would that effect be a good thing?
- There are now several dozen branches of Catholicism, but there are over 30,000 Protestant denominations. Why such a difference? Perhaps the initial "I don't agree with that; I'll do it differently" impulse of the Reformation continues, so every time a significant difference of opinion emerges, another denomination results. Is that impulse positive? What might some negative aspects be? How did the Protestant Reformation affect the history of Unitarian Universalism?
- Many Christian denominations consider themselves the One True Church, believing that followers of other denominations do not have the truth and will go to hell. Consider the following questions carefully and with an open mind: Why would such a belief be appealing to believers? Would it confer a responsibility on believers toward other people? If so, what responsibility?
- The Christian doctrine that Jesus was both fully God and fully man seems to be an irreconcilable contradiction. Unitarian Universalists believe that 1) each person is the ultimate authority to choose what faith is right for them, and 2) we are right in our conviction that people should have this freedom. Are these beliefs contradictions? Why or why not? Can contradictory statements both be true? Can you think of any examples?
- Ultimately, Luther's most serious crime was encouraging independence: 1) independence for people to think for themselves and use reason in their faith; 2) independence from the Roman Catholic Church because a person's relationship with God was personal, not reliant on clergy, and only God, not the Church through indulgences, could forgive sins. Why was this independence so threatening? The Catholic Church feared that open debate of fundamental issues would destroy the Church. Has this turned out to be the case? Has active public disputation of theological issues ultimately strengthened or weakened Christianity?
- Martin Luther opposed indulgences because they were a corruption, undermining the highest values the Church was supposed to be embodying. Invite youth to consider: is there a group or organization they are involved or familiar with that engages in practices that contradict or ignore the very values they espouse? (Examples: an environmental organization that wastes energy or water or does not recycle; a school that teaches good health but sells junk food on campus.) Ask:
 - If you were to write Theses, alerting some group or organization to what you consider abuses of power or inconsistencies, what would your document concern?
 - Are some kinds of abuses or inconsistencies more offensive than others? If so, what would those be? Why?
 - What organization would you want to give a wake-up call to?
 - Is there some area where you think you could use a wake up call, some way in which you are living in contradiction of your own values?

ACTIVITY 2: U.S. RELIGIONS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [25 Largest Christian Denomination in the United States, 2007](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Description of Activity

Participants review a list of Christian denominations in the United States.

Ask a volunteer to name a Christian denomination. Define "denomination" as "a religious group, usually including many local churches, often larger than a sect."

Invite participants to guess at the 25 largest Christian denominations in the United States in 2007. Write the names on newsprint. Remind youth that Catholics are Christians, if the Catholic Church is not named. After brainstorming refer to Handout 1, 25 Largest Christian Denomination in the United States, 2007 and give the group the correct ranking.

Ask:

- Are there any surprises?
- Did you know that Catholicism is the largest denomination in the United States? Did you know there are subcategories of many Protestant denominations?
- How many of these denominations have you encountered—either by visiting churches or having friends or family members who belong to the denomination? Mark any denomination the group will discuss in future workshops or encounter in engagement.

ACTIVITY 3: CHRISTIAN DIVERSITY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Several phone books, business pages or Yellow Pages (C)
- Newspapers
- Any other listing that shows a variety of churches in your area
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- If your local newspapers include a religion section or listings/ads from churches, pull these pages out and bring to the workshop.
- This activity involves seeing the diversity of Christian churches in your area. If you have trouble finding material for the youth to use to

this effect, consider other options, such as printing out material researched online or contacting your Chamber of Commerce or Visitor's Bureau for more information.

- Copy the workshop quote on newsprint and post.

Description of Activity

Participants discover the range of Christian churches that service unique ethnic and racial populations.

Remind youth that in the story of Pentecost, disciples of Jesus started speaking languages they never knew and, in this way, were able to spread the news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to people from lands far and wide.

Read the workshop quote. Make sure the group knows that Channing was an influential Unitarian minister who lived from 1780-1842. If the Welcoming and Entering activity was done, ask how the range of Bible translations has to do with Channing's quote?

Distribute the material you gathered that demonstrates the ranges of church services in your community. In particular, look for churches that hold services in different languages (Korean, Chinese, Spanish are just a few you might see represented.) or to congregations comprised mostly of people from one ethnic group (Catholic churches in black neighborhoods, African Methodist Episcopal churches or Greek Orthodox churches are examples.)

Ask:

- Have you ever attended a Christian church with services in another language than English? Have you ever attended a Christian church with a congregation comprised mostly of one ethnic group or a minority population? If you will be engaging with such a church during this program, share that information.
- Are you aware of any friends of yours who attend such a church?
- Christianity has a wide appeal. Part of the widespread nature of the religion can also be contributed to evangelical denominations and sects, which lead missions and build churches in parts of the world that had never heard of Christianity. It must also be acknowledged that colonialism spread Christianity: when the nations of Western Europe—such as Spain, France, Portugal, Holland, and Great Britain—took over countries and regions in Africa, Asia, South and Central America, Australia, and the Caribbean and other islands, they brought their religion with them. Many peoples were forced to give up their indigenous religion and worship

the god of their conquerors, who were often also their enslavers.

- What is the fastest growing religion today? [Islam] According to information from the United Nations, Islam outpaced Catholicism as the most populous religion. Do you think this fact contributes to tensions amongst the Christians and Muslims? Though Islam does seek converts (unlike Judaism, which does not actively seek converts), the high growth rate is most attributable to high birth rates, longer life expectancies, and the large number of young Muslims of childbearing age. The Muslim population in the U.S. is predicted to double over the next 20 years. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2011) Many Christian denominations in the United States are decreasing in number. This is due partly to an increase in the number of Americans who identify as "spiritual, but not religious" and who do not feel allegiance to any religious denomination. Do you see this trend among your friends and/or family?

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [Christianity Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document) (Workshop 11)
- Handout 3, [Nicene Creed](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

Redistribute the Christianity Fact Sheet from Workshop 11. What in today's workshop illustrates how Christianity is a source for our living faith today? Review the seven Principles. Are any of the statements in the Principles in line with Christian theology or in conflict with it? Read Handout 3, Nicene Creed. Explain that this profession of faith, in slightly different forms, is the creed Catholic and many Protestant Christians recite and believe. If you have engaged with a Christian community in worship, ask if participants remember the reciting of the creed. These beliefs were the result of the council of Nicea, 325 CE. Remind youth that it was with this same council that Unitarians became heretics because of their disbelief in the Trinity. Answer any remaining questions about Christianity or, if you cannot answer immediately, seek answers for the next workshop.

If you will be engaging with a Protestant community, give participants any information they need.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line
- Sticky notes and fine point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Hang Religions Timeline visibly in the space.
- Have map or globe handy.
- Create sticky note saying, "Protestantism, 1517." Keep it out of sight.

Description of Activity

The time line is updated to add Protestantism.

Ask participants if they remember the year Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences to the Wittenberg Church door. It was 1517. Ask participants to notice the significant length of time Christianity existed before this major branching took place. Note also how young Protestantism is compared with Catholicism—only about a quarter the age. However, Protestants, and Unitarian Universalists (the first Unitarian Churches being founded after King John Sigismund of Transylvania legalized religious freedom in 1568, influenced by the Protestant Reformation) still benefit from the wealth of history, writings, and theological development of the millennium and a half of Christian development before the Protestant Reformation. (Place marker on time line.) Ask who remembers where the Protestant Reformation began. Have a volunteer locate Germany on the map. Share that there are 970 million Protestants and 1.13 billion Catholics worldwide. Together these numbers make Christianity the largest religion in the world.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster with closing words
- Chalice
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Taking It Home handouts for all participants.
- Post closing words if needed.

Description of Activity

Invite youth to form a circle. Have everyone join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong

with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Materials for designing and printing stickers

Preparation for Activity

- You can order customizable love stickers from [Zazzle](http://www.zazzle.com/love+stickers?pg=3) (at www.zazzle.com/love+stickers?pg=3).
- Stickers and Charts have free stickers you can download and print, including [these](http://www.stickersandcharts.com/valentines.php) (at www.stickersandcharts.com/valentines.php) for Valentines Day. Avery makes sticker paper. Acrylic spray is handy to prevent ink from running.

Description of Activity

In Matthew 22: 34-40, Jesus was asked, "What is the greatest commandment?" He replied that it is to love God. However, he went on to say, the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Ask youth if they believe there is enough love in the world. They will probably say, "No." After all, every day we hear news of acts of violence and hatred. Brainstorm ways you could, as a group or individually, work to increase love. One possible way is to bring acts of love to everyone's attention. You could help do this by purchasing love stickers for the group. They could say "love" or be hearts, or the group can design its own. Participants can order pre-printed stickers or purchase materials to print their own stickers as a group.

Once participants have stickers, encourage them to keep the stickers with them at all times. When they witness someone committing an act of love or generosity or caring, they can give that person a sticker and ask the person to wear it to remind everyone of the importance of love. It could become a fad at your congregation or school. Perhaps people will start being nice to get the sticker. Love can be contagious!

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

How did the workshop go? Which activities worked well with the group? Were the challenging subjects engaged with energy and respect? Were participants willing to share aspects of their personal lives in the group? Did the youth seem to grasp the concepts involved? How

will the answers to these questions affect preparation for subsequent workshops?

TAKING IT HOME

They have no right to exercise power over us except insofar as we may have granted it to them.... We are all priests, as many of us as are Christians. —
Martin Luther

DURING TODAY'S WORKSHOP... We continued our exploration of Christianity by acting out the birth of Protestantism with Martin Luther. We looked at a ranking of Protestant denominations and the diversity of Christian churches in our area.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What does the Bible mean to you?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS FURTHER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

- The [Christian Bible Reference Site](http://www.twopaths.com/) (at www.twopaths.com/) has Bible stories and answers to frequently asked questions. It also has puzzles to increase your biblical literacy.
- Christianity, like other religions, finds ways to be relevant to today's youth. Go to [Creative Bible Studies](http://www.creativebiblestudy.com/youth-bible-study-lessons.html) (at www.creativebiblestudy.com/youth-bible-study-lessons.html) to see how this site connects Shrek, Pirates of the Caribbean, and the video game Halo to Christianity.
- Look through the Yellow Pages (C) under "churches." What can you tell about the Christian composition of your city by the number of different denominations represented in the phone book?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange with a Protestant church for your group to attend a Sunday worship service. Inquire if there will be a communion, and whether it is available to nonmembers or those who have not been baptized. Consider engagement with a historically African American church.
- Remind participants to wear appropriate clothing.
- Remind participants to be polite if their hosts offer literature, instruction, urge them to accept Christ as their Savior, or otherwise try to convert them.

Description of Activity

Youth attend a conservative Protestant worship service and discuss the event.

Meet beforehand to be sure participants are properly dressed and to review courteous behavior guidelines. Share information about the availability of communion. Suggest youth take note of the physical space. Usually evidence of the Protestant Reformation is apparent by the absence of elements rejected by the reformers: iconography (often only the cross and no saints), elaborate church building, incense, confessionals, or elaborate clerical vestments. Suggest also that they mark differences in the service itself, what liturgy is used, what it says, the emotional tone and style of the worship experience.

When the engagement is done, process the visit. Ask participants for their immediate responses:

- What was the experience like for them? Did it seem more or less familiar than the Catholic or Orthodox service? Were they made to feel welcome and important?
- Were there familiar elements or themes in the sermon? Did they notice mention or implication of Calvinist theology (for example, calling people "unworthy")? [Note: while elements of Calvinism have been roundly rejected by conservative Christianity—for example, Calvinists believe in infant baptism to wash babies of sin, but contemporary conservative Christians believe people must be old enough to choose Christ or baptism has no meaning and is heresy—the first and most important Calvinist teaching, the corrupt nature of humankind, is woven throughout most conservative Christian theology.]
- Could the sermon have been preached from a Unitarian Universalist pulpit? Why or why not?
- What was the atmosphere in the church like? Was it more or less formal than your church? Did the atmosphere seem fitting to the worship service? (For example, if the message was stark, were the surroundings also stark?)
- Were there teens and children in attendance?
- Was the group warmly and respectfully received?
- Were the teachings of Jesus evident in the church? Did they seem more or less evident than in the Catholic Church?
- Were there different roles for men and women?
- Did this seem like the kind of church Jesus would have wanted to spread his teachings? Why or why not?
- How would you compare your experience in a Catholic (or Orthodox) Church to your experience in this Protestant Church?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CONGREGATIONALISM (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Time piece (minutes)
- Handout 2, [Calvinism versus Historic Universalism](#) (included in this document)
- Table for two teams to sit facing each other
- Coin

Preparation for Activity

- Copies of Handout 2 for all participants.
- Prepare table, timer, newsprint and markers in the room.

Description of Activity

Youth hear brief history of Congregational churches in the United States and debate Calvinist and Universalist doctrine.

Share with participants the following:

In 1534, King Henry VIII broke with the Pope and created the Church of England. He was not, however, advocating religious freedom. His motives were personal (divorce) and political (consolidating all power under his monarchy). English people who wanted change in the Anglican Church—which resembled the Roman Catholic Church from which it broke—soon began holding worship secretly. This was against the law, and became more and more dangerous. Eventually one group moved to Holland and in 1620 sailed to the British colony in America so they could worship as they chose. These immigrants are known as the Puritans—they sought to "purify" the Church of many of its trappings—and the churches they founded were congregational in organization. Congregational churches maintained that every church could govern itself free of any higher authority, could hire its own clergy, and could worship according to their own beliefs. In their new settlements in what would become Massachusetts, the Puritans did not extend religious freedom to others, but punished, executed, and banished dissenters.

These early congregational churches founded by the Puritans followed a harsh Calvinist theology. Ask if anyone is familiar with Calvinism. Then explain that Calvinist theology is based on five fundamental beliefs (write on newsprint, making first letter larger to spell TULIP down left side of the paper). These five tenets of Calvinism are:

- **Total Inherited Depravity.** The entire human race is depraved, in a state of irredeemable trespass and sin because of Adam and Eve's sin. Humans cannot save themselves. In pure Calvinism, babies are depraved at birth.
- **Unconditional Election.** (Also known as "predestination.") Because humans are born with sin, they cannot choose to follow God. God therefore chooses who will be saved and who will suffer eternal damnation. People's behavior does not determine their salvation; the choice was made before their birth.
- **Limited Atonement.** Since God chose who will be saved, Christ died only for those destined for salvation. All other people are still damned.
- **Irresistible Grace.** Being naturally depraved, human beings cannot follow God by choice. However, if a person is one of God's chosen, they cannot overcome or resist the power of God no matter what they may want.
- **Perseverance of the Saints.** Since people are inherently evil, they can only be saved if God elects them. If God has chosen someone, though, they cannot be "unsaved," no matter what they do.

Ask, what do you think of Calvinist doctrine?

Share that between 1620 and 1800, members of Congregational churches gradually turned toward more liberal theology. In the early 1800s, many of the oldest churches in the colonies became Unitarian, and many others kept the name Congregational, remained Trinitarian, but moved to a less literal interpretation of the Bible and a more hopeful view of humankind. The liberal movement continued, and in 1957, many (but not all) Congregational churches merged with the Evangelical and Reform Church to create the United Church of Christ one of the most liberal of mainstream Christian denominations. (In fact, the United Church of Christ worked with the Unitarian Universalist Association to create the Our Whole Lives sexuality education curriculum.)

Meanwhile, Universalist theology was emerging in the United States in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

There were Universalist ministers, mostly itinerants who roved the rural countryside preaching the love of God in contrast to the Calvinist view of God. When John Murray arrived to preach in the first Universalist Church on American soil, there were still Calvinist Congregational churches that would have thought most everything he had to say was blasphemous.

Universalism spread West to California and throughout the South, reaching peak membership around the time of the Civil War. It is estimated Universalism was the fifth largest religion in the United States at that time. Its belief in a loving, forgiving God, a chance for everyone to achieve salvation, and the core teachings of Jesus as a guide to a moral life, were very attractive messages. People who believed a Calvinist theology were alarmed by Universalism—especially the concept of universal salvation. How could society control people's behavior if they thought they could do terrible things and still go to heaven? It is interesting to note that today Christians who preach universal salvation are under attack by more fundamentalist Christians whose theology is related to Calvinism.

By 1961, the two liberal religious movements, Universalism and Unitarianism, had moved close enough together to merge into our present Unitarian Universalist Association. Both Unitarian and Universalist (as well as Trinitarian Congregational) churches were independent in organization, government and worship from any higher authority. Only the members of an individual church could make decisions about the life of that church. This is called "congregational polity," a freedom Unitarian Universalist churches still exercise today. However, Unitarian Universalism today looks far different from when both religions first were preached in this country.

Distribute Handout 2, Calvinism versus Historic Universalism. Make sure youth understand the beliefs in the handout represent historical Universalism of the 18th and 19th centuries, not Unitarian Universalism as practiced today. Allow the youth to choose a "side" to defend in a mock debate. If there is difficulty deciding, count off in twos to divide the group in half. Invite the defenders of Calvinism to sit together; and the defenders of Universalism to do the same. Use a table with the groups sitting on opposite sides if everyone will fit. Tell youth they will be allowed a three minute opening statement, then two points will be chosen by each side to debate. Suggest they select the ones they feel most strongly about or can most vigorously support.

Allow the participants a few minutes to consult together and choose an opening speaker. Flip a coin to decide which side goes first. After opening statements, ask the

group that spoke second to present their first point for two minutes. Then the other group responds, also in two minutes. The responding group then chooses a point to present, and so on.

After all points have been debated, allow each group a final two-minute statement.

At the conclusion of the debate, ask participants if they thought either side "won." Why or why not? What was the strongest point made? What would they have liked the chance to say? Did they wish they knew more about the Bible so they could quote passages to support their points?

Invite everyone to help reset the room.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 12: STORY: MARTIN LUTHER AND THE 95 THESES ON THE POWER AND EFFICACY OF INDULGENCES

By Greta Anderson.

NARRATOR:

Martin Luther was born in 1483 in what is now Germany. He was christened in the Roman Catholic Church, like everyone else in the Holy Roman Empire, which stretched through most of Europe at the time. He received his doctorate in theology from Wittenberg University in 1512. Five years later, in 1517, he nailed a list of 95 "theses", or arguments, to the door of the Wittenberg Church. Many of these arguments dealt with indulgences. At that time, it was not enough to confess one's sins. The Catholic Church encouraged people to secure their salvation by purchasing certificates called indulgences. This would clear a person of sin—for a while, until more sins accumulated, and another indulgence needed to be purchased.

Luther's act had great repercussions around Europe, but it also had repercussions in his life. The following three letters were written by Martin Luther just before and just after the nailing the theses to Wittenberg Church. The first is a letter from Martin Luther to Archbishop Albrecht written before his revolutionary act. In the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, archbishops rank just below the Pope.

FIRST READER:

Spare me, Most Reverend Father in Christ and Most Illustrious Prince, that I, the dregs of humanity, have so much boldness that I have dared to think of a letter to the height of your Sublimity. The Lord Jesus is my witness that, conscious of my smallness and baseness, I have long deferred what I am now shameless enough to do....

Papal indulgences for the building of St. Peter's are circulating under your most distinguished name... , and I grieve over the wholly false impressions which the people have conceived from them; to wit, — the unhappy souls believe that if they have purchased letters of indulgence they are sure of their salvation; again, that so soon as they cast their contributions into the money-box, souls fly out of purgatory; furthermore, that these graces are so great that there is no sin too great to be absolved, even, as they say (though the thing is impossible) if one had violated the Mother of God; again, that a man is free, through these indulgences, from all penalty and guilt.

NARRATOR:

The church used the money from indulgences for various purposes, and often to build grand cathedrals. Each bishop had his own cathedral, which served as his seat of power. A large, ornate cathedral helped glorify not only God but the bishop who presided there. But that is not Martin's main concern in this letter. He is worried about the souls of the parishioners. How does one absolve oneself of sins? Clearly not through money. What about good deeds? Luther said no. Human actions had no real power in matters of eternity. He was developing a brand new theology. In it, what mattered was how the person felt about his or her sins—whether or not she/he had inwardly surrendered to the total power and grace that is God.

This next letter was written from Martin to one of his teachers of theology at Wittenberg, around the time of the controversy.

SECOND READER:

I remember, dear Father, that once, among those pleasant and wholesome talks of thine, with which the Lord Jesus oftentimes gives me wondrous consolation, the word penitential was mentioned. ... we heard thee say as with a voice from heaven, that there is no true penitence which does not begin with love of righteousness and of God, and that this love, which others think to be the end and the completion of penitence, is rather its beginning.

After this it came about that, by the grace of the learned men who dutifully teach us Greek and Hebrew, I learned that this [Latin] word is in [the New Testament] Greek *metanoia* [meh-tuh-NOY-uh], and is derived from *meta* and *noun*, such that ... *metanoia* is a "coming to one's senses," and is a knowledge of one's own evil, gained after punishment has been accepted and error acknowledged; and this cannot possibly happen without a change in our heart and our love....

Depending on these things, I ventured to think those men false teachers who ascribed so much to works of penitence that they left us scarcely anything of penitence itself except trivial satisfactions and laborious confession, because, forsooth, they had derived their idea from the Latin words *poenitentiam agere* [pen-eh-TENSH-ee-yum uh-ZHAIR-eh], which indicate an action, rather than a change of heart, and are in no way an equivalent for the Greek *metanoia*.

NARRATOR:

Luther did not just wake up one day believing in something new. Hours and hours of study convinced him of the importance of faith rather than acts. Legends tell of Luther reading the Bible through the night by the light of a sputtering candle. To understand it better, he read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New

Testament in Greek. These are the languages in which the books were originally written.

By contrast, the Catholic Church conducted all of its services in Latin. The Bible it used was in Latin. Never mind that most people did not understand Latin! People were missing out on the meaning of their faith—and just following its forms, or rituals. In subsequent years, Luther translated the Bible into the common language, German, so that people could read it and understand it on their own.

Unfortunately, not everyone was so ready to go against the established power of the Church—least of all the Church itself. Shortly after nailing the 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church, Luther wrote this letter to the Pope.

THIRD READER:

I have heard evil reports about myself, most blessed Father, by which I know that certain friends have put my name in very bad odor with you and yours, saying that I have attempted to belittle the power of the keys and of the Supreme Pontiff. Therefore I am accused of heresy, apostasy, and perfidy, and am called by six hundred other names of ignominy. My ears shudder and my eyes are astounded. But the one thing in which I put my confidence remains unshaken—my clear and quiet conscience.

NARRATOR:

The Pope excommunicated him anyway. Exiled from the Catholic Church, Luther had no choice. If he could not reform Catholicism, he must start his own church. Thus began the Protestant Revolution in Europe.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 12: HANDOUT 1: 25 LARGEST CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, 2012

[The 2012 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches](#). Used with permission.

1. The Catholic Church
2. The Southern Baptist Convention
3. The United Methodist Church
4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
5. The Church of God in Christ
6. National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
7. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8. National Baptist Convention of America
9. Presbyterian Church (USA)
10. Assemblies of God
11. African Methodist Episcopal Church
12. National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
13. Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
14. The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod (LCMS)
15. Episcopal Church
16. Churches of Christ
17. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
18. Pentecostal Assemblies of the World
19. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
20. American Baptist Churches in the USA
21. United Church of Christ
22. Baptist Bible Fellowship International
23. Christian Churches and Churches of Christ
24. The Orthodox Church in America
25. Jehovah's Witnesses

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 12: HANDOUT 2: CALVINISM VERSUS HISTORIC UNIVERSALISM

CALVINISM

Humans are inherently sinful and depraved

God arbitrarily chooses who will be saved

Christ died only for the chosen

People can choose to follow God only if they are already chosen

The chosen cannot be damned no matter how badly they behave; those not chosen can never get to heaven no matter how well they live

God's nature is unknowable

Holiness and happiness have no connection

HISTORIC UNIVERSALISM

Humans are flawed but not inherently depraved. All should be loved, respected, and forgiven because they are loved by God

God saves everyone, without exception

Christ came to save everyone

All people can choose to follow God through the teachings of Jesus.

All people will ultimately join God in heaven. Living a "bad" life will be punished, but God is merciful and forgiving. Good works do matter.

God's nature is love

Holiness and happiness are inseparable

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 12: HANDOUT 3: NICENE CREED

1975 Ecumenical Version, published by Prayers We Have in Common and adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and many mainstream Protestant denominations.

NOTE: "Ecumenical" means pertaining to the whole Christian Church; promoting or fostering Christian unity throughout the world. It does not include non-Christian faiths.

Nicene Creed

"We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was
made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
and his kingdom will have no end

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and
glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of
sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

NOTE: "catholic" here, with the lower case "c," means
universal, involving all, pertaining to the whole Christian
body or church. Capitalized, "Catholic" refers to the
Roman Catholic Church.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 12: LEADER RESOURCE 1: CHRISTIANITY 2 BACKGROUND

A quick review: Christianity, born at Pentecost in approximately 30 CE, grew for a thousand years. Around 318 CE, The Holy Roman Emperor Constantine converted and the institution of the Catholic Church was founded. A huge church conflict resulted in what is called the Great Schism of 1054 CE. (Write "Great Schism" at the top of newsprint, with an inverted "V" under it.) The Great Schism resulted in the splitting of the Catholic Church into the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. (Write names of branches on newsprint.) Eastern Orthodox Churches are self-governed and do not recognize papal authority over them. Each of these two major branches considers itself the True Church established by Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

Almost another 500 years went by, and the Roman Catholic Church experienced another significant rift. In 1517, Martin Luther, a monk, started a public debate over what he considered corruption within the church, with results he never could have predicted. The huge furor he set in motion started the Protestant Reformation (draw a line from "Roman Catholic Church" and write "Protestant Reformation"), which birthed dozens of non-Catholic Christian denominations in only a few years and eventually more than 30,000 denominations. (Draw lots of radiating lines from "Protestant Reformation" and write the number "30,000+").

(Point out word "Protestant" to participants. Ask the youth what they think that word means. Protestant means "one who protests.") In this case, they were protesting the excesses of the Roman Catholic Church. One protester was John Calvin, a French theologian

who broke with the Roman Catholic Church in the 1520s. (Write "John Calvin.") He was very influential, and many Protestants adopted Calvinist theology. (Write "Calvinism" on newsprint.)

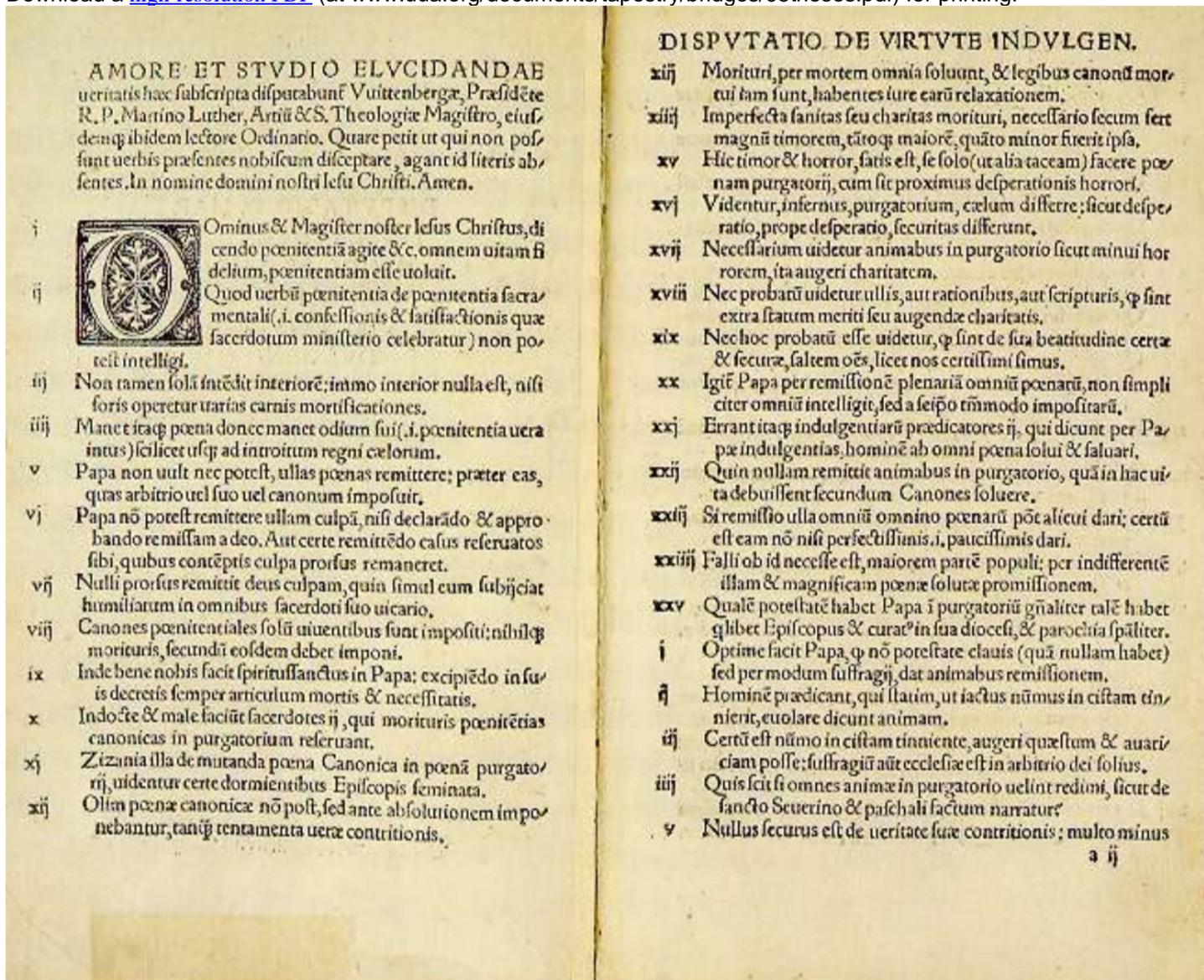
(Refer to map/globe.) The Reformation spread like wildfire; there was widespread dissatisfaction with corruption in the church, and new non-Catholic Christian churches sprang up all over Europe. Denominations born in these early years (among others): the first Unitarian churches arose in Transylvania (indicate locations on map), the Lutheran Church (named for Martin Luther) formed in Germany, and Congregationalist groups met secretly in England—because after King Henry VIII broke with Rome and created the Church of England, it was no longer illegal not to be a Roman Catholic; it was now illegal not to be a member of the Church of England!

One of Martin Luther's ideas was particularly influential: that nobody needed an intermediary to have a relationship with God. (Write "Personal relationship with God.") Specifically, no priest or authority figure was necessary. This sounded reasonable, and people who adopted it as a belief followed it to other logical conclusions of both church and personal independence. (Write "more independence.") Some declared that only members had the right to decide what happened within their new churches. These were the Congregationalists—Puritans—who a few years later came to America, landed at Plymouth Rock, and began founding Congregational churches all over the colonies. Congregationalists and Unitarians from the Protestant Reformation are the direct ancestors of Unitarian Universalism, and this fierce and stubborn independence is still part of who we are today.

What other differences can youth name between Catholicism and Protestantism?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 12: LEADER RESOURCE 2: IMAGE OF THESES

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/95theses.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/95theses.pdf) for printing.



FIND OUT MORE

Religion Facts has a short [biography of Martin Luther](http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/people/luther/bio.htm) (at www.religionfacts.com/christianity/people/luther/bio.htm). Squidoo has a lay person's [interpretation of the Theses](http://www.squidoo.com/wmp95theses) (at www.squidoo.com/wmp95theses), line by line. The Catholic Resources article [Who Are Christians?](http://catholic-resources.org/Courses/Christianity-) (at catholic-resources.org/Courses/Christianity-

[Branches.htm](http://www.spreadinglight.com/theology/calvin.html)) has an overview of the branches of Christianity.

Read more about Congregationalism and Calvinism at [The Congregational Way](http://www.naccc.org/AboutUs/CongregationalWay.aspx) (at www.naccc.org/AboutUs/CongregationalWay.aspx) and [Basics of Calvinism](http://www.spreadinglight.com/theology/calvin.html) (at www.spreadinglight.com/theology/calvin.html). [Church Year](http://www.churchyear.net/index.html) (at www.churchyear.net/index.html) is a good source for information on Catholic holy days and the liturgical calendar.

WORKSHOP 13: ISLAM 1—PEACE BY SURRENDER

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Living life where you're remembering God intentionally, consciously, just changes everything. — Ann Holmes Redding, in the Seattle Times, June 17, 2007; Redding is an African American who served nearly 30 years as an Episcopal priest before being defrocked for professing faith as a Muslim; Redding sees no conflict and considers herself both Christian and Muslim

This workshop introduces Islam, the world's second largest faith. Only Christianity has more adherents. Over 1.5 billion people are Muslim, nearly a quarter of the population of the earth and living on every continent. Islam, like Hinduism, Christianity, and Judaism, is monotheistic: Muslims believe in one god, whom they call Allah. "Allah" does not mean "God—it means "the God"—so the deity's very name contains the denial of any other gods.

Of all the faiths studied in Building Bridges, none is receiving as much attention on the world stage as Islam. It is both condemned and widely misunderstood. Almost all non-Muslims will live, love, play, struggle, and work with and among Muslims in their lives. Therefore, no religion is more important to understand for global peace and for person-to-person relationships.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce participants to some core aspects of Islam
- Acquaint participants with the life of Muhammad, founder of Islam
- Encourage participants to think about how their own religion is manifest in their lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Discuss important aspects and concepts of Islam
- Deepen their understanding of the Islamic faith in its diverse expressions
- Learn about the prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam

- Think more deeply about how their own faith could be expressed in small and great ways, in every part of their lives, and throughout life.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	10
Activity 1: Story – The Life of Muhammad	15
Activity 2: The Five Pillars of Islam	25
Activity 3: Hajj	25
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	10
Activity 5: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Wisdom from the Islamic World	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: What We Say Matters	25
Alternate Activity 3: What's in a Name?	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

One challenge of facilitating a group exploring Islam is to stay grounded in order to guide the group to do the same. Begin by recognizing any preconceived notions you have about Muslims and Islam. Talk with your co-leader in advance of the workshop; share your level of familiarity with Islam and any biases you think you might bring. You can help each other identify prejudices and dispel biases by exposing them to one another. Establish how you will help each other keep biases from the workshop.

A great strength of Islam is how it permeates the daily lives of Muslims. Before the workshop, try for a few days to establish a gentle, consistent faith practice to experience the rhythm of living and breathing your faith. Try this:

Say a brief Unitarian Universalist meditation or prayer five times a day. Times could be: 1) when you wake, 2)

before breakfast, 3) mid-day, 4) before dinner, 5) when you go to bed. Try to keep to the same times each day, even if that means adjusting your schedule.

The prayer or words of meditation should take less than a minute each time. Just be sure to give the experience your full attention.

On the day of the workshop, be sure to arrive early enough to spend a few minutes in restful silence and exchange blessings with your co-leader.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Materials for Activity

- Images of Muslim art from the Arab world

Preparation for Activity

- Visit [Stock Photos](http://www.stockphotos.ro/old-arab-mosaic-image4574137.html) (at www.stockphotos.ro/old-arab-mosaic-image4574137.html) or Google Images and print a few Arabic or Muslim mosaic designs and examples of calligraphy. You might also visit a public library to find books on Arabic calligraphy and mosaics.
- Note: Do not print calligraphic images of the word "Allah." To casually discard the printed name of God is offensive in Islam; to be respectful you must burn the printed item.

Description of Activity

Youth view the Arabic art forms of calligraphy and mosaics.

Invite participants to view the books or print outs you have obtained.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Several copies of the Qur'an in different English translations, and at least one in Arabic
- Leader Resource 1, [Islam Background](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1, Islam Background so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Obtain copies of the Qur'an. A recommended English translation is by Tarif Khalidi, published by Viking Penguin in 2008.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions remaining from the last workshop.

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly noting how many times a day they think about their faith. Tell them it does not matter whether they consider their faith to be Unitarian Universalism, a different faith, or a combination—this sharing is about how many times a day their personal faith consciously enters their thoughts.

Tell youth that today they explore Islam. Religious Muslims—followers of Islam—pray five times a day.

Share the workshop quote from African American Muslim Ann Holmes Redding:

Living life where you're remembering God intentionally, consciously, just changes everything.

Ask participants to consider how they would feel about taking time out of every day to pray, meditate, or reflect on their religion five times.

Let participants share what they already know and what questions they may have about Islam. Write their questions on newsprint. Tell the group their questions might be answered by activities in this workshop and you will answer any questions you can. Tell them you will seek answers—or invite volunteers to seek answers—to remaining questions before the next meeting.

If youth participated in Welcome and Entering, tell the group that calligraphy and mosaics are two unique art forms from the Arabic world, where Islam is the predominant religion.

Read aloud or share in your own words the information in Leader Resource 1, Islam Background. Use newsprint to write "Islam," "Holy Qur'an," and any other terms you may want to address with the group.

Afterward, allow a few minutes for participants to view the Qur'ans. If you were able to locate one in Arabic, point this out.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Life of Muhammad](#)" (included in this document)
- A world map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.

- On the map or globe, locate places you will point out as you tell the youth the story: the city of Mecca; the countries of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Spain, and France.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the story of the life of Muhammad, final prophet of Islam.

Tell or read the story "Life of Muhammad." Ask participants for their initial reactions: What did they think of the story?

This is the birth story of Islam in its present form. Muslims consider Islam to be as old as Adam and Eve, and recognize many prophets, including Jesus. However, for Muslims, Muhammad was the last, and he delivered the word of God as written in the Holy Qur'an, never to be changed or added to.

Ask participants if they see parallels between Jesus' life and Muhammad's. Some parallels are: Both lived in working class households, both learned a trade, both lived quietly until they were middle-aged (for their time), then left their trade to embark on work that would change the world. Do youth see others? What differences do participants see? Muhammad was a messenger, while Jesus is represented in Christianity as being an embodiment of God. Muhammad had a wife who was critical to his success; Jesus never married. Muhammad named Islam and aggressively spread it, creating an empire during his lifetime. Jesus lived humbly, never created or named a religion during his life, and preached to all who wanted to listen but never accepted leadership positions. Muhammad lived 22 years after beginning his ministry; Jesus preached only three years before his execution. After noting these similarities and differences, continue discussion with these questions:

- Do you consider Jesus or Muhammad more successful? How are you gauging success?
- What do you think of the assertion that Muhammad is the final messenger, delivering God's word just as other prophets before him, including Jesus? Do prophets and sages you are familiar with seem to be delivering the same messages, just in different times and places?
- Would Muhammad's presenting his message as the last and final truth, not ever to change, have been something people in that time and place would like to hear? How would the idea of permanence have struck them?
- Islam came with strict rules dictating how to live daily. Why would people have been ready to

accept these rules? Do you think they understood compliance with these rules as a loss of freedom? If so, what was the tradeoff—what would they gain?

- Muhammad told people that Allah would condemn them to eternal hell if they did not follow the rules—if they sinned. If we accept that this element contributed to Islam's success, along with many others, what might be the appeal of an afterlife, where misdeeds were punished and good ones rewarded for eternity?
- Does it seem from your explorations in religion so far that simplicity and clarity of the message contribute to a religion's appeal? If so, what implications might this have for Unitarian Universalism? What is our simple message?

ACTIVITY 2: THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Pillars](#) (included in this document)
- Scissors
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Pillars for all participants and facilitators; set these copies aside.
- Make enough additional copies of Handout 1 so you can cut apart the five Pillar statements on each handout, and have enough to distribute the five statements evenly among the participants, when you ask each youth to choose one.
- Cut the extra handouts apart, one entire Pillar statement on each piece. Mix the pieces and place them in a pile face-down.
- Optional: If the group includes fewer than five youth, make just one extra copy of Handout 1, Pillars. Cut the handout into five slips. Plan to invite youth to take turns presenting the pillars and give each youth a complete handout when they are done.

Description of Activity

Participants become familiar with the Five Pillars of Islam.

Share with participants that there are two main branches of Islam, called Sunni (SOO-nee) and Shia (SHEE-ah). There are many more Sunni than Shiite (SHEE-ite) Muslims; for every ten Sunnis, there are somewhere between one and two Shiites. However, some nations are majority Shiite, including Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, and Azerbaijan. Differences exist between the

branches, and they do not always coexist peacefully, but all call themselves Muslim and agree on the basics. Both Sunnis and Shiites take the Qur'an as their most sacred text and consider Muhammad the final messenger of Allah.

Explain that all Muslims affirm the Five Pillars of Islam. The Five Pillars concern both beliefs and behavior, actions that demonstrate one's devotion to God and loyalty to the Islamic faith.

Distribute the slips, giving a single Pillar to each participant. Ask that they group themselves by Pillar so all who have Pillar 1 will be together, all who have Pillar 2 will be together, and so on. Instruct each group to read and understand their assigned Pillar, then present it to the large group, indicating reasons why their Pillar would be an important contribution to living a good life as a Muslim. Help each group find a place where they can talk without distracting others or being overheard.

After five minutes, re-gather the large group and ask if a group wants to go first. The Pillars can be presented in any order. Allow each group to make its presentation. Questions seeking clarification can be answered, but let comments and discussion wait until all Pillars have been presented.

After all presentations, ask for comments. During discussion, ask the groups to write the Pillars on newsprint where everyone can see them while facilitators distribute Handout 1 to all participants. After general comments, ask:

- Does one Pillar seem more important than the others? If so, why?
- If someone followed the Five Pillars diligently, could a day go by when they did not think about their faith many times a day?
- Would following the Five Pillars give Muslims a feeling of solidarity with other Muslims?
- How would it feel to be a Muslim if everyone around you was not? How would it feel to find a private place to pray five times a day when no one else does? What about not eating all day, only at night, for a month? Would you feel embarrassed? Feel good about your loyalty?
- How do you feel about making visible signs of faith, such as praying five times a day? Is that good for a person? Is it good for a community? Good for a religion? Why or why not? What about being required to make visible signs of faith—does that make a difference in whether it is good or not?
- Islam is not the only religion with regular rituals. Remind participants that religiously observant Jews and practicing Catholics also have a number of significant rituals. Does dutifully

taking part in a religious ritual mean you are faithful? Is it possible that daily prayers could become a rote ritual without real meaning? Does not participating in the ritual mean someone is not faithful?

- What do you see as the benefits of having both daily actions and a lifetime goal as requirements of a faith?
- The entire rhythm of a Muslim's day revolves around their faith. What would that be like? Do you feel that your faith is powerful enough to sustain that level of attention?

ACTIVITY 3: HAJJ (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Writing paper and pens/pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Consider lifelong goals (spiritual or otherwise) you may have, or have had, that you can share with the youth.

Description of Activity

Participants consider the value of a lifelong religious goal and ponder what a Unitarian Universalist version of such a goal might look like.

Ask participants if they have any lifetime goals—for example, something they want to learn sometime in their lives, something they want to continue doing their entire lives, a place they want to someday visit or live. Hear and respect all answers. Ask specifically if the youth have any spiritual or religious goals for their lives. If helpful to start the conversation, share any lifelong goals you have, or share the fact that you do not have any.

Recall that the Five Pillars of Islam pertain to behavior and beliefs that Muslims are expected to do throughout their lives. There is one Pillar, however, which is a once-in-a-lifetime requirement. Ask if the youth remember the name of this Pillar. It is Hajj (pronounced "HAH-dge"), which calls on every Muslim to make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime.

Here are some important aspects of Hajj:

- This is an once-in-a-lifetime journey taken not for business or pleasure, but to demonstrate love and devotion to Allah.
- The Muslim world sets aside a specific date in the year for Hajj. It is not done individually, but collectively. About two million Muslims participate yearly, from all over the world.
- Tour groups sponsor Hajj tours to make it affordable and simplify travel logistics.
- All Muslims—women, men, youth, children—are welcomed on Hajj.

- Everyone changes into a simple white garment to perform Hajj, called Ihram. No accessories can be worn. Everyone is dressed the same to remove outward appearances of class, ethnicity, or other differences. The only identity one has on Hajj is "Muslim."
- Rituals are performed, including circling the Black Stone or Ka'ba, seven times. This stone is believed to have been laid by Abraham. Remind youth of the story of Abraham in Workshop 5. Like Jews and Christians, Muslims believe Abraham is the father of their faith. That is why these three religions are referred to as "Abrahamic" faiths.
- More young people are going on Hajj than in previous years. Young adults might go before starting jobs that might limit their ability to travel. Young couples might go before starting a family. Young people are using Hajj to learn more about their religion.
- Participants frequently feel transformed by the experience. One famous transformation was experienced by African American leader Malcolm X, who came to truly understand "brotherhood" from his Hajj. Hajj is a purifying experience, a chance to start anew in devotion to Allah. Feelings of solidarity and a deepening of Muslim identity occur when surrounded by millions of other Muslims, who may not speak the same language or share the same culture.

Let youth share any thoughts they have about Hajj. Inquire if the group is aware of any such opportunities in Unitarian Universalism. Share that many congregations ask youth to participate in a Coming of Age or Bridging program. Some visit the UUA headquarters in Boston, MA. Many Unitarian Universalists participate in civil rights tours that explore our history. Some Unitarian Universalists set a goal of attending General Assembly, the business meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Some people have suggested a year of service program for young adult Unitarian Universalists. One experience that UUs of all ages often experience as a special immersion in Unitarian Universalist community is UU camps and conferences. These weeklong camps are often the first time UUs are with UUs from all over the country. Of course, none of these activities is mandatory.

Ask youth to consider the idea of a once-in-a-lifetime expression of faith for Unitarian Universalists. Unitarian Universalism is theologically diverse; it contains people of countless beliefs. However, if an action might be identified that would be a suitable expression of faith for all or most Unitarian Universalists, what would it be?

Encourage broad thinking: it could be anything from creating a book or song, climbing a mountain, visiting Unitarian Universalist congregations in every state, or performing 1,000 unacknowledged acts of kindness.

Ask youth to form groups of three to brainstorm an action that might be considered an expression of a lifetime of Unitarian Universalist faith. Provide paper and writing utensils. Allow five minutes for collecting ideas.

Re-gather the group and allow youth to share their ideas. What ideas appeal to them most? What kinds of ideas appeal to them? What makes these ideas particularly suitable to Unitarian Universalism? What does it say about our faith that these ideas seem to be its best expression?

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Islam Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 2 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Youth receive a fact sheet on Islam to take home.

Distribute Handout 2, Islam Fact Sheet and review it with the group. Ask:

- What questions do you still have about Islam?
- What beliefs do Unitarian Universalists and Muslims share?
- How does knowing about Islam influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

If the group will engage with a Muslim community, give participants any information they will need beforehand.

If there are outstanding questions about Islam, assign volunteers to research and bring answers to the next workshop or divide these duties among facilitators. If youth have questions about women's roles in Islam or the connection between terrorism and Islam, refer to the next workshop, Workshop 14, Islam 2.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Display the time line where all participants will be able to see it.

- Write a sticky note saying "Islam, 622 CE."

Description of Activity

The Religions Time Line is updated to add Islam.

Ask participants if they remember the year commonly used as the beginning of Islam; it was the year of the start of the Islamic calendar. Remind them it was the year Muhammad and his followers moved to Medina, twelve years after he began spreading the word of Allah. It was the year 622 CE. Place the stick note on the time line.

Ask participants to identify where Islam emerged, or was codified by Muhammad. Explain that Mecca is still the geographic center of Islam, and it is Muslim practice to pray in the direction of Mecca, wherever in the world a Muslim is. Point out Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the countries of northern Africa, noting that some of these countries are Islamic states, and all are majority Muslim. Islam is the second-largest faith on Earth, practiced all over the world.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint and post.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle, join hands, and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: WISDOM FROM THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access

- The text of the six [Unitarian Universalist Sources](#) (at www.uua.org/beliefs/principles/index.shtml)
- Optional: Puppets or materials for making puppets, or costumes, set pieces, and stage make-up

Preparation for Activity

- Have stories available for the group to read and select for performance. The [Outrageous Wisdom of Nasruddin](#) (at www.nasruddin.org/pages/storylist.html) website offers 15 stories. Mulla Nasruddin tales appear in other Tapestry of Faith curricula; find those stories online [here](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/grace/session14/sessionplan/stories/115603.shtml) in the program Amazing Grace and [here](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session6/sessionplan/stories/123344.shtml) in the program Moral Tales. Also find Nasruddin tales at your congregational, religious education, or local library. Look in books that have wisdom tales, stories from Sufism (a mystical branch of Islam), or tales from the Middle East.
- Have the Unitarian Universalist [Sources](#) (at www.uua.org/beliefs/principles/index.shtml) available to review with the group.

Description of Activity

Participants share a wisdom tale from the Islamic world with others in the religious education community.

As Unitarian Universalists, we acknowledge that wisdom can come to us from many different sources. Review our Unitarian Universalist Sources with the group. Note that UUs learn from wisdom tales—stories from many lands, handed down through generations. If you have brought books of wisdom tales, let participants browse through them for a few moments.

Ask if anyone has ever heard a story about a character named Mulla Nasruddin. You might remind them of stories used in other Tapestry of Faith programs (see Preparation for Activity). Ask if the group would like to present one of these stories to the congregation. Venues might include Children's Chapel, a multigenerational service, a youth or Religious Education year-end service, a retreat, a potluck, Wednesday night fellowship time, or another gathering that might appreciate entertainment.

After you decide when to present the wisdom tale, seek permission and guidance from the religious educator, minister, worship leader, or other congregational leader, as appropriate. You might also seek assistance from theater professionals in the congregation.

Decide as a group on your criteria for choosing a story; then select one to present.

Decide if youth will act out the parts or use puppets.

Schedule time to work on puppets, sets, and/or costumes. Choose volunteer puppeteers and/or actors. Rehearse and present. At the end of the presentation, if appropriate, ask the audience for the moral of the story.

After the presentation, gather the group and discuss the process. What would you do differently next time? What worked well?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. Did participants engage the subject with respect? Did participants bring specific expectations about or established emotional responses to Islam or Muslims? Were they able to process those? Did youth understand and respect basic Islamic beliefs? Which kinds of activities worked well with the group? How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

TAKING IT HOME

Living life where you're remembering God intentionally, consciously, just changes everything. — Ann Holmes Redding, in the *Seattle Times*, June 17, 2007; Redding is an African American who served nearly 30 years as an Episcopal priest before being defrocked for professing faith as a Muslim; Redding sees no conflict and considers herself both Christian and Muslim

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we started our experiences with Islam. We heard the story of Muhammad's life and learned the Five Pillars of Islam.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The *Seattle Times* ran an article about Ann Holmes, in which she mentioned "knowing at all times I'm in between prayers" as part of her Muslim faith. The article continued, "She likens it to being in love, constantly looking forward to having 'all these dates with God.... Living a life where you're remembering God intentionally, consciously, just changes everything.'"

Have you ever thought about a connection to the divine as being similar to a love affair?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Spend some time with the Qur'an, either [online](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/k/koran/) (at quod.lib.umich.edu/k/koran/) or in book form.

- Watch [this video](http://thisvideo.ummahfilms.blogspot.com/2010/01/hajj-with-baba-ali-new-ummah-films.html) (at ummahfilms.blogspot.com/2010/01/hajj-with-baba-ali-new-ummah-films.html) from a Muslim blogger, Baba Ali, about his Hajj. There is humor in his presentation, but he also makes points about some of what is special about Hajj.
- Some UU congregations have partnered with Muslim groups to do service work together in their local communities. In the [Family pages insert in UU World magazine](#) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/families/153856.shtml) for Fall, 2011, find stories and reflections about interfaith life in our contemporary communities.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- See general suggestions on Engagement in the program Introduction, under Implementation.
- Contact a local mosque and arrange a visit during communal prayers on a Friday evening. Ask if females are allowed inside the mosque and clarify seating arrangements. Most mosques in the West allow men and women to attend mosque at the same time, but they are seated separately. Find out any hair/head covering and other dress requirements for males as well as females.
- Make sure at least one female and one male facilitator are available if males and females will be seated separately inside the mosque.
- Invite your contact at the mosque to visit the group and share any expectations for dress, behavior, and what they may experience. If the contact is not available, convey clothing and behavioral expectations to the youth. If you lack specific guidance, ask that youth wear neat, modest, loose-fitting clothing, perhaps head coverings for girls and women. They should wear nice shoes they can easily remove; attendees are required to remove shoes inside a mosque.
- Suggest that during the visit participants take note of:
 - The level of reverence and concentration by Muslims during prayer at the mosque. How much socializing seems to happen? How focused do Muslim attendees seem to be on their prayers?
 - Programs for the community, other than worship. Are there classes, activities,

- advertisements for services, or other public postings at the mosque?
- Connection to history and Arabic culture. Are signs posted in Arabic? Are materials available in Arabic as well as English and other languages spoken locally? What language or languages are prayers conducted in?
- Architecture, artwork, and building design. Do these combine Western and Arabic features, or do they seem more one, or the other?
- Level of respect. How well behaved are children and youth attending prayers? Is there communal parenting; in other words, do adults correct other people's kids? How do people interact with the prayer leader? How do people interact with guests?

Description of Activity

Participants engage with the Islamic community and process the experience.

After returning to the congregation, ask participants for their first impressions. What did they think of the experience? Continue the discussion with these questions:

- Did the experience affect you differently from services of other faiths you have attended? If so, how? Why?
- Did the presence of a prayer leader affect the feeling of the service for you? If so, in what way? Did the sound of many voices, if there were many, joined in prayer affect you in some way?
- What seemed to be the level of concentration of attendees? Did their level of engagement differ from that of attendees at other services you have attended? If so, how? And if so, what might explain the difference?
- How long did the prayers last, from beginning to end? Was the length of the service surprising? Why or why not? If so, in what way?
- Was there a sermon? If so, what was the content? How was it like or unlike other sermons you have heard?
- Was there interaction between men and women at the mosque before or after prayers? What about between boys and girls?
- Was there a notable difference between the behavior of men and women? Did adults seem to interact differently with female children than with male children?

- How did the furnishings, art work, and worship space differ from those you have seen at other houses of worship?
- Was money collected during the service?
- The Qur'an is central to the lives of Muslims. Were sacred texts present at the mosque? Were individuals carrying them, or was one used by the prayer leader? Why might they be present, or not?
- What made you feel welcomed in the mosque?
- How would you sum up your observations, comparing Islamic services with Jewish, Christian, or Unitarian Universalist services?

Thank the youth for their respectful attendance and thoughtful observations.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WHAT WE SAY MATTERS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Writing paper and pens/pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Practice saying "As salaam alaikum" (As sa-LAM ah-LAY-kum) with palms together and thumbs near your heart, inclining your head or bowing slightly. Hear a [pronunciation](http://www.islamic-dictionary.com/index.php?word=assalamu%20alaikum) (at www.islamic-dictionary.com/index.php?word=assalamu%20alaikum) on the Islamic Dictionary website. Note that different spellings exist for this greeting.

Description of Activity

Participants learn traditional greetings of Muslims and others, and consider the importance of words we say every day.

Stand in front of participants, place your palms together in front of your heart, bow slightly and say to them, "As salaam alaikum." If you cannot face all participants at once, repeat as needed until you have greeted everyone present.

Explain that you just wished them peace. "As salaam alaikum" is the traditional greeting in Islam; meaning, "Peace be upon you." Ask youth to repeat the phrase, "As salaam alaikum," several times. Explain that "Wa alaikum as salaam" is the traditional response, meaning, "And upon you, peace." Practice with the youth saying, "Wa alaikum as salaam" several times.

Ask if any youth have been greeted in this way before. If so, ask where that took place. How did they feel about being greeted this way? Did they know that the greeter was wishing them peace?

Recall with the youth that the name Islam derives partly from the word "salaam"—sometimes spelled with two As: "Islaam." Explain further that "as salaam" is also considered to be another name for Allah; so when people greet each other saying "As salaam alaikum," they are wishing each other peace as well as the blessings of Allah.

If they live in a predominately non-Muslim community, ask youth what the customary greeting is where they live. If they live in a predominately Muslim community, ask what the customary greeting is among non-Muslims. Ask what meaning that greeting has for them. If there is a customary response, what is it, what meaning does it have?

Now ask: Once something has been said many times, does it lose its meaning?

Share that among the Masai people of East Africa, the traditional greeting is "Kasserian ingera," which translates to "How are the children?" The customary response is, "The children are well." Ask participants if this greeting suggests to them anything about the values of the Masai. Ask if they think using a greeting like the Masai's might have a gradual effect on the person saying it.

Ask the youth to pair up to sample the following greetings and responses to see how they feel. Some of the greetings are real and some have been created for the exercise. Suggest they each "try on" both parts of each greeting by physically walking toward one another, acknowledging one other, and saying:

- "And have you learned today?" "Learning always, thank you. And you?" "Learning always."
- "Shalom." "Shalom." (Hebrew: "peace.")
- "How is your wealth?" "My wealth is growing. And yours?" "Growing and growing."
- "Waapun" (Jamaican greeting that is short for "What's happening?"). "It's all good."
- "Live long and prosper." "Live long and prosper."
- "Another day, always the same!" "And never enough!"
- "Are the people working?" "The people are hard at work."
- "Blessed" (Icelandic). "Blessed."
- "I wish you all good things." "I don't care what you wish."

What other greetings do participants know?

Ask the youth for their initial responses. How did they feel after giving each of these greetings? How did they feel to be responded to in different ways? Did any of

your feelings surprise you? Continue discussion with questions such as:

- Did the greetings you tried suggest anything about the cultures that would use them every day? What cultures would you wish to be part of?
- Is the traditional greeting where you live neutral (like "Hello!"), or is there some content (like "How are you?")?
- A customary greeting becomes automatic. Do people still mean it—if not completely, then at some level? Do you suppose the words "How are the children?" comes to mean "Hi" and only "Hi," or might the words retain some meaning, even when someone has said them many times?
- Do you feel the values expressed in your customary greeting are your values? Do the words convey what you feel is most important?
- If a common greeting is "How are you?" do you sometimes mean it and sometimes not? How does this affect your interactions with people?
- Suppose you moved to a new place and learned that the customary greeting meant, "Go away," and the customary response translated as, "Get lost, yourself." Would that affect your thinking about that society? Would you feel comfortable saying that to people, even if the locals assured you it did not mean anything negative?

Ask participants the following:

If a greeting were an expression of your highest values and a blessing, then as a Unitarian Universalist what would your chosen greeting be? What would you most want for people, including yourself? What do you think is the best single thing a person or group can have? Would it be peace? Would it be money? The welfare of the children? Creativity? An empowered journey? Long life? What might a customary response be? Recognizing that people want many different things, and that each of you will have a different answer, think for a few minutes about a simple greeting that would offer what you think is the best blessing people can have.

Give participants two to five minutes to think of their greetings. Distribute paper and pens or pencils and invite them to write their thoughts. Facilitators can also create greetings.

Then, have participants pair up and share their greetings, as though they were greeting each other in the ways they have chosen. If any youth have envisioned a customary response, ask them to provide that response to their partner and then exchange the greeting and response.

Invite participants to move to a new partner, preferably someone they have not worked with, and share their greetings.

Gather in a circle and share thoughts and reactions to the greetings. Ask: Which greetings did you like? What did you like about them? What might it mean for our society if one of these greetings were used in place of what is used now? If youth could choose a new greeting to use in their group of friends or their congregation, what would it be? Why?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: WHAT'S IN A NAME? (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Writing paper and pens/pencils or calligraphy pens, ink, and paper
- A computer with Internet access or a book with American English names translated into Arabic
- Images of Muslim art from the Arab world

Preparation for Activity

- Visit [Speak 7](http://arabic.speak7.com/) (at arabic.speak7.com/) or another Internet site that has common American English names written in Arabic and a chart of the Arabic alphabet. Prepare to show the website to the group. Or, obtain a book with English names translated into Arabic, or invite someone in your congregation or community who is fluent in written Arabic to help you lead this activity.
- Visit [Stock Photos](http://www.stockphotos.ro/old-arab-mosaic-image4574137.html) (at www.stockphotos.ro/old-arab-mosaic-image4574137.html) or Google Images and print a few Arabic or Muslim mosaic designs and examples of calligraphy. You might visit a public library to find books on Arabic calligraphy and mosaics.
- Note: Do not print a calligraphic image of the name "Allah." To casually discard the printed name of God is offensive in Islam; to be respectful you must burn the printed item.

Description of Activity

Youth write their transliterated names in Arabic calligraphy.

Tell the group they will have the opportunity to write Arabic calligraphy.

Explain that calligraphy and other abstract art forms like mosaics are important to Islam because Islam does not believe in representing Allah, Muhammad, or other holy people in images/pictures. Ask the group what other religions do not believe in creating pictures of the divine. What religions warn against worshipping images of God? There are no artistic representations of holy figures in Muslim mosques: only calligraphy and mosaics are used.

Explain that calligraphy is a way of making the written word into an art form. Show examples of Arabic calligraphy. Do not include the word "Allah." Tell the group that Muslims do not take the word "Allah" lightly. If you print the word on paper, it is extremely disrespectful to throw it away in the trash. You should burn the paper it was written on.

Tell participants that several years ago, a Danish newspaper published editorial cartoons depicting Muhammad. Many Muslims were angry, seeing this as a direct insult to Islam. Some extremists called for the death of the cartoonist. The situation was made worse when college students from various universities decided to do public drawings of Muhammad on sidewalks. Muslim student groups protested, saying not only was it disrespectful, but that it made them feel unsafe. Remind youth that words and pictures matter.

Invite youth to learn to write their names in Arabic. Show them the chart of the Arabic alphabet. Say that the translation is not literal because the alphabets are different: the translation is based on phonetic similarities. Make sure they understand that Arabic is read from right to left, like Hebrew, to which it is closely related.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

13: STORY: THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

Arabia in the sixth century was dangerous and chaotic.

[Leader: On a map or globe, indicate Arabian Peninsula, sweeping over Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Libya.]

There were shortages of food and other goods, which led many to steal. A few people were rich, but most were very poor. The polytheism most people followed—worship of many divine beings—did not offer much concrete guidance for how to live. Often, people just did whatever they wanted.

Into this wild setting, in 570 CE in the city of Mecca, a baby boy was born. His father had died before he was born, and his mother named him Muhammad, which means "highly praised." Sadly, Muhammad's mother died, too, when he was only five. An uncle adopted the little boy and gave him a kind upbringing. Even when he was very little, Muhammad was sweet and generous. He seemed to have learned from his own sorrow to be compassionate toward other people's suffering.

The family was not rich, so when he grew up, Muhammad learned the caravan trade. When he was 25, he was hired to run the large caravan operation of a rich trader named Khadijah. Khadijah greatly respected the skill and honesty of her young employee. Muhammad respected and trusted her, also, and in time Khadijah, a widow, proposed that they marry. Their ages differed by 15 years (Khadijah was 40, Muhammad 25), but this did not matter to them: Muhammad and Khadijah married and were very happy.

Muhammad managed Khadijah's caravan business for the next 15 years, and often, to escape the bustle of Mecca, Muhammad took a little food and went to a cave a little distance from the city. There he stayed for a few days and meditated.

On one of these visits, Muhammad fell asleep, and was awakened by a voice echoing through the cave. Muhammad opened his eyes and saw an angel, who ordered him, "Proclaim!" Muhammad did not understand. The angel said it brought a message from Allah that Muhammad must memorize and proclaim to all people.

Muhammad objected! He could neither read nor write, and did not feel competent to proclaim the word of God. The angel insisted Muhammad was chosen, and no other. Muhammad must proclaim the word of Allah.

Muhammad went home and told Khadijah of his experience. Khadijah told Muhammad she believed in the angel's message, and believed Muhammad was worthy to be God's chosen Messenger. She urged Muhammad to accept the charge given him by the angel Gabriel, and to begin proclaiming as Allah wished.

Muhammad took Khadijah's advice and left the caravan business to preach the word of Allah. Muhammad proclaimed that there was only one God, and that Islam, which means submission to God, was the only true religion. Muhammad called the followers of Islam Muslims, and Khadijah was the first Muslim.

Muhammad told people to pray to Allah five times a day to show their complete devotion to God. He told them to be generous and help those less fortunate than themselves. He told them to be honest, to not steal or lie, and to be faithful to their families.

At first, hardly anybody listened to Muhammad. After three years of work, fewer than forty people had converted to Islam. But Muhammad remained faithful to Allah. He continued proclaiming and by the end of ten years, hundreds of families had converted to Islam.

The leaders of Mecca became worried. A major source of income for the city was pilgrims visiting Mecca's hundreds of shrines to gods and goddesses. If Muhammad convinced them there was only one god, the city would lose much money. The leaders also did not like Muhammad telling them they should give up their wild ways. They decided to get rid of Muhammad.

At this critical time, a group came from the city of Medina, about 215 miles north of Mecca, to see Muhammad. Their city needed help, and they had heard he was wise. The people of Medina invited Muhammad to rule them. Muhammad said he was willing, if everyone in Medina would convert to Islam. The people agreed, so instead of being imprisoned, Muhammad became ruler of a city. The year of the Hijra, when Muhammad and his followers fled to Medina, was 622 CE.

From this time, Islam spread quickly. Muhammad lived only ten more years, but by the time he died, Islam had spread to the point that Muhammad controlled the entire Arabian Peninsula. By the end of the century, his followers had conquered the lands of present-day Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Armenia, Turkey, Israel, all of North Africa, and Spain, and had crossed the Pyrenees mountain range into France.

Muhammad was a simple man who did not think he was worthy to be God's Messenger. He nevertheless responded to God's call with energy and faithfulness

and proclaimed what would become the religion of nearly a fourth of the people on Earth. Mohammad began life as a penniless orphan, and died the uncontested ruler of all of Arabia and prophet of a faith that would endure through the ages.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

13: HANDOUT 1: PILLARS

The Five Pillars are considered the most essential instructions from Muhammad for how to live as a Muslim. Loyal Muslims are expected to follow the Five Pillars as closely as they can.

1: Profess Faith – Shahada

Shahada – Say with conviction, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." This asserts that only Allah deserves to be worshipped, and that Muhammad was the last and final prophet of God's word.

Shahada, if said with conviction, is all that is needed to convert to Islam and become a Muslim. In order to say it with full belief, the speaker should 1) believe that the Holy Qur'an is the literal word of God, revealed to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel; 2) believe there will be a Day of Judgment when all people will be resurrected, judged by Allah, and deemed worthy of heaven or condemned to hell; 3) accept Islam with its required practices; and 4) commit to worshipping only Allah.

2: Pray – Salat

Salat – Pray at five specific times a day, facing the holy city of Mecca. Prayers are performed at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and at night. Each set of prayers is only a few minutes long, and can be done almost anywhere. The prayers affirm a Muslim's devotion to God as well as each Muslim's direct relationship with God.

3: Give Alms – Zakat

Zakat, or charitable giving – Give support to those less fortunate, especially the poor. Zakat serves as a reminder that all wealth comes from Allah and should be used to benefit others as well as oneself. Muslims are required by their faith to give 2.5 percent of their wealth to the needy, but may give more if they wish.

4: Fasting during Ramadan – Sawm

Sawm – All adult Muslims fast for the month of Ramadan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. The fast lasts 29 or 30 days, during which Muslims do not eat or drink anything during daylight hours, only before dawn and after dark. Ramadan is revered as the month when the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad, so Muslims try to live especially pure and faithful lives during Ramadan. The fast also helps Muslims learn compassion for those who are truly hungry or needy in other ways. Children are not required to fast until they are ten to twelve years old, although they may begin earlier if they choose and their parents permit. If fasting

will endanger a person's health, they may break the fast.

5: Pilgrimage – Hajj (pronounced HAH-dge")

Hajj – Every Muslim is expected, at least once in their lifetime, to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. The Hajj takes place during five days in the last month of the Islamic calendar. Pilgrims change into white robes to signify that all are equal in the eyes of Allah. They walk counter-clockwise seven times around the Kaa'ba, the cube-shaped building which houses the holy Black Stone, and perform rites in praise of Allah, in rejection of evil, and in remembrance of events in Islam's history. More than two million Muslims perform the Hajj each year, traveling to Saudi Arabia from all over the world.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

13: HANDOUT 2: ISLAM FACT SHEET

Dates from: 622 CE in Mecca (in Saudi Arabia) Note: Muslims believe Islam is the only true religion and has no beginning; 622 CE is the date the Islamic calendar began, keyed to an important event in Muhammad's life

Adherents: 1.5 billion (940 million Sunni, 560 million Shia)

Ranking: Second, behind Christianity

Prophets: Muhammad (last and final prophet); also Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Joseph, Moses, David, John the Baptist, Jesus, and others

Texts: Holy Qur'an (Qur'an) – primary scripture; also the Hadith (literally "report" or "tradition"), a collection of books chronicling sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers. The original language of Qur'an and Hadith is Arabic. The Qur'an is considered sealed; that is, permanently unalterable.

Clergy: Sunni Islam does not have formal clergy; however, imam is a term of respect for one who leads prayers, or sometimes a religious professional. Shiite Islam has hierarchical clergy, from the mullah, who has made a serious study of Islamic law and literature, to the mujtahid, an Islamic religious scholar, to the very powerful ayatollah, who sometimes rule entire countries. An imam in Shiite Islam is the highest of all, with very specific requirements. Some branches of Shia believe there can no longer be an imam, but in any case only one can exist at a time.

Major Holidays:

Ramadan – a month-long holiday observed with fasting during daylight hours and prayer, commemorates when Muhammad was given the Qur'an by the angel Gabriel. The day after the end of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, is a holy day celebrated with decorations and gift giving.

Mawlid al-Nabi – celebrates the birth of the Prophet. Conservative Muslims do not celebrate this holiday or any birthdays.

Ashura – marks an occurrence in 680 CE when 70 Muslims were martyred

Eid al-Adha – marks the end of the Hajj. Traditionally, some Muslims celebrate this three-day festival by sacrificing an animal and sharing the meat with family and the needy.

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

Five Pillars of Islam – profession of faith ("There is one God and Muhammad is his prophet"), prayer toward Mecca five times a day, giving to the poor and performing community service, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca

Muslim – a follower of Islam

Mecca – in Saudi Arabia, main holy city of Islam; location of the Kaa'ba

Shia – branch of Islam with 560 million adherents; grant authority to lineage of Ali (cousin of Muhammad) and direct descendants of Muhammad; Shia or Shiite is a shortening of Shiat Ali, which means "Partisans of Ali"

Sunni – branch of Islam with 940 million adherents; grant authority to lineage of caliphs who retained leadership over the claims of Muhammad's descendants (p.b.u.h.), meaning "peace be upon him," notation appearing after Muhammad's name in English; also appears as (s.a.w.), for the transliteration of the Arabic sallallahu alaihi wasallam of the same meaning
As Salaam Alaikum – traditional Muslim greeting; means "Peace be unto you."

Hijra – migration of Muhammad and his followers to Medina in year 622 CE, after which Islam spread rapidly; also the beginning of the Islamic calendar
Sunna (or *Sunnah*) – way of life prescribed in Islam, based on teachings and practices of Muhammad (therefore on both Qur'an and Hadith)

Hajj – a pilgrimage to Mecca which every Muslim is expected to undertake at least once during life; one of the Five Pillars of Islam

ummah – community, especially the community of believers; can refer to a group of individuals or the body of Islamic nations

ablution – cleansing with water, performed before prayer

hijab – headscarf worn by some Muslim women

halal – lawful; literally "allowed by Allah;" permitted under Islamic law

Kaa'ba – the black cubic building which houses relics of Muhammad; the point toward which all Muslims pray

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- Value of caring for those less fortunate than oneself
- Value of social justice
- Value of strong families
- Value of commitment to and acting on what one believes most important
- Do not believe in the Trinity or divinity of Jesus, yet respect Jesus as an important prophet and teacher
- In *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), Hymns 180 and 188 and Readings 509, 607, 609, and 610 come from Islamic tradition.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 13: LEADER RESOURCE 1: ISLAM BACKGROUND

The Islamic faith is in the news almost every day, yet it is widely misunderstood. One and a half billion people, nearly one in four people on Earth, are Muslim, so it is important for non-Muslims to better understand this faith and its followers.

Surrender and Peace. The name of the faith, Islam, means "surrender," or sometimes "submission," depending on the translation. It has roots in the Arabic for "peace." So, Islam means the peace that comes from complete surrender to God. Following God's wishes with complete loyalty is central to Muslim life.

Sacred Texts. The most important sacred text of Islam is the Holy Qur'an, which Muslims believe was revealed directly to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel over a 20 year period. Also important is the large body of books called Hadith (pronounced hah-DEETH), which chronicles many of the teachings, actions, and lifestyle of Muhammad. Muslims look to the Qur'an and Hadith for directions or illustrations for nearly every situation they encounter, trusting them to provide a guide for faithful living in accordance with the Prophet Muhammad's teachings.

Symbols. Islam has no official symbols. However, symbols notably associated with Islam are the name of Allah in Arabic script and the crescent moon and star.

Where Are the Muslims? While Islam began in the Middle East, the majority of Muslims today live in the Asia-Pacific region, in nations including Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and China. About 20 percent of the world's Muslims live in the Middle East and North Africa. Islam is practiced on all continents, in every country. While estimates of Muslims in the United States vary by millions, a review of many sources suggests there are between 2 and 2.8 million Muslims in the U.S.

Islam in the News Today. In most Western societies, negative images of Arab people and Muslims are common. In the United States, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, there has been a tendency, based on the actions of a small minority, to suspect all Muslims of terrorism and to see Islam as a violent religion. Characterizing all Muslims as terrorists goes directly against our first Principle of respecting the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Also, it creates an atmosphere of distrust that works against finding peaceful solutions to the world's problems. Since September 11, many Unitarian Universalists have worked to build alliances with Muslim communities and counter misinformation and fear.

Islam and Women. Sharia law exists in a variety of countries, sometimes as the only law (theocracy), and sometimes together with civil (non-religion-based) law. At a fundamentalist extreme, Sharia laws contain violent punishments for violations of the law, for example, stoning a woman to death for committing adultery, and cutting off the hand of a thief. While the breadth and consistency of its enforcement does vary from community to community, Sharia always includes restrictions on women that do not pertain to men. For example, in Saudi Arabia, women are not allowed to drive; under the Taliban in Afghanistan, women are not permitted to pursue education and are excluded from professional jobs.

Islam's rules for women are based on a religious belief that women have a special role as caretakers of home and children and a need for protection, while men have a special role to earn money in the outside world to support their families and to protect women. Sharia law is intended to safeguard these special roles. While the Qur'an affirms Muhammad's approval of women's right to own property and right to seek divorce, literal interpretations of Qur'an also inform Sharia laws' many restrictions on women.

Where a non-Muslim might see the wearing of the hijab as discriminatory, many Muslim women embrace wearing a head or full body covering and comply with this restriction by personal choice.

The question of women's rights in Islam raises a broader question: With so many different interpretations possible of religious texts, how can someone tell what a faith truly demands? How can one know when a faith practice is being used to authorize a social or political agenda? When do the practices of a society over a thousand years ago become inappropriate for the 21st century? Who decides?

FIND OUT MORE

The Internet offers enormous resources for exploring Islam. A good starting place may be the [Islam and Islamic Studies Resources](#) (at www.uga.edu/islam/home.html) website provided by Professor Alan Godlas of the [Department of Religion](#) (at www.uga.edu/religion) at the [University of Georgia](#) (at www.uga.edu). An annotated bibliography of online links, this website includes on its home page words which apply to online research about any faith:

Note that the vast majority of religion sites on the Web are established by committed believers. Although this presents certain problems (one of which is the variable quality of the material), its virtue is that the discourse of believers is directly accessible to students of religion. The articles linked on this site have been written both by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars as well as informed believers. Of course, the views expressed in the links connected to this site are not necessarily the views of Dr. Godlas or the University of Georgia.

[A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam](#) (at www.islam-guide.com/) is a website with many articles and links about Muslim beliefs and practices. A website called [The Eid](#) (at www.theeid.com/origin-of-islam.html) explains the Muslim holiday of Eid-UI-Adha, other Muslim holidays, and other aspects of Islam. Learn about Islam and Qur'an, and see recent [video of the Hajj](#) (at www.islamicity.com/multimedia/livetv/LiveHajjCoverage.shtml) on the IslamiCity website. [Muslim bloggers](#) (at muslim.families.com/blog/category/366) on the [Families website](#) (at www.families.com/) provide a window into a

variety of Islamic perspectives on everyday issues. Here is a [blogpost](#) (at muslim.families.com/blog/what-is-halal) on halal, a diet based on Islamic law. *Mosque* by David Macaulay (Mooloolaba, Australia: Sandpiper, 2008) explores the architecture of a mosque in its cultural and religious contexts.

The Internet offers a wide array of resources, opinions, and discussions about Sharia law. Find the article "[Islam: Governing Under Sharia](#) (at www.cfr.org/publication/8034/)" on the website of the Council on Foreign Relations, an independent, nonpartisan membership organization, think tank, and publisher. An article with a political science perspective, "[Shari'ah: Beyond Theocracy and Secularism](#) (at abdullahhasan.net/?p=1134)," discusses the effect of Western powers' colonization on Arab populations' acceptance of Sharia law.

The UUA has produced a [Muslim Interfaith Guide](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/washingtonoffice/uu_muslim_interfaith_guide.pdf) to interfaith dialogue. Read the *Seattle Times* article on Ann Holmes Redding, "[I am both Muslim and Christian](#)" (at seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2003751274_redding17m.html) (June 17, 2007). The Religious Tolerance website has collected [responses](#) (at www.religioustolerance.org/bemultfaith1.htm) to Ann Holmes Redding's story.

[Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1274): *A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents* (2004) is a collection of wisdom tales from Islam, collected and adapted by Sarah Conover. You can purchase the book from the UUA Bookstore and listen to a tale read aloud from the book on the [UUA Bookstore website](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1274). Read a *Huffington Post* article on a [U.S. Mosque Study](#) (at www.huffingtonpost.com/news/us-mosque-study-2011).

WORKSHOP 14: ISLAM 2—CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Islam in its original state gave women privileges and imposed no harsh restrictions or double standards upon them. — Saimah Ashraf, Muslim author, in her essay "Shattering Illusions: Western Conceptions of Muslim Women"
Women are active fighting for their rights in all public spheres, including as workers, in many societies, but again the culture of religious patriarchy is so dominant that we are still not free individuals in our own right. — Houzan Mahmoud, Iraqi activist

This workshop continues to explore Islam, the world's second largest faith. This workshop may be more challenging for participants and facilitators. Participants discuss the complex topic of women in Islam, including contradictions between the Qur'an's apparent affirmation of equality between women and men and the disparate treatment of the genders in contemporary Islamic societies. Participants explore three contemporary issues: the status of women in Muslim societies; the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; and the division between the Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce fundamental aspects of Islam
- Introduce some of the complex issues of women in Islamic cultures
- Acquaint participants with Khadijah, first wife of Muhammad
- Consider the challenge of peace in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Deepen their understanding of Islam
- Discuss the status of women in Islamic societies
- Identify similarities and differences among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism
- Explore the difficulties involved in peacemaking, by examining the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story – Khadijah, First Woman of Islam	10
Activity 2: Where Are the Women?	30
Activity 3: Muslims in Conflict	30
Faith in Action: Peace in Palestine	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: The Holy Qur'an	20
Alternate Activity 2: Sikhs Are Not Muslims	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider your own feelings about gender equality, war, and the Muslim faith. How will you manage feelings of judgment you might have about the intersection of these three? Though your opinions may be based on facts, be careful not to influence youth's feelings. Let them discover their own opinions.

Several days before the workshop, begin and end each day by nurturing active, peaceful balance. Use the meditation below or imagery of your own choosing to create a sense of engaged, aware balance. A serene mindset will provide a foundation for this workshop.

Prepare with a meditation. You may wish to hear these words read to you:

Lie on the floor or on your bed with your body in a symmetrical position, arms and legs supported by the strong, welcoming, even surface under you. Close your eyes. Release every tension, release to the steady embrace of the earth, and feel yourself in perfect balance.

Feel your body, open, at rest, at peace. Feel your mind, open, still, at peace. Feel your heart, open, serene, at peace. Feel your spirit, open, ready, at peace. Body,

mind, heart, and spirit—feel them as one, you, balanced and perfect in this moment.

Allow yourself to become aware of some of the pressures of the world—feel the sensation—physical pressure pushing on your body, your heart, your mind, your spirit—and maintain your balance, without effort or strain, simply balanced and perfect in this moment.

Release to the embrace of the earth and feel that there is no work to be done here, no strain, effortless: The

world may push, but you carry your balance within yourself, inviolate, unreachable, serene.

The balance of the universe, the balance of all things, begins here. Balanced and perfect, this moment makes all things possible. This balance is here, now, yours and part of you, indivisible, balanced and perfect, ready within you with any blink of an eye.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- A 22 x 28 inch sheet of poster board and a marker
- Masking tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Judaism/Christianity/Islam](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Answers to Judaism/Christianity/Islam Game](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1, Judaism/Christianity/Islam. Cut the boxes apart so each phrase is on a separate slip of paper.
- Print Leader Resource 2, Answers to Judaism/Christianity/Islam Game, and use it as a guide to draw a grid, with marker, on the poster board: 1) Draw a line parallel to one of the short edges (22 inches), 2 inches from the edge; 2) draw lines parallel to this line every 2 inches down the length of the poster; 3) turn the poster; draw 3 lines in the other direction, spaced every 5 and a half inches, to evenly divide the length of the poster into four columns. Turn the poster board so the shorter side (22 inches) is at the top. Using Leader Resource 2, Answers to Judaism/Christianity/Islam Game as a guide, put an "X" in the upper left space; you will not be using it. Across the top (next to the "X"), write in large, bold letters: "JUDAISM" to head the first column, "CHRISTIANITY" next, and then "ISLAM." In the left-hand column (under the "X"), label each block to correspond with the categories listed in the first column of Leader Resource 2.
- In the welcoming area, hang the poster board at an accessible level. Place slips and masking tape on a table large enough to spread out the slips.

Description of Activity

Participants play a "guess which faith has this characteristic" game, placing slips of paper on a poster comparing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

As participants enter, indicate the poster in the welcoming area and invite participants to correctly place the slips on the poster with masking tape. Encourage youth to consult with each other. If they disagree about where to place a certain slip, suggest youth explain their reasoning and come to agreement.

Using masking tape allows paper slips to be easily moved on the poster board.

A few minutes before the workshop begins, give youth Leader Resource 2, Answers to Judaism/Christianity/Islam Game. How did they do? Were there any surprises?

Including All Participants

Make sure the poster board is accessible to all participants.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- World map
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 3, [Islam 2 Background](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Sunni and Shia – Comparison Chart](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 3 so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and mentioning either 1) an aspect of Islam that has been on their minds since the last workshop, or 2) something that struck them as interesting or surprising from the Welcoming and Entering poster board game activity.

Answer any questions about Islam from the previous workshop.

Read or share with youth, in your own words, the information from Leader Resource 3, Islam 2 Background. Use newsprint to list important terms from the resource and to record youth's answers in the "experiment" you will lead.

At the end of the presentation, distribute Handout 1, Sunni and Shia – Comparison Chart. Tell the group these two sects are one way Muslims differ, and today they will discuss other ways Muslims differ—starting with differences among Muslims about the role of women in Islamic life, both in contemporary and historical times.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY – KHADIJAH, FIRST WOMAN OF ISLAM (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Khadijah, First Woman of Islam](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the story of Khadijah, first wife of the Prophet Muhammad.

Tell or read the story. Ask participants for their initial reactions. What did they think of the story?

Ask participants if they had heard of Khadijah before. Ask for their impressions of her as a businessperson. As a spouse? As a friend? Continue discussion with questions such as:

- Khadijah's level of independence was unusual. What made this possible?
- Khadijah turned down a number of marriage proposals, continuing to run a business and raise her small children alone. Then, she proposed to Muhammad, an uncommon occurrence at that time. Did Khadijah need a life partner to thrive and be happy? What if Muhammad had said no—what do you think Khadijah would have done?
- Women in Islamic societies typically do not have equal opportunities or rights as men. Does this seem at odds with the reverence Muhammad gave Khadijah?
- As a successful and influential person in Mecca, do you think Khadijah would have been remembered in history if she had not married Muhammad? Why or why not?
- The mother is considered a very important figure in Muslim society. How might have Khadijah's great virtue and personal power contributed to this view of mothers and motherhood?
- Khadijah was an excellent manager of money. She chose, however, to use every penny of her wealth to protect Muhammad, other Muslims,

and to support the growth of Islam. Are you committed to anything that strongly? If Unitarian Universalism were under threat, what would you be willing to do to protect and support it? Would you give all your wealth and possessions for its welfare? Would you want your family to? Why or why not? That level of commitment is undeniably powerful; do you see it as a good thing? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 2: WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Position – Muslim Women Are Equal](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 3, [Position – Muslim Women Are Not Equal](#) (included in this document)
- Timepiece (seconds)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the opinions expressed in Handouts 2 and 3.
- Copy Handout 2 for participants in Group 1 and copy Handout 3 for participants in Group 2.

Description of Activity

Participants discuss relationship between women's status as affirmed in the Qur'an and the treatment of women in contemporary Islamic countries.

Ask if youth have impressions of what life is like for women in Islamic societies. Share that in some Islamic nations and communities, women have very different lives from men—girls and women have limited or no access to education, a woman cannot get a job without approval from her father or husband, women are not allowed to go out in public without a male relative or guardian, women are required to cover themselves completely in loose-fitting clothing, from hijab (head cloth) to toes, and only the hands and face may show. A husband can be flogged for being unfaithful to his wife, but a wife can be stoned to death for being unfaithful to her husband. In Saudi Arabia, women are not allowed to drive a car or travel without permission of a male guardian.

Explain, in these words or your own:

Many religious leaders in Muslim countries assert that religious laws, known as Sharia, are based entirely on the Qur'an and the teachings and life of Muhammad. However, there is disagreement about this among Muslims. Many faithful Muslim women and men believe Muhammad taught equality between the genders, and that

current Sharia laws do not support that equality and are not true expressions of Islam.

Muhammad's teachings and laws regarding women were an improvement over societal standards of the time. For example, the Qur'an instructed that, when a parent died, girl children should inherit half what their brother(s) inherited. This seems unfair until we know that before that time, girls frequently inherited nothing at all. It was expected that men would support a household, while women would be supported by a man.

Share with the group these words from a Muslim woman blogger, [Haitham Sabbah](http://sabbah.biz/mt/archives/2005/06/26/hijab%E2%80%A6-a-must-or-a-choice/) (at sabbah.biz/mt/archives/2005/06/26/hijab%E2%80%A6-a-must-or-a-choice/) (June 26, 2005):

Muslim women in the Muslim world today do not receive the noble treatment described by Islam!

Tell the group hijab, particularly, the robes and headpiece that cover everything but face and hands—and sometimes a veil to cover the face—has often been viewed both inside and outside Islam as a symbol of oppression. However, some Muslim women think opposition to hijab comes from ignorance. Share these words from another female Muslim blogger, [Tayseir Mahmoud Shabadul Haq](http://www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=SH1004-4142) (at www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=SH1004-4142) (April 10, 2010):

I don't dress this way, act this way, and talk this way because I'm forced to. I am who I am today of my own free will and as a result of the decisions I've made throughout my life with the guidance of my Lord. I cover the beauty He has blessed me with, as He has blessed every woman, so that you may see beyond the physical.

Ask participants to count off, saying "1" and "2" every other person. Ask all the Ones to form one group, and all the Twos to form another. Move youth between groups if necessary to achieve gender diversity in each group. Say:

We are going to have a debate. This is to be a civil debate, with no yelling and no name calling. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying; make sure you really hear them, just as you want to be truly heard.

Group 1 will take the position that Muslim women are equal and equally

valued; Group 2 will take the position that Muslim women are not equal and are not equally valued. Your objective is not to convince the other group of your opinion, but to understand the opposing viewpoint and to be fully understood.

Give the members of Group 1 Handout 2, Position – Muslim Women Are Equal. Give the members of Group 2 Handout 3, Position – Muslim Women Are Not Equal. Then, give these instructions:

You will have five minutes to review your position, discuss your talking points with your group members, and choose speakers for your group. Ideally, everyone will speak, but this is not absolutely required. Each group will start by stating your basic position, then supporting that position with a few major points. There will be a time limit of two minutes for this opening statement. The other group will then do the same: state their basic position and support it with a few major points with a time limit of two minutes. Then we will have open debate, alternating speakers between the two groups. After the opening statements, comments are limited to thirty seconds. I (the group facilitator) will moderate. I will limit or end the participation of anyone who violates the debate rules or our group covenant. Any participant may call for the moderator to act, but I encourage you to also monitor yourselves and one another. If necessary, you may kindly remind one another to be respectful.

Allow groups to meet for five minutes. Then, re-gather everyone. Have Group 1 present first. Continue the debate until six minutes are remaining for this activity. Invite each group to make a final, 30-second comment.

Invite participants to draw conclusions. Was either side more persuasive than the other? Did both sides have legitimate points? Was it interesting to be in the position of arguing a position they did not believe in, if that was the case?

If you have a few minutes more, invite the youth to compare the story of Khadijah with the story of Mary, mother of Jesus, regarded by many as the most important woman in Christianity. Guide the group to compare how the two women are represented in their respective faiths, using these questions:

- Compare their ages. (Khadijah a mature woman; Mary a young adult, possibly a teenager)
- What were their characters like? (Khadijah was strong, stubborn, energetic; Mary was humble and quiet)
- What were their standings in society? (Khadijah was rich and powerful; Mary was poor)
- Do these differences mean anything? Do they affect your opinion of all women, or just those individual women?

To conclude the activity, share with the group this quote from American convert to Islam, Yahya M:

At the beginning, Islam was the most revolutionary liberalization of women's rights the civilized world has ever seen. But afterwards Muslims became ignorant of this and now Muslim countries are the scene of some of the worst abuses of women's rights.

Ask:

- What do you think now about the status of women in Islam? In predominantly Muslim countries or communities?
- If someone is Muslim, does that mean you can assume what the person thinks of the role of women in their society? Replace "Muslim" with any other group: Can you tell, from someone's religion, their opinion on women's rights?

Thank the youth for their thoughtful contributions.

ACTIVITY 3: MUSLIMS IN CONFLICT (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- World map
- A 4-foot square sheet of a smooth, flat, rigid material such as foam core art board or thin plywood—a sheet light enough for two youth to handle easily
- Red and black permanent markers
- A light, quick-rolling ball such as a large marble or a ping-pong ball
- Leader Resource 4, [Map of Middle East – Predominately Muslim Countries and Israel](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: A computer and digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Locate the Middle East on the world map. Identify the state of Israel and Palestinian territories of Gaza (a strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea, on the Israeli side of its border with Egypt) and the West Bank (a radius

of land surrounding the eastern side of Jerusalem, on the Israeli side of its border with Jordan). Note: Maps may vary in how they represent Israeli and Palestinian lands. Use these variations as a teachable moment to demonstrate the depth and endurance of conflict in this region.

- Draw a red circle, four inches in diameter, in the center of the 4-foot x 4-foot square sheet. Draw another red circle around that one, eight inches across (the lines will be two inches apart), and a third 12 inches in diameter. Draw three black circles (16, 20, and 24 inches in diameter). Draw three more red circles (28, 32, and 36 inches in diameter).
- Identify a corridor or space in the room approximately 8 feet wide and 20 feet long. If possible, a shorter distance can be used, but the width is necessary to have people on either side of the 4-foot by 4-foot sheet.
- Make enough copies of Leader Resource 4 for participants to share.
- Optional: Download Leader Resource 4 to project using a computer and digital projector. Test projection of the map onto a screen or wall.

Description of Activity

Youth learn about the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, discuss September 11, 2001, and consider the difficulty of peacemaking in complex situations.

Ask participants to sit in a circle on the floor. Invite a volunteer to point to where the Middle East is located on the world map. Ask: What do you know about conflict between the state of Israel and the Arabs of Palestine? Depending on responses, share this information as needed:

There is ongoing conflict in the Middle East. There are many reasons for ongoing tension in the region, some thousands of years old. One major aspect of the Middle East conflict is the Arab-Israeli conflict, which often is talked about in religious terms, for the logical reason that most of the Middle East is Arab and Muslim and Israel is a Jewish nation. As you probably know, Israel was created to be a Jewish homeland after World War II, in 1948. However, the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors is not a conflict over religious beliefs but over identity, political power, and economic and natural resources.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been so tragic, so many people have died, and peaceful intervals have been so sadly short, that some people have the feeling it has gone on forever and healing cannot be achieved. It has not gone on forever. Jews and Muslims coexisted relatively peacefully for over 1,300 years. Jews were subject to widespread abuse by Christians by the time Islam emerged in 622 BCE. So, when Muslim conquerors began spreading Islam across the Arabian world and North Africa, Jews logically expected more of the same. Jewish existence under Muslim rule, however, was generally better. Jews were a minority in Arab lands. They did not have full citizenship, but neither did any other non-Muslims. Jews could practice their faith and usually govern their own communities if they paid their taxes and complied with other regulations. There were horrible exceptions, times when Jewish communities were massacred or forced to convert to Islam or be expelled from their homes. Most commonly, however, Muslim rulers made an effort to deal fairly with Jewish communities. However, ever since the diaspora (scattering) of Jewish people began in 587 BCE, Jews have dreamed and waited for the day when they could again have a land that was home. In the massive upheaval and redrawing of international boundaries following World War II, Great Britain controlled the region of Palestine. The United Nations passed a resolution which divided Palestine into two states—one Jewish, one Arab. The UN plan further proposed that the holy city of Jerusalem, which both groups claimed as holy, belong to neither state but stay under international control by a UN administrator. The Jewish group agreed to the plan, but the Palestinian group rejected it. Despite the lack of an agreed-on plan, Britain withdrew from Palestine. The day before Britain left, the Jewish community in Palestine published a Declaration of Independence claiming

the land of Palestine as the State of Israel. That was on May 14, 1948. Five different Arab armies invaded and the Arab-Israeli conflict was underway. Palestinians, the Arabs who lived in the area, have seen their homeland controlled by various nations. Many Palestinians have become refugees as politics and warfare shifted national borders in the region. Today, some Palestinian families have lived in refugee camps for as many as three generations. Like the Jews, the Palestinians dream of a secure homeland.

There has been violent conflict, on and off, since 1948. People on both sides have worked unsuccessfully for political compromise so there can be peace. Yet, both sides have broken ceasefires. Both sides have killed civilians. Neither trusts the other. And both think they are right and the other is wrong. So, what is to be done?

Ask for initial reactions to this information. Then, discuss:

- Invite youth to look at the map. Aggression often stems from fear. Is it logical that Israelis might feel threatened? What could help Israelis feel less threatened, other than expanding the nation's boundaries?
- Palestinians lack economic resources, political stability, and internationally recognized statehood. Is it logical that Palestinians might feel threatened? What could contribute to Palestinians feeling less threatened?
- Do you think the conflict is likely to be resolved soon? Why or why not?
- What approach do you think could be most effective to create peace? Have you successfully experienced creating peace in or between situations and people in your own life? How did you do it?
- Who has power to bring peace to the Israel/Palestine region? What part can individuals in Israel and Palestine take in helping to reach peaceful solutions? What role can institutions, like faith communities and schools, have in this situation? What about the governments of these nations? What about the international community?
- Neither group trusts the other, yet trust will be needed to peacefully co-exist. How can trust be established? Have you been in situations

where you felt your trust was violated by a friend? By a family member? Have you been able to re-establish a broken trust? Did you want to? How did you do it?

Invite two youth to volunteer. Each will represent one side of a conflict. Ask the volunteers to stand at one end of the 8-foot-wide corridor or other large space, then hand them the square and ask the two of them to hold it between them, horizontally, with the circles on top.

Say, "You have been in conflict for a long time. You have just decided on a course of action which you hope can lead to a lasting peace. This," (hold up the ball), "is your precarious peace. You must carry it between you, all the way over there." (Indicate the far end if the decided-on walkway. If using a smaller space, instruct them to walk in a circle all the way around the room or walk to the other end of the room, turn, and come all the way back.) Ask, "Are you ready?" When they indicate their readiness, place the ball carefully in the very center ring. Say, "Go."

Once the first pair of youth has completed their walk for peace, allow other pairs to try. Mix up pairings for different heights, different ordinary rates of movement, different temperaments.

Suggest the youth try it with more people, perhaps one at each corner, or even more than four. Ask:

- Was it easier with fewer people or more people involved?
- What was the most important factor in keeping the ball from falling? Laughing? A certain speed? Careful, constant attention?
- Did you try different things to discover what would work best? Was it disheartening to try something new and have it not work? Was it gratifying to try something new and have it work better?
- Did it work better to move quickly or slowly? Why?
- It can be exhausting to fully concentrate on a delicate operation for five minutes. What would it be like to try to carry the ball for five hours? Five days? Would you be able to keep with it or would you drop the ball?
- People devoted to creating peace in the Middle East have been trying to "carry the ball" for more than 60 years. What do you think of peacemakers who have been working for peace for 35 or 40 years? Where might such endurance come from?

Tell the youth, in these words or your own:

Israel/Palestine is not the only site of conflict involving Muslims. On September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by Muslim extremists and about 3,000 people died. The terrorist group responsible was called Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda does not have a national home, yet it is a political organization as well as a religious one.

Ask:

- What do you know about the September 11 attacks? What comments have you heard about them in connection with Islam?
- What do you think about the relationship between Islam and terrorism? Are the conflicts between Muslim populations and other groups about politics, about religion, or—because of the way Islam pervades a person's entire life—about both?

Ask if they have heard stories in Building Bridges about other times religion has led to violence. Is Islam the only faith where religious fundamentalists have turned to violence? Remind them about the Crusades in Christianity.

If participants do not say so, say that the terrorist acts committed today by Muslims are being committed by a small group. In these words or your own, explain:

Most Muslims condemn their actions as not being those of a true Muslim. Millions of Muslims live peaceful lives with their neighbors.

If your community has a local Muslim population, mention it as an example.

Including All Participants

If any participants use wheelchairs, crutches, or other mobility aids, plan ahead to borrow one or more of those same aids to outfit the participant's partner with matching gear. A blind participant will benefit from constant verbal feedback from their partner.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.

- Write the closing words on newsprint and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: PEACE IN PALESTINE (30 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Find a member of your congregation or community who is working with organizations who support peace in the Middle East or cooperative relationships among local Muslims and Jews. Invite them to talk to the group. If they have Jewish and Muslim colleagues, invite them, too. Suggest they create a presentation no longer than 20 minutes and bring an activity youth can do to help—for example, postcards to write to legislators or care boxes for people in refugee camps. Let them know the youth might have questions.

Description of Activity

Tell the group that the visitor(s) will discuss what they are doing to help bring peace to the Middle East. Introduce the visitor(s). After the presentation, facilitate youth to ask questions. If the visitor has brought an activity to help youth engage with the peace process, invite them to lead it.

Thank the visitor(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. This workshop addressed several challenging topics. Did they engage topics, and each other, with respect? Were youth attentive throughout the workshop, or did their attention wane? Which activities worked well? How will the answers to these questions shape future workshops?

Look ahead to Workshop 15, which includes five religions. Decide if you will have time to use alternate activities.

TAKING IT HOME

Islam in its original state gave women privileges and imposed no harsh restrictions or double standards upon them. — Saimah Ashraf, Muslim author, in her essay "Shattering Illusions: Western Conceptions of Muslim Women"

Women are active fighting for their rights in all public spheres, including as workers, in many societies, but again the culture of religious patriarchy is so dominant that we are still not free individuals in our own right. — Houzan Mahmoud, Iraqi activist

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we continued our exploration of Islam, examining contemporary issues: the status of women, the division between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, the challenge of peace in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and the modern appearance of terrorism as an expression of Muslim extremists. The story in this workshop was about Khadijah, the first wife of Muhammad.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Khadijah supported Muhammad on his spiritual journey. Do you have someone who supports you on your spiritual journey?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Read the book *The Complete Persopolis* by Marjane Satrapi (New York: Pantheon, 2007) or watch the animated movie *Persepolis* (2007, directed by [Vincent Paronnaud](http://www.netflix.com/RoleDisplay/Vincent_Paronnaud/30070521?trkid=1457035&lnkce=mdp-director) (at www.netflix.com/RoleDisplay/Vincent_Paronnaud/30070521?trkid=1457035&lnkce=mdp-director) and [Marjane Satrapi](http://www.netflix.com/RoleDisplay/Marjane_Satrapi/30070522?trkid=1457035&lnkce=mdp-director) (at www.netflix.com/RoleDisplay/Marjane_Satrapi/30070522?trkid=1457035&lnkce=mdp-director), PG-13) to hear one young woman's experiences with an Islamic government.
- [Mideast Tunes](http://blog.mideastunes.com/aboutus) (at blog.mideastunes.com/aboutus) features alternative music from the Middle East. Many of these musicians are trying to change the world with their music. There are several genres, including classical, punk, heavy metal, and hip-hop. Even if you do not understand the lyrics, you can enjoy the music.
- A novel about a youth who decides to wear the hijab is *Does This Make My Head Look Big?* by [Randa Abdel-Fattah](http://search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/results.asp?ATH=Randa+Abdel%2DFattah) (at search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/results.asp?ATH=Randa+Abdel%2DFattah) (New York: Scholastic, 2007).

- Another interesting book is *The Trouble with Islam Today* by Irshad Manji, (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2005). The author is a lesbian-Ugandan-Canadian woman, who embraces her Islamic faith while also understanding the challenges of modern Islam.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: THE HOLY QUR'AN (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 4, [Excerpts from the Holy Qur'an](#) (included in this document) for all participants
- Bibles (New Revised Standard Version) for all participants

Description of Activity

Participants read excerpts from the Qur'an, compare stories told with alternate versions told in the Bible, and discuss the implications of those differences.

Share with participants that the Bible is recognized as a sacred text by Muslims. Explain:

In Islam, the Bible, though not considered the ultimate authority, is still counted as a sacred text of true revelation. Islam recognizes that Jesus was a holy messenger, a prophet, but does not consider Jesus divine.

Muslims believe that the message in the Bible had become confused or corrupted in the 600 years since it had been written, and therefore Allah's revelations to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel were intended to provide clarity and be the final word. For this reason, while translations of the Qur'an are used by people all over the world, only the original Arabic Qur'an is considered the ultimate authority to Muslims.

Interestingly, just as the Christian scriptures (or New Testament) were not written down during Jesus' lifetime, the Qur'an was not written down while Muhammad lived. Instead, it was memorized and repeated word for word. Caliph Uthman, the third Muslim leader in the Sunni tradition, ordered the Qur'an written down, starting about 18 years after Muhammad's death. The Qur'an contains instructions for most areas of people's lives. Its importance to faithful Muslims cannot be overstated. The instructions which became known as the Five Pillars of

Islam appear there, as well as many recommendations which (together with additional information from the Hadith) have been codified in Islamic nations as Sharia law. It cannot be changed or added to.

Familiar prophets, including Abraham and Jesus, and many familiar Bible stories appear in the Qur'an. There are differences, however, between the biblical and the qu'ranic tellings, some minor and others significant.

In the story of Noah and the flood, for example, Noah's son drowns in the qu'ranic version, while in the Hebrew scripture version all Noah's three sons and their wives survive. The Qur'an specifically denies a Trinity, identified as Father, Mother, and Son, while Christian scripture makes no specific mention of a Trinity, although many Christians believe a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is strongly implied. In the Qur'an, Jesus appears as a true prophet of God, but truly and only human; in the Christian scriptures, Jesus appears as divine and second only to God.

Distribute Handout 4, Excerpts from the Holy Qur'an and copies of the Bible. Ask a volunteer to read the first excerpt from the handout aloud. Then invite participant responses and discuss the passage with questions such as:

- How does this version differ from the biblical version of the Adam and Eve story? (If needed, ask participants to find parallels in the Bible.)
- The Qur'an states that while Adam was created first, Eve was then created from the same soul. Do you find that idea appealing? Why or why not? Would being created from the same soul tend to affirm or undermine a feeling of equality between women and men? Would it support the idea of being equally valued by God?
- In traditional Judaism and Christianity, Eve picked the fruit and then gave it to Adam. This action has been used to support the idea that women are weaker or more wicked than men. The story is told differently in the Qur'an. Both Adam and Eve share responsibility for defying God's order not to eat the fruit. What do you think about this difference? How could this story shape the way people think about women and men?

- In the Qur'an, Adam and Eve were created in Paradise, which was not on Earth. After they ate the fruit, God forgave them but removed them from Paradise and put them on Earth. In the Bible, they were created in the Garden of Eden on Earth. After they ate the fruit, God banished them from the Garden and sentenced Eve and all women to greater pain in childbirth as punishment. What do you think about these differences? How might these different versions affect a person's belief in the ability to create a heaven on Earth?

Ask a volunteer to read the second excerpt from the handout. Then invite participant responses and discuss, using these questions:

- As illustrated in this passage, Jesus is not crucified in the Qur'an. Instead, an illusion appears to the people who wish to crucify him so they believed it has happened, but instead Jesus is taken into Heaven by Allah. How might a Christian view this retelling? Why? Does this version of the end of Jesus' life tend to put more, or less, emphasis on his teachings? (If needed, ask participants to find parallels in the Christian scripture.)
- The Qur'an was viewed as an essential correction to the Bible, which was perceived to have drifted from its sacred origins. To ensure the ongoing purity of the Qur'an's message, no additions or changes are permitted: Qur'an is seen as the final and perfect revelation of God. What might some strengths of this stability be? What might be some weaknesses?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: SIKHS ARE NOT MUSLIMS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- An assortment of small items which could be worn or carried in a pocket—for example, a comb, rubber band, tiny mirror, coin, simple ring, various pins and pendants, small stone, small bell, small box of matches, locket, or tiny animal figure
- Handout 5, [Sikh Pop Quiz](#) (included in this document) and pens/pencils
- Handout 6, [The Turban and Five Ks of Sikhism](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 5 as a two-sided handout for all participants.
- Copy Handout 6 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Youth learn the importance of Sikhism and explore the idea of visible expressions of faith.

Share with youth the following:

We are going to look at a different religion—a very important faith, among the largest in the world with more than 23 million adherents. It is unusual to talk about two major faiths in the same workshop, but there is a good reason for this pairing: In North America, sometimes followers of this faith are misidentified as Muslims. In fact, after the September 11, 2001, incidences of attacks, profiling, abusive behavior, and discrimination toward people of this faith soared. Does anyone know, or perhaps have a guess, which religion this is?

If none of the youth know, inform them that the faith is Sikhism. If the youth name Sikhism, thank them, and then ask them to wait to share further until everyone has a chance to take the Sikh Pop Quiz.

Distribute Handout 5, Sikh Pop Quiz and writing materials. Ask youth to answer the questions without helping each other. After five minutes, have participants talk together and come to an agreement about the answers. Then, compare the group's answers with the Pop Quiz Answers:

Pop Quiz Answers

1. (c) Sat Sri Akal means roughly, "Blessed is one who says God is Truth"
2. (a) Sikhism
3. (e) Punjab—a region partly in India, mostly in Pakistan
4. (c) Early 1900s—Sikhs have been in the United States for over a hundred years
5. (e) All of the above
6. (e) One or two generations
7. (b) Tantamount to taking off their pants
8. (e) Fifth largest religion (behind Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and not counting indigenous faiths, atheism/agnosticism, or Falun Gong)
9. False – Sikhs are not to alter the body for purely cosmetic purposes
10. (d) Share with the needy, work honestly and hard, and always remember the Creator in everything you do

Share, in these words or your own:

Sikhs live all over the world. "Sikh" is pronounced "se-ickh" with a short "I,"

close to the word "sick," not "seek." Sikhism began in the year 1500, about 900 years after Islam and just before the birth of Protestantism in 1517. Its founder, Guru Nanak Dev, was born to a Hindu family in western Punjab (Pakistan near India). While still a young man, he decided he was neither Hindu nor Muslim, the predominant religions in the region. Then, when he was 30, Guru Nanak Dev experienced a revelation and began to preach a new message emphasizing generosity, awareness of God, and the unity and equality of all people, male or female, rich or poor. He named the new religion Sikh, meaning "learner," since Sikhs endeavor to learn constantly to be better people and serve God better. Guru Nanak Dev began a book which is known as the Guru Granth Sahib. After Guru Nanak Dev died, nine more gurus ("teachers") followed, and most of them added to the Guru Granth Sahib. Since the death of the tenth Guru, there have been no more human leaders of the Sikh faith. However, the book, the Guru Granth Sahib, is accepted as a true Guru and the remaining holy teacher of living Sikh wisdom. The Guru Granth Sahib is considered complete and perfect. An important aspect of Sikhism is that, at the ceremony where one becomes a full member, they vow to wear at all times five sacred symbols of the faith. The objects, some of which are visible and some not, are potent reminders of the wearer's strongest beliefs and of their sacred obligations to themselves, to their faith, and to others.

Distribute Handout 6, The Turban and Five Ks of Sikhism. Ask for five volunteers to each read a section aloud. Ask for thoughts about the Five Ks.

Continue discussion with these questions:

- The Panj Kakkar, or Five Ks, remind a Sikh of gratitude, humility, cleanliness, discipline of thought, restraint from doing harm, self-control, and readiness to defend truth and the oppressed. As Unitarian Universalists, what do you most value? If you were going to choose items to remind yourself of your values every day, what would they be?

- If you carried or wore something as a spiritual emblem, would you want it to be visible to other people or not? Why? The [Search Sikhism](http://www.searchsikhism.com/five.html) (at www.searchsikhism.com/five.html) website states, "The Khalsa cannot be anonymous." (Khalsa is a Punjab word for Sikh.) How do youth feel about the idea of not being able to be anonymous about their faith? Do you enjoy the ability to be anonymous in your faith? Do you think it could result in greater commitment to your faith if you wore a visible symbol of it at all times?
- Would your visible emblem of faith be the flaming chalice, or something else? Have you ever worn such in public—a chalice pendant or t-shirt?
- Do you wear something that represents a "signature" of you—a necklace, ring, piece of clothing, hat, anything you always or almost always have on you? What does it mean to you? Everything we wear or do conveys some message to the people around us. What do you think your signature item says about you to other people?
- If you were wearing your chosen symbol and someone asked you, "What's that?" how would you answer? Would you say, "It's the symbol of my religion," hoping they move on to the next subject? Would you name your faith? Would you give a brief description? If you wanted to give a brief description of Unitarian Universalism, could you do it? What would you say?

Place the small objects on a surface where they can be seen. Suggest that every item could be invested with meaning of some kind, depending on who was carrying it and what the object reminded them of. Ask what some of the items might mean if someone were carrying them as sacred symbols.

Do some of the items represent qualities or values participants named as most important to them? If they were going to choose something to carry or wear, how would they go about choosing?

If you have decided objects will be available for youth to take if they wish, offer at this time for each to choose an object (or several). Then, ask youth to sit quietly holding their items for a moment. Suggest that they try, for at least a day, to carry or wear that object with sacred intention, reminding them of why they chose it—think about what it means and call them to their higher selves. Suggest, "It might be interesting to see how that feels."

Answer any remaining questions about Sikhism or, if you cannot answer immediately, plan to obtain answers for the next workshop.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

14: STORY: KHADIJAH, FIRST WOMAN OF ISLAM

Remarkable women have done remarkable things in every part of the world in every time in history. Most of their accomplishments were not recorded in history books. While just as brilliant, creative, and courageous as men, women in many societies have been valued less, and often their contributions discounted, not recorded at all, or attributed to men. Notable exceptions were women so extraordinary their worth could not be ignored or minimized. One such woman, revered by billions, is Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid), born in Mecca in 555 CE.

Khadijah was born to a life of privilege. Her family was important in Mecca and quite wealthy; she could have lived a life of ease all her days. Khadijah, however, was an intelligent and industrious young woman who enjoyed business and became very skilled. When her father died, the young woman took charge of the family business, which thrived and grew under her direction. Compassionate as well as hard-working, Khadijah gave a great deal of money to help others—assisting the poor, sick, disabled, widows, orphans, and giving poor couples money to marry.

Twice Khadijah married, and when each of her husbands died, she overcame her grief and continued to rear her small children and run her successful caravan business by herself. Khadijah had many employees, including the important position of her agent, who traveled with her caravans, negotiated deals in other cities, and took charge of the large amounts of money involved in the trading business.

When Khadijah was 40 years old, she was widely known in Arabia as a powerful, smart, independent woman, and many men wanted to work for her. However, when she needed to hire an agent, she did not hire any of the men who eagerly sought the job. Instead, she selected a hard-working young man named Muhammad who had the reputation of being honest and diligent. Muhammad was only 25 years old when he accepted the job, but he proved to be an excellent employee and a courteous and ethical man. Within a fairly short time Khadijah concluded he would be a suitable partner in life, as well, and so she, Khadijah, proposed marriage to Muhammad.

The difference in their ages was 15 years, but there was never a question of their complete devotion to each other. Muhammad continued to work for Khadijah's caravan business, and they had six children together, although only one of the children, a girl named Fatimah,

lived to adulthood. Khadijah and Muhammad lived happily in this busy, productive way for 15 years, but when Muhammad was 40 their lives took a radical turn.

Muhammad meditated in a cave outside Mecca from time to time, and one afternoon he returned home from the cave exhausted and frightened, calling to Khadijah for help. He told her the angel Gabriel had spoken to him with a message from God, but he did not know what it meant. Khadijah believed Muhammad. She assured him he was sane and that this news was good, not fearful. Khadijah became the first convert to Islam, and remained Muhammad's most staunch believer, ally, and friend through the trials that lay ahead.

Khadijah encouraged Muhammad to leave the business and preach full time. She financially supported him so he could preach with all his heart and energy; she sustained him in this way for the rest of her life. When necessary, she supported his followers, too. In the early years, when the growth of Islam was slow and increasingly dangerous, Khadijah protected Muhammad with her political power and influence. As time passed, Muhammad's compelling word gained followers, and just as steadily, city leaders became more alarmed and wanted Muhammad arrested. Eventually, when the authorities could not be kept away and finally came for him, Khadijah left her comfortable home to join her husband, Muhammad, in hiding. Three years of rugged living followed, during which Khadijah depleted her entire large fortune supporting the followers of Islam. Her wealth was gone and her health strained to the breaking point by deprivation. However, her spirits remained high and her devotion never flagged. Finally, the brave, honorable, and faithful Khadijah became ill and died.

The year Khadijah died was 619 CE. She was 65 years old, and she and Muhammad had been partners for 25 years. Muhammad's uncle Abu Talib also died that year, and Muhammad called 619 the Year of Sorrow. It is known in Islamic history as the Year of Sorrow to this day.

Khadijah is recognized as a great woman. Muhammad revered Khadijah's memory the rest of his life, and consistently held her up to both men and women as a model of intelligence, virtue, courage, and devotion to family and to God. During the 25 years of their marriage, Muhammad remained married only to Khadijah. After Khadijah died, Muhammad had numerous wives at once as was the custom of that time.

Khadijah is revered by Muslims worldwide, honored with the titles First Believer and Mother of Believers. Muslims believe Islam is the true faith, originating with

Adam and Eve, so the work of Muhammad did not create Islam. However, its success is in great part due

to Khadijah's unwavering support in its formative years.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: HANDOUT 1: SUNNI AND SHIA – COMPARISON CHART

	Sunni	Shia
Adherents called	Sunnis	Shiites or Shi'i
Meaning of name	"tradition" or "well-trodden path"	"partisans of Ali"
Current adherents	85-90 percent of Muslims, 1.275-1.35 billion	10-15 percent of Muslims, 150-225 million
Did Muhammad designate a successor?	No	Yes
True successor of the Prophet	Abu Bakr, father of Muhammad's wife, A'isha	Ali ibn Abi Talib, husband of Fatimah, Muhammad's daughter
Qualifications for leader of the faith	Tribe of the Prophet; later, any qualified ruler	Family of the Prophet
Leadership	Imam is a prayer leader; no clerical hierarchy	Imam is exalted position; Ayatollah is title for highest imams
Quality of imams	Human	Infallible manifestations of God; perfect interpreters of the Qur'an
Approach to Islam	Qur'an applies to entire life; individuals approach God directly	More orthodox; Qur'an and laws interpreted by clerics
Holy cities	Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem	Mecca, Najaf, Karbala, Medina, Jerusalem
Day of communal worship (not considered Sabbath or a holy day)	Friday	Friday

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: HANDOUT 2: POSITION – MUSLIM WOMEN ARE EQUAL

Muslim women are equal to men and equally valued.

- The Holy Qur'an states that women and men were created from a single soul and are moral equals in the eyes of God. Qur'an 4:1: "O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a watcher over you."
- The importance of Khadijah to Muhammad and the reverence she is given by Muslims show the high value of women in Islamic society.
- The mother of Jesus, "Maryam" in the Arabic, is highly revered. The Qu'ran devotes an entire chapter to her and her name is mentioned more in the Qu'ran than in the Christian scriptures.
- One of the attributes of Allah is that Allah has no body and no gender. If one gender were better than the other, Allah would have that gender; therefore, since Allah does not have a gender, the genders are equal.
- Hijab—the requirement that women cover their hair and dress modestly—is for women's protection and to ensure men will treat them respectfully.
- Wearing the hijab is an honor. Dressing modestly forces others to judge a woman by her mind and character rather than her appearance.
- Men also are instructed in the Qur'an to dress modestly and speak humbly; this instruction to women is not discriminatory.
- It is hypocritical to single Islam out as oppressing women. Christian and Jewish scriptures and societies are pervasively sexist.
- Women are encouraged to lower their eyes and speak with soft voices not because they are inferior but because their eyes and voices possess great power; it is not necessary to stare someone in the face or raise one's voice in order to be heard.
- Benazir Bhutto served as Prime Minister of Pakistan (equivalent to President in the United States) in two separate terms, ending with her assassination. Pakistan is a conservative

Muslim nation, yet a woman was elected to head the country. This demonstrates that Muslim women can pursue educations and careers, even public ones, if they choose.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: HANDOUT 3: POSITION – MUSLIM WOMEN ARE NOT EQUAL

Muslim women are not considered equal to men or valued equally with men in Islamic society.

- The Holy Qur'an states clearly that women are to be subordinate to men. Qur'an 4.34: "Men stand superior to women in that God hath preferred some of them over others, and in that they expend of their wealth; and the virtuous women, devoted, careful (in their husbands') absence, as God has cared for them. But those whose perverseness ye fear, admonish them and remove them into bed-chambers and beat them; but if they submit to you, then do not seek a way against them; verily, God is high and great."
- Behavior of the Prophet Muhammad clearly shows his value and respect for Khadijah. Khadijah also is widely revered by Muslims. However, reverence for Khadijah does not necessarily translate to respect for all women.
- One of the attributes of Allah is that Allah has no body and no gender. Yet Allah is always referred to as "He." In Arabic, genderless nouns are generally given the male form. This clearly illustrates that in Arabic Islamic society, males are seen as superior to females.
- The requirement that women cover their hair and dress modestly is demeaning and discriminatory. The restriction is used to justify mistreatment of women with uncovered hair, exposed arms, etc., by suggesting they "asked for it" by being immodest.
- While many specifics of Sharia law (Islamic religious law) are not found in the Qur'an, traditional Muslim texts and practice are used to justify restrictions which limit women's access to education, transportation, employment, making women reliant on men for these fundamental rights and denying women self-determination. In countries where this is the case, women and girls experience oppression, whatever the Qur'an says.
- If lowering the eyes and softening the voice are recognitions of personal power and displays of humility before God, why are men not required to do it as well as women? The fact that this is not required of men demonstrates the expectation of women being submissive.
- Unwillingness to question different requirements for men and women is a sign of ongoing oppression. Does something being done many

times and having the force of habit make it right?

- Acknowledging that Muhammad was ahead of his time, valued women enough to assert their equality with men, and changed their standing in society for the better, would he not want today's women also to be equal with men? If Muhammad could see that the way Sharia (Islamic law) is applied today keeps women from opportunity, freedom, and happiness, would he want things done differently?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: HANDOUT 4: EXCERPTS FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

From the Qur'an, Rodwell edition (1876) and Palmer edition (1880).

Excerpt from Sura II, The Cow

He said, "O Adam, inform them (the angels) of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not say to you that I know the hidden things of the Heavens and of the Earth, and that I know what ye bring to light, and what ye hide?" And when He said to the angels, "Bow down and worship Adam" then worshipped they all, save Eblis (Satan). He refused and swelled with pride, and became one of the unbelievers.

And He said, "O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat yet plentifully therefrom wherever ye list, but to this tree come not nigh, lest ye become of the transgressors."

But Satan made them slip from it, and caused their banishment from the place in which they were.

Excerpt from Sura IV, The Chapter of Women

"Verily, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of God," ... but they did not kill him, and they did not crucify him, but a similitude was made for them. And verily, those who differ about him are in doubt concerning him; they have no knowledge concerning, but only follow an opinion. They did not kill him, for sure! Nay, God raised him up unto Himself, for God is mighty and wise.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: HANDOUT 5: SIKH POP QUIZ

From the Sikh Coalition, 40 Exchange Place, Suite 728, NY, NY 10004, 1-212-655-3095 and the website Khalsa Kids.

1. If you meet a Sikh, an appropriate way to greet them is:
 - a. "Salaam Alaikum"
 - b. "Namaste"
 - c. "Sat Sri Akal"
 - d. "Bonjour"
2. Ninety-nine percent of the persons who wear turbans in the United States follow what faith(s)?
 - a. Sikhism
 - b. Hinduism
 - c. Islam
 - d. Sikhism and Islam
 - e. Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam
3. Sikhs are predominantly from which part of the world?
 - a. Afghanistan
 - b. Tajikistan
 - c. Pakistan
 - d. New Jersey
 - e. Punjab
4. When did Sikhs first come to the United States?
 - a. In the 1960s during the large wave of Asian immigration to the U.S.
 - b. With the Pilgrims on the Mayflower
 - c. Early 1900s
 - d. In the 1940s to fight with U.S. forces during World War II
 - e. In the 1980s during a time of great political unrest in India
5. Sikhs have made which of the following contributions to American society?
 - a. The inventor of fiber optics is a Sikh
 - b. The largest federal court security contractor for the U.S. Marshals Service is a Sikh-American owned company
 - c. A Sikh is America's largest peach grower
 - d. One of the first doctors to arrive at ground zero on 9/11 was a Sikh
 - e. All of the above
6. A Sikh-American is likely to have been in the United States for how long?
 - a. Three generations
 - b. Two generations
 - c. One generation
 - d. Two to three generations
 - e. One to two generations
7. For a Sikh male, removing their turban in public is:

- a. Not a problem
- b. Tantamount to taking off their pants
- c. A sign of respect
- d. An inconvenience, but not forbidden
- e. Not cool

8. Sikhism is the world's:

- a. Largest religion
- b. Second largest religion
- c. Third largest religion
- d. Fourth largest religion
- e. Fifth largest religion

9. True or False? Sikhs can cut their hair whenever they want, without violating the tenets their faith.

10. The guiding principle(s) of a Sikh's life:

- a. Be removed from worldly things if you want to save yourself from their corruption
- b. Sikhism is our only salvation
- c. Always remember to pray during the day
- d. Share with the needy, work honestly and hard, always remember the Creator in everything you do
- e. Live hard, die young

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: HANDOUT 6: THE TURBAN AND FIVE KS OF SIKHISM

The Five Ks (in Punjabi "Panj Kakkar") are symbols of faith worn by baptized Sikh men and women. The name, Panj Kakkar or Five Ks, comes from all five items beginning with the letter "K." It is considered an honor to wear the Five Ks and (for men) turban which publicly identify the wearer as Sikh. Sikhs feel the public nature of their faith holds them to a high level of accountability, both personally and as representatives of their religion. The Five Ks are:

Kesh

Kesh means unshorn hair. Sikhs affirm that they will keep their hair in its natural state, never cutting it. This is an expression of accepting the natural gifts of God and a commitment to live in harmony with situations and people as they are. Accepting and celebrating one's God-given body without changing it is the first step in accepting other laws, the foremost of which is becoming a universal being.

Kangha

A kangha is a small comb. The kangha is used to brush a Sikh's long hair twice a day, after which men retie their turbans. Symbolically, the kangha reminds Sikhs to keep their lives in order and their thoughts clear and clean.

Kara

Kara means link or bond; the kara is a steel bracelet worn on the right wrist. It is a continuous band with no beginning and no end, just as God has no beginning and no end, and signifies a Sikh's link to the Sikh community and teachings. The kara serves as a reminder to do no harm.

Kachha

The kachha is an undergarment similar to boxer shorts. The loose-fitting, white shorts have two meanings. One is the reminder to control bodily urges and stay clean in spirit. The other is to remain free to move swiftly when it is time to prevent harm or protect what is good.

Kirpan

A kirpan is a warrior's sword. Today's kirpan can be a real knife, but this can pose difficulties. Often, small symbolic kirpans are worn, instead, attached to the kangha (comb) or worn as a pendant. It is not a symbol of violence. The word kirpan comes from "kirpa," meaning an act of kindness. In any of its forms, the kirpan is a symbol of power, freedom of spirit, and courage to always defend the weak and the oppressed.

Turban

The Punjabi word for turban also begins with a K ("keski"), but it is separate from the Five Ks. Usually the turban is worn only by men. Sikh men wear their long hair in a turban to protect the hair and keep it neat, and also as a public expression of humility and faith.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: LEADER RESOURCE 1: JUDAISM/CHRISTIANITY/ISLAM

Cut along the lines to create slips. Participants attach the slips to the prepared poster board with masking tape.

Judaism	Christianity	Islam
monotheism	monotheism; some Trinitarian	monotheism
angels, demons, the Devil	angels, demons, the Devil	angels, demons, the Devil
false prophet	Son of God, savior of humankind	real but not final prophet of God
normal birth	virgin birth	virgin birth
yes	yes	wasn't crucified; ascended to heaven
Jesus will not be resurrected	Jesus was resurrected	Jesus will be resurrected
Eve ate the fruit and gave it to Adam	Eve ate the fruit and gave it to Adam	Both Adam and Eve picked the fruit
some believe a messiah will come; Jesus was not the Messiah	Jesus will return as Messiah	Jesus will return as Messiah
two equal impulses, one good, one bad	sinful by nature	equal ability to do good or evil
Saturday, Sabbath	Sunday, Sabbath	Friday, not a Sabbath
interpretation is possible to determine God's will	to some, the word of God, infallible; to some, inspired by God, fallible	literal word of God, infallible
others are false interpretations and extensions of Judaism	Judaism true but incomplete religion; Islam false religion	others are respected, but thought to have wrong and partial revelation

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: LEADER RESOURCE 2: ANSWERS TO JUDAISM/CHRISTIANITY/ISLAM GAME

This chart shows the beliefs held by mainstream adherents of each of the Abrahamic religions. There are many variations in beliefs, in each of these faiths.

	Judaism	Christianity	Islam
Type of theism	monotheism	monotheism; some Trinitarian	monotheism
Other spiritual beings	angels, demons, the Devil	angels, demons, the Devil	angels, demons, the Devil
Status of Jesus	false prophet	Son of God, savior of humankind	real but not final prophet of God
Jesus' birth	normal birth	virgin birth	virgin birth
Did Jesus die at crucifixion?	yes	yes	no; he ascended to heaven
Resurrection	Jesus was not and will not be resurrected	Jesus was resurrected	Jesus will be resurrected
Who initiated the first sin?	Eve ate the apple and gave it to Adam	Eve ate the apple and gave it to Adam	Both Adam and Eve picked apple
Second Coming	some believe a messiah will come; Jesus was not the Messiah	Jesus will return as Messiah	Jesus will return as Messiah
Human nature	two equal impulses, one good, one bad	sinful by nature	equal ability to do good or evil
Day of worship	Saturday, Sabbath	Sunday, Sabbath	Friday, not a Sabbath
View of sacred text	interpretation is possible to determine God's will	to some, the word of God, infallible; to some, inspired by God, fallible	literal word of God, infallible
View of other Abrahamic faiths	others are false interpretations and extensions of Judaism	Judaism true but incomplete religion; Islam false religion	others are respected, but thought to have wrong and partial revelation

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: LEADER RESOURCE 3: ISLAM 2 BACKGROUND

In the previous workshop, we discussed a number of aspects of Islam. One important thing we did not look at was its two main branches.

In our study of Christianity, we have learned [or, will learn] about a major split that happened about 1,500 years after Christianity began, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses of Contention to the Wittenberg church door and launched the Protestant Reformation. There are now thousands of Protestant denominations, with a billion adherents.

The split in Islam is very different. The division in Islam began as soon as Muhammad died, and it was not about corrupt individuals or even differences in beliefs; rather, it was about succession: Who should become caliph (kah-LEEF, meaning "successor" or "deputy") after Muhammad's death?

Here is what happened. Two men, Abu Bakr and Ali, were Muhammad's closest friends, advisors, and companions. Abu Bakr was the first male convert to Islam, and Ali was Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, married to Muhammad's daughter Fatimah. When Muhammad died in 632 CE, his wishes for a successor were not clear enough to prevent a struggle. Advocates for both Ali and Abu Bakr asserted that Muhammad had chosen their favorite to be caliph. Ali's supporters contended that only blood relatives and descendants of Muhammad should be caliph, and bitterly opposed Abu Bakr.

When elders of the Muslim community elected Abu Bakr the first caliph, Ali's partisans did not accept Abu Bakr as a legitimate leader. Two more elected caliphs followed Abu Bakr, each time with Ali's supporters fervently asserting Ali's sole right to lead Islam. When the third caliph, Uthman, was murdered in 656 CE (24 years after Muhammad's death) and Ali finally became caliph, the conflict became war. Five years later, Ali himself was assassinated and the caliphate passed to another elected leader instead of to one of Ali's sons (grandchildren of Muhammad).

The disagreement has never been resolved. The branches are Sunni and Shia. Sunni means "people of custom and community." This is the group which believed in leaders chosen by the community. Shia means "partisans of Ali"—the group which believed the caliph should be a descendant of Muhammad). Worldwide, the Shiites make up only ten percent of

Muslims. However, most Shiites live in the Middle East, where they are the majority. Iran's population is 93 percent Shiite. The fact that Iran's leadership was Shiite and Iraq was controlled by Sunnis for many years contributed to the war that raged for ten years between those two countries and in which millions were killed in both nations.

The Sunni and Shia branches differ in forms of leadership, the physical forms of prayer, and many other aspects. One theological difference has been described in this way:

... Shiites believe Allah commands something because it is a good thing (and does not command something because it is bad). Sunnis think that because Allah orders it, it makes it good. (from "Sunni and Shiite Branches of Islam" on the [Hyper History](http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/essays/comp/cw11sunnishiitesplit.htm) (at www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/essays/comp/cw11sunnishiitesplit.htm) website)

Discussion

What do youth think about this? The difference seems subtle, but could make big difference in the way people think about God. If we substitute a parent for Allah, the difference is a little easier to see. One youth says, "I don't always agree with my mom, but when she tells me to do something, I know it's because she thinks it's a good thing." Another youth responds, "Well, if my mom tells me to do something that makes it a good thing!" Ask the youth which mom seems more authoritarian? Or maybe the moms are the same! Could the difference be in the way the youth receive what mom says? In other words, might the second youth just be more committed to accepting, or submitting to, the mom's judgment?

Interestingly, the Shiites have a very strong hierarchy, with layers of authority within the faith. The top layer is the ayatollahs, whom Shiites consider the supreme religious authority until the return of the last descendant of Muhammad. By comparison, Sunnis have no official clergy. There is nonprofessional religious leadership, though. Trained volunteers lead prayers, and frequently are financially supported by the communities they serve.

Experiment

Tell the youth you would like to conduct an experiment. Then ask, "If someone asks you what religion you are, or, 'What's your church?' what do you answer?" Accept all answers. Then continue, "Great; thank you. Okay, next question: When other people are asked what religion they are, or what church they go to, what are

some answers they might give?" Write responses on posted newsprint.

Together, look at the list; most will be Christian denominations. Note that when Christians are asked what their religion is, usually they will answer with their denomination: for example, "Church of Christ," "Baptist," "Mormon," "Methodist," etc. When adherents of Islam are asked the same question, they answer, "Muslim," never "Sunni" or "Shiite." Disagreement arises when a Sunni is asked if a Shia is a Muslim, or a

Shia is asked if a Sunni is Muslim. Then, the answer is often "no."

Even though Shiites and Sunnis have differences deep enough to fight wars and kill millions of each others' people over, members of each group say they are Muslim, and each believes its sect to be faithful to the deepest truths of Islam. Do youth think this feeling of having irreconcilable differences but being in the same family, so to speak, would serve to ease tension or intensify it?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 14: LEADER RESOURCE 4: MAP OF MIDDLE EAST – PREDOMINATELY MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND ISRAEL

From the website [Women in Islam](http://www.womeninislam.com); fair use as permitted by website owner.

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/map1.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/map1.pdf) for printing.



FIND OUT MORE

The quote from this workshop comes from Saimah Ashraf. Her essay "[Shattering Illusions: Western Conceptions of Muslim Women](#) (at www.jannah.org/sisters/shatter.html)" contrasts Islam's position on women as stated in the Qur'an versus women's rights and roles as proscribed today in a variety of countries and examines Western attitudes toward Muslim women.

Additional resources on women and Islam: [Love in a Headscarf](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1416) by Shelina Zahra Janmohamed (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010); *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* by Leila Ahmed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, paperback 1993); a [post on the IslamiCity website](#) (at www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=SH1004-4142) by Tayseir Mahmoud Shabadul Haq, a Muslim woman who wears hijab; the online post "[Hijab: a Must, OR a Choice?](#)" (at sabbah.biz/mt/archives/2005/06/26/hijab...-a-must-or-a-choice/) by Haitham Sabbah; and a 2009 report, "[Women Leaders Struggle for Female Rights in Iraq](#)" (at [www.niqash.org/content.php?contentTypeID=74&id=2403\(=0\)](http://www.niqash.org/content.php?contentTypeID=74&id=2403(=0))) on the Niqash website.

On its website, the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry describes [differences between the Bible and the Qur'an](#) (at www.carm.org/differences-between-bible-and-quran) from a Christian perspective.

Khadijah

The book *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs* by Sara Conover and Freda Crane offers a story about Khadijah, "The First Muslim." The Islamic Occasions network offers a [longer, less formal history of Khadijah](#) (at www.ezsoftech.com/islamic/khadijah.asp). Also see a translation of a 2003 [biographical study of Khadijah-al-Kubra](#) (at eprints.hec.gov.pk/1863/1/1791.htm) (Khadijah the Great) by Anar-Al-Din.

Shia and Sunni

Explore differences between Shia and Sunni Islam in the article "[Comparison of Shia, Sunni, and Sufi Factions of Islam](#)" (at staff.jccc.net/jbacon/readings/world_religions/Sunni-Shia.htm)."

Sikhism

Visit the [Sikhs](#) (at www.sikhs.org/) website or the website [Khalsa Kids](#) (at www.khalsakids.org/). The Religious Tolerance website has information about [Sikhism](#) (at www.religioustolerance.org/sikhism.htm). Also see [The Ten Gurus](#) (at www.hinduwebsite.com/sikhism/sikhgurus.asp) of Sikhism (Hindu website) and [The Five Ks \(the Search Sikhism website\)](#) (at www.searchsikhism.com/five.html).

WORKSHOP 15: THE 1800S—FIVE NEW RELIGIONS

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To live and let live, without clamour for distinction or recognition; to wait upon divine love; to write truth first on the tablet of one's own heart—this is the sanity and perfection of living. — Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science

This workshop introduces five faiths that emerged between 1830 and 1880.

It examines their historical context, looks at some of their characteristic elements, and appreciates the energy that led to their beginnings.

Because it is difficult to cover five religions in ninety minutes, you might consider extending this into two workshops by including the two Alternate Activities and extending the discussion time for other activities.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce some fundamental aspects of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Baha'i Faith, Seventh-Day Adventists, Church of Christ, Scientist, and Jehovah's Witnesses
- Introduce some important religious figures from the mid 1800s
- Present the story of the Mormon Trail
- Compare these faiths with Unitarian Universalism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Increase their understanding of these five faiths
- Discuss religious persecution
- Learn greater appreciation for worldviews different from their own
- Consider how Unitarian Universalism might become more welcoming to cultural diversity
- Practice spreading the good news of Unitarian Universalism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity

Minutes

Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story – The Mormon Trail	20
Activity 2: Going Door to Door	15
Activity 3: Multicultural and Multiracial	25
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	10
Activity 5: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Faithful Eating	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement – A Baha'i Gathering	90
Alternate Activity 2: Religion and Media Bias	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Humility is our friend. Variety and adaptability are the friends of humankind. These are related issues. Be at peace with how little or much you know about the faiths presented in this workshop. Appreciate the different forms in which spiritual nourishment is embodied. Read the following meditation during the week to prepare for this workshop:

I am a little fish in a vast and wondrous pool. As I swim, my eyes are open and I see marvels, surprises around every plant, within every crevice. Plays of light, astounding creatures, moments that stand still in time. The variety and bounty amaze me; my soul expands. I am only a little fish, but my heart surpasses the bounds of my small frame, offering joy and welcome for all the glory that is spread before me.

The day of the workshop, give yourself time so you are not rushed. Talk with your co-facilitator, and create a peaceful environment in the space. When the workshop begins, be ready to explore with good humor and curiosity the varieties of religious experience in this workshop.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [If You Believed](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Then What Would You Do or Believe?](#) (included in this document)
- Pens or pencils
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write on newsprint, "If You Believed ... " and post it in the welcoming area.
- Reproduce a few copies of Leader Resource 1, If You Believed, and place them on the welcoming table.

Description of Activity

Participants follow a line of reasoning related to today's religions.

As participants enter, welcome them and offer writing implements and Handout 1, Then What Would You Do or Believe? Invite them to consult Leader Resource 1, If You Believed, on the welcoming table and answer the questions on their handouts. They are welcome to compare answers and discuss them with others. This is not an opportunity to criticize the beliefs of others. This is an exercise posing the question, *if* participants believed something, *then* what would logically follow? We do not always know why people believe what they do, but what they believe is important to them, and has logic for them. This is an exercise in understanding someone else's perspective.

Encourage discussion among participants. Set a respectful tone. A few minutes before the workshop begins, ask participants if they know any religion that holds all these beliefs. If someone knows, affirm their answer; otherwise, share with the youth that Jehovah's Witnesses hold all the beliefs stated here. Witnesses, as they are commonly called, do not celebrate Christmas, Easter, or birthdays, but this is not a punishment or sacrifice; it is their understanding of scripture and a strong expression of their faith. Share that Jehovah's Witnesses is one of the faiths that emerged in the period we will explore today.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle

- Leader Resource 2, [1800s Background](#) (included in this document)
- Religions Time Line
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Map of the United States
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 2, 1800s Background, until you are comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Answer questions from the last workshop.

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and sharing briefly a belief they have that other people find unusual or that makes the youth feel like an outsider. Facilitators can sensitively reference this experience later to remind participants what it is can be like for adherents of the faiths introduced today.

Read or share in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 2, 1800s Background. Write key terms on newsprint.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE MORMON TRAIL (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Mormon Trail](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story until you are comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the story of the Mormon Trail.

Tell participants that you need their help to tell the story. Read the story aloud, following the prompts. Ask participants for their initial reactions to the story.

- What did they think of the story?
- Had they heard it before, in sum or in part?

- What do you think of the Mormons' decision to move west? Was it necessary? Would you have done the same thing?
- Men greatly outnumbered women on the journey. Why do you think this was so? Mormons were polygamists (having multiple wives) at the time. By some historical accounts, some Mormons stayed behind in the population centers of the United States to convert people, especially young women, and encourage them to join their new brethren in Salt Lake City. Not until the women arrived, separated from their friends and families and often with little or no money, did they learn of the Mormon practice of polygamy. What do you think of this method of recruitment? What do you think of polygamy? What do you think of polyandry (multiple husbands)? Do you feel differently about the two? Why or why not? Why do you think it is rejected by most societies?
- What about Mormon beliefs and practices do you think followers of the dominant faith, Christianity, found so threatening that they expelled them? [The beliefs stemming from the Book of Mormon? The close-knit nature of their communities? The way they kept their money in and for their communities? Their tendency to isolate themselves? The threat of their political power?]
- How do you think Mormons are regarded in this country today?

ACTIVITY 2: GOING DOOR TO DOOR (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Copies of the pamphlet, "[To the Point: 15 Unitarian Universalist Elevator Speeches](http://www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1508) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1508)"

Description of Activity

Participants role-play conversations with those seeking to convert them.

Ask youth what comes to mind when they think of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) or Jehovah's Witnesses. Someone will likely mention the door-to-door proselytizing these two groups conduct. Ask the following:

- Why do these faiths proselytize?
- Have you ever been approached by a Mormon or Witness? What was it like?

Help participants consider that followers of these faiths believe it is their religious duty to spread God's word as

they understand it. They believe they are sharing "good news" and saving people who convert from Hell. Ask youth if they believe there is something wrong with this practice, and if so, what? Would it be wrong to share the "good news" of Unitarian Universalism door-to-door? Would you be comfortable doing so?

This exercise helps youth practice responding to proselytizers politely and effectively. Invite youth to role-play being approached by someone who wants to convert them to their faith. Designate one person as "the door knocker" (or DK) and the other as "the door answerer" (or DA). DK does not have to know all the beliefs of LDS or Witnesses. They can attempt to talk to the DA about how God loves them and has a plan for them, and how they can be saved. They can try to leave literature. Both DK and DA should be respectful to each other. DAs may want to share their "good news" about Unitarian Universalism.

After the role-play, distribute copies of the pamphlet. Explain "elevator speech": if someone, in an elevator asked you "What do Unitarian Universalists believe?", your elevator speech would provide a short answer in basically the time it may take you to reach the floor where you or the asker gets off. Say that sometimes it is not easy to talk about our faith. Encourage participants to practice talking about their faith, keeping in mind that they do not need to explain everything about Unitarian Universalism, but just what is personally important to them about their faith. The pamphlet shows how 15 UUs do this and might provide a good springboard for participants in thinking about how they would talk about Unitarian Universalism.

ACTIVITY 3: MULTICULTURAL AND MULTIRACIAL (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Baha'i music selections, and a music player
- Handout 2, [Excerpts from Community Cohesion — a Baha'i Perspective](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain samples of Baha'i music. One way is to visit [the Divine Notes website](http://www.divinenotes.com/) (at www.divinenotes.com/), where you can purchase credits and download several tracks. Or, if your workshop space has Internet access, sample clips during the workshop, for free. Try [Navid Freedom](#) (at www.divinenotes.com/artists/NavidFreedom/FE73FA69-9126-B96A-5571-154CB7594FE3) (Italian-Persian rapper), [Lin Cheng](#) (at www.divinenotes.com/artists/LinCheng/16EB9862-B437-72C3-CCA7-DCA6AF692763)

(Chinese singer and violinist), and [Eric Dozier](#) (at www.divinenotes.com/artists/EricDozierandOneHumanFamily/5B696C0F-A605-551A-00B2-E84ADA3F40EB), African American gospel singer from Tennessee.

Description of Activity

Youth consider the success of the Baha'i Faith in creating multicultural, multiracial communities. They explore what Unitarian Universalism can learn from them.

Share the following:

We must face the fact that in America, the church is still the most segregated hour in this nation. At 11:00 on Sunday morning when we stand and sing and Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation. This is tragic. Nobody of honesty can overlook this. — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dec. 18, 1963

While Dr. King said this decades ago, it is still true. Although multicultural gains have been made in other areas of society, as of 2008, fewer than 10 percent of America's churches were multiracial (defined as no more than 80 percent of the congregation being of one racial/ethnic group).

The Baha'i Faith, with its seven million members, is the second most geographically widespread religion in the world, second in reach only to Christianity, which is 300 times larger. Why their wide appeal?

1. They believe that all people are one in spiritual purpose.
2. They consider no group complete without diversity.
3. All aspects of their worship are intentionally diverse.

Ask the youth if they consider these tenets valuable. Diversity is a stated goal of the Unitarian Universalist Association and many of its member congregations.

- Do you agree diversity is a worthwhile goal?
- Why would multicultural, multiracial diversity be something our faith movement would want to do?
- Is diversity a stated goal of our congregation? If so, how is it going?

Read the following Baha'i quote:

If the flowers of a garden were all of one color, the effect would be monotonous to the eye; but if the colors are variegated, it is most pleasing and wonderful. The difference in adornment of color and capacity of reflection

among the flowers gives the garden its beauty and charm. Therefore, although we are of different individualities, different in ideas and of various fragrances, let us strive like flowers of the same divine garden to live together in harmony. Even though each soul has its own individual perfume and color, all are reflecting the same light, all contributing fragrance to the same breeze which blows through the garden, all continuing to grow in complete harmony and accord.

Become as waves of one sea, trees of one forest, growing in the utmost love, agreement and unity.

('Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 24)

Because they believe no group is complete without diversity, some Baha'i communities require that all church business be conducted by a diverse group; in fact, no matter how many people are present, there is no quorum without ethnic diversity. Business is postponed until there are multiple ethnicities present.

- What do you think of this practice? What is the purpose of such a rule?
- Since it is sometimes very inconvenient, should the commitment be absolute, or should the rule be ignored sometime?
- What if the requirement for diversity in the conduct of business included age diversity, and our congregation could not do group business without youth and young adult participation? Do you think that is a good idea? Why or why not? If you received a call saying a meeting could not happen unless you came, how would you feel? Important? Annoyed? Tokenized? Appreciated? Something else?

Sociologist Brad Christerson wrote based on his research:

We found that multiethnic faith communities that integrated culturally diverse ways of worshiping, preaching, and doing ministry were much more able to manage conflict and retain a diverse constituency. — Brad Christerson, co-author, "Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations" (NY: NYU Press, 2005)

- Does this make sense to you?
- What cultural heritage(s) are evident in our congregation's worship?

- What cultures in our community are not evident in our worship? What would be a logical entry point to diversify worship at our church?

The Baha'i faith, like many other religious communities, ranges all over the world. One consequence of this is a wide selection of Baha'i inspired music. As part of their commitment to multiculturalism, some Baha'i use music from many different cultures in worship, incorporating different styles, including Latin, American jazz, traditional Christian hymnody, folk music, and many more. Consequently, visitors will likely hear music from their ethnic background and faith tradition.

Play the songs you downloaded. If you can visit DivineNotes.com, peruse their catalog, noting the music styles and the countries represented. Ask:

- What do you think of the Divine Notes website?
- If the Unitarian Universalist Association were to create a broadly inclusive, faith-based music website like Divine Notes, what musical styles would you want included? Which cultural groups would you want to welcome through music?
- What do you think would be the result of such a project for our congregations? How would it affect current members? Newcomers?
- Any other ideas to nurture a more multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic religious community?

Distribute Handout 2, Excerpts from Community Cohesion – a Baha'i Perspective for youth to read later.

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [1800s Religions – Five Faiths Grid](#) (included in this document)
- Poster of Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

Description of Activity

The basic tenets of the five religions founded in the 1800s are summarized.

Distribute Handout 3, and point out that instead of the usual fact sheet on one religion, this chart compares the five religions explored in this workshop. Review the chart and answer any questions. Compare the chart and the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources poster to look for themes and values that might hold meaning for Unitarian Universalists. Notice that Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the Trinity. Consequently, they are frequently not considered Christian. The Baha'i faith has many beliefs shared with UUs, such as the unity of the human family, gender

equality, the compatibility of reason and religion, the importance of peace and overcoming prejudice, and the right of individuals to choose their own spiritual paths.

If you will be engaging with one of these religious communities, give participants the information they need.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line
- Sticky notes and fine point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Post the Religions Timeline.
- Have map or globe handy.
- Create sticky notes saying, "Latter-day Saints, 1830," "Baha'i, 1863," "Seventh-day Adventists, 1863," "Church of Christ, Scientist, 1879," "Jehovah's Witnesses, 1879." Keep them out of sight.

Description of Activity

The time line is updated to add Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Baha'i, Seventh-day Adventists, Church of Christ, Scientist, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Ask participants if they remember about when the five faiths emerged. Place sticky notes on the time line. The religions appeared between 1830 and 1879, spanning fifty years.

Ask if participants remember where in the world these five faiths were born? Point out the United States for four of the faiths and Iran for Baha'i. Share that, all together these five faiths include 36.1 million followers, about one for every ten Buddhists, one for every 25 Hindus, one for every 42 Muslims, or one for every 58 Christians.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster with closing words
- Chalice
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Copies of Taking It Home for all participants.
- Post Closing Words if needed.

Description of Activity

Distribute the handout. Invite the group to form a circle, join hands, and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We

are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: FAITHFUL EATING

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Dr. Kellogg](#) (included in this document)
- Boxes of Kellogg's Corn Flakes (TM)
- Boxes of miscellaneous other Kellogg's (TM) cereals
- Pocket-sized notebooks and pens or pencils
- Optional: If cereal will be eaten have bowls, milk, spoons, and napkins

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 3, Dr. Kellogg, until you are comfortable presenting it.
- Optional: Make enough copies of Leader Resource 3 for participants..

Description of Activity

Read aloud, or have participants read aloud, the story of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg.

Ask youth for their initial reactions. Then ask:

- What do you think of Dr. Kellogg?
- If you were ill, would you go to Dr. Kellogg for treatment? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with Dr. Kellogg that good food is the foundation of good health? If so, do you put effort into eating a healthy diet? Why or why not?
- What do you think of Dr. Kellogg's restaurant coupon idea?
- Do you agree with Dr. Kellogg that providing good food is a better way of helping the homeless than giving them cash? Why or why not? Is it paternalistic not to allow people to make their own decisions, or do givers of charity have a right to say how their gift will be used?

Distribute Kellogg's Corn Flakes (TM) boxes. Suggest participants take a moment to look at the ingredients list. Ask:

- What are your initial observations?
- Are there ingredients Dr. Kellogg would not have approved? If so, which ones and why? Dr. Kellogg might have considered the modern American diet, with its abundance of fat, sugar,

salt, and processed foods, to constitute a public health threat. Do you agree?

- Are you in the habit of reading the labels of the foods you eat?
- If public health is at risk, should our government be involved? How?
- Seventh-day Adventists have dietary regulations. Do we as Unitarian Universalists? Should we?

A number of Unitarian Universalists believe ethical eating is an act of faith and everyone's responsibility as both an ecological issue and a justice issue for those who do not have enough to eat. UUs at GA 2011 passed a [Resolution on Ethical Eating](#) (at www.uua.org/justice/statements/statements/185320.shtml).

If the cereal will be eaten, distribute supplies. Continue discussion while eating.

Tell them that this Faith in Action activity involves becoming more aware of our diet. Distribute notebooks and pens. Invite participants to keep a food log for the next week. They should write down what they eat and drink at meals and in between. If the meal consists of processed food, they should read all the

Ingredients and record the top three. If they forget and fail to record a meal or even a day's food, encourage them to write what they remember, and just keep going.

After a week, invite youth to look over their food log. The top items for consumption should be vegetables and fruits. Grains and proteins should be next. They should drink eight glasses of water a day. Do they think they follow a healthy diet? If not, what would they like to change?

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. Did participants engage the subject with respect? Do you feel you were able to at least touch on all five faiths so that participants are more familiar with them? Now that you are well into the program, discuss how well the group is forming. Fellowship is an important part of any long-term program. If needed, add a game to future workshops or an extended check-in.

TAKING IT HOME

To live and let live, without clamour for distinction or recognition; to wait upon divine love; to write truth first on the tablet of one's own heart—this is the sanity and perfection of living. — Mary Baker Eddy

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we heard about the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, including their journey on the Mormon Trail to escape religious persecution. We found out some facts about Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, and the Baha'i. We talked about the reasons some of these faiths proselytize and we practiced sharing our UU faith with others.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How are UUs viewed in your community and region? Is Unitarian Universalism unknown? Regarded negatively? Appreciated? Are UU congregations welcome in interfaith organizations and efforts? Why or why not? Does your congregation reach out to other faiths in the community? Why or why not?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS FURTHER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

Do you have friends that belong to one of the faiths explored in this workshop? They might appreciate a conversation with you about what it is like to belong to a religious minority. Look for videos on YouTube of youth discussing what it is like to belong to one of these faiths.

Practice describing Unitarian Universalist faith with others in your family so you will be ready the next time someone asks you, "What's a UU?" See the new UUA pamphlet, "[To the Point: 15 Unitarian Universalist Elevator Speeches](#)." (at

www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=1508)"

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT — A BAHAI' GATHERING (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Baha'i Contact Us toll-free: 1-800-22-Unite; or, [Contact Baha'i](#) (at contact.bahai.us/SeekerResidency.aspx) can help you find a Baha'i community. Contact the group and ask to attend a gathering open to the public. Ask what visitors should know before attending the service.
- Inform youth that Baha'i typically are welcoming to newcomers, but personally conservative. Guide youth to dress and behave accordingly.

Description of Activity

Participants attend a Baha'i gathering and discuss the experience.

Meet beforehand to check appropriate dress and review courteous behavior guidelines. Suggest that youth take note of the physical space and what graphic images or iconography are present, what style the facility exhibits, and the accessibility of the service. Encourage them to

look for signs of multiculturalism, and notice the emotional tone and style of the worship experience.

After the engagement, process the visit. Ask participants for their immediate responses. What was the experience like for them? Did it seem more or less familiar than other services they have attended? Did they feel more or less comfortable at the Baha'i gathering than at other worship experiences? Why?

- What did you see? Symbols of faith? Books? Decorations?
- Was there an altar? If so, what was on the altar?
- Who participated in worship and in what way? Were genders treated differently?
- Were special garments worn?
- Was there music? What was it like?
- What was the atmosphere? Was it more or less formal than your congregation?
- Were there children present? If so, were accommodations made for them? Were there any youth?
- How were you and the group treated?
- Did you notice indications of intentional welcome to people of diverse backgrounds?
- Were there familiar elements or themes in the sermon? Could it have been delivered from a Unitarian Universalist pulpit? Why or why not?
- The most important themes in many Baha'i services are unity, love, and peace. Were these evident? Were teachings of prophets besides Baha'u'llah incorporated into the talk? What were the most important issues raised in the talk? What did you agree with most strongly?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: RELIGION AND MEDIA BIAS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Articles covering an event involving one of the five faiths in this workshop, such as [Texas FLDS Raid, One Year Later](#) (at blog.beliefnet.com/mormoninquiry/2009/04/the-texas-flds-raid-one-year-l.html), [400 Children Taken in Mormon Raid](#) (at www.independent.ie/world-news/americas/400-children-taken-in-mormon-raid-1342208.html), [Mormons Torn Over FLDS Raid](#) (at www.religionnewsblog.com/21169/flds-70), [LDS Messenger Retrospective](#) (at messengerandadvocate.wordpress.com/2009/03/26/flds-texas-raid-one-year-later/), or articles about other religions, including Unitarian Universalism, in the news. The articles should

all be about the same topic so the coverage can be compared and contrasted.

- Plain paper and pens or pencils
- Computer with Internet connection

Preparation for Activity

- Set up and test electronic equipment.
- Gather and read the articles you have selected.

Description of Activity

Participants evaluate the coverage of a religion in the news for possible media bias.

Ask participants what they know about media bias. Define it if they do not do so. Do they believe media are generally biased or unbiased? Do they believe a specific medium they are familiar with demonstrates a specific bias? How can they tell when the media is biased?

Here are some hallmarks of biased media coverage:

- Loaded, subjective, or emotional language and/or images
- Lopsided coverage or offering only one point of view
- Unattributed quotes
- Assumptions that are not verified and are used to draw conclusions
- Presenting opinion as fact
- Inconsistent investigation.

Divide the group into teams and invite each team to read one of the articles. Ask them to look for bias and record the words or images that reveal this bias. Have teams report back to the group about their article and any evidence of bias.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

15: STORY: THE MORMON TRAIL

By Greta Anderson.

How did an American religion that began with a boy praying in the woods become, in less than 200 years, a major world religion? How did a story as surprising as his—of Jesus visiting the Americas and modern-day Native Americans descending from the Hebrews—gain acceptance by 13 million people worldwide? How did a religion promoting polygamy (marrying more than one wife) as late as the 1880s become a part of mainstream America today?

The answer is that Mormonism has come a long way, both figuratively and literally. You will graph the literal journey with your bodies today.

Have participants line up. Designate the walls of the room you are in as north, south, east and west. Or rather, Canada, the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic and the Pacific. Tell youth, "As each place name is read, the next person in line will go to the approximate place on our 'map,' and remember the piece of history that occurred there. At the end of the story, you will recite this part of the history."

New York

The story of Mormonism began in Palmyra, New York in 1823. A youth named Joseph Smith says he was visited by an angel, Moroni. Moroni told Smith that God had a special relationship with the people of North America. Over the next four years, Moroni instructed Smith to dig up golden tablets that told of God's activities in America and helped him translate them into The Book of Mormon, which was published in 1830. Smith said he gave the plates back to the angel, then started preaching. He formed The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Smith served as the church's first president until his death in 1844.

What were some of the core beliefs in Smith's early church? Smith preached that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit were three distinct beings that could act as one, but he called them the "Godhead," not the Trinity. Mormonism is Christian, and does not consider itself Catholic or Protestant, but a return to a religion as preached by Jesus in the Americas and disclosed in The Book of Mormon (which Mormons consider divine scripture, alongside the Bible).

They believe that individuals are composed of spirits that lived together in God's presence before being incarnated in their present bodies. During a lifetime, Mormons must prove themselves worthy to rejoin their spirits with God. They do this by baptism, following a strict moral and health code, missionary work, and

supporting the church through financial contributions and service. Marriage and a strong family life are also central to the church's teachings.

Ohio

The young church moved to Kirtland, Ohio. True to its missionary nature, it grew quickly. Required tithing (giving 10 percent of income to the church) and other donations strengthened the Mormon community. Instead of relying on outside sources, the church helped Mormon families build homes and businesses. The general populace became suspicious of their financial dealings and growing numbers, and they drove them out.

Missouri

Next stop was Jackson County, Missouri. The first Mormon temple was built here. The Mormon population was growing so fast the local townspeople felt they were taking over. A war between the locals and the Mormons ensued.

Illinois

Nauvoo, Illinois became their new Zion, or Promised Land. By 1844, Nauvoo was bigger than Chicago. Joseph Smith was the mayor and was running for President of the United States. The church was gaining significant political power. When Smith destroyed the presses of a newspaper that criticized him, a protest arose. Smith was arrested, tried, found guilty, and imprisoned in the nearby county jail. Smith was killed by a mob. Mormon crops and homes were burned. They were threatened with extinction. It was time to move again.

Utah

Brigham Young, the newly elected Mormon leader, decided to relocate the Mormons to Salt Lake City, Utah, wilderness territory at that time. This was the endpoint of what became known as the Mormon Trail. Perhaps as many as 17,000 made the trip in a number of treks, by wagon and even handcarts, over a span of 20 years. Many of the initial group of travelers died from hunger and cold. Once reaching Utah, missionary groups were sent out all along the Western United States and eventually, abroad, to make converts to Mormonism.

Today, Salt Lake City remains the headquarters of the church, and Mormons make up more than 72 percent of the population of Utah. Yet, only about one sixth of the total Mormon population resides in Utah and less than half in the United States: in 1997, the Church membership outside the U.S. surpassed its U.S. numbers.

[Ask participants to share in order what location they represent and what happened there.]

Due to political pressure, polygamy was outlawed by the church in 1890. The church originally denied "the priesthood"—or full membership in the church—to African Americans, who were considered cursed by God and inferior to whites. (By contrast, white males became priests at the age of 16.) It dropped this racist prohibition in 1978. Perhaps someday policies of exclusion of women from the priesthood and denial of membership to homosexuals will also be dropped.

Some beliefs integral to the religion include the idea that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; the Book of Mormon is the word of God along with the Bible; Zion, the New Jerusalem, will be built in America; and Jesus will reign there in person. In addition, they believe that a Heavenly Mother reigns in heaven alongside God, and

we are the children of their marriage. As children of God, they believe human beings have divine potential.

Mormons also have a strong set of values. When a Mormon falls into bad luck or hard times, there is a safety net to help them get back on their feet. Mormons tend to define different gender roles for males and females because they believe it provides a foundation of stability for children and for society. The Mormons believe that "no success outside the home can compensate for failure within it."

The growth of their church has much to do with its proselytizing. Settled successfully in their Salt Lake City home, thousands of young Mormon "priests" spread out across America and the rest of the world to seek converts. Perhaps some will come to your door. How will you respond?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 15:

HANDOUT 1: THEN WHAT WOULD YOU DO OR BELIEVE?

First, read Leader Resource 1, If You Believed. Circle one choice for each item.

- There is a Trinity / There is no Trinity
- Accept blood transfusions / Refuse blood transfusions
- Evolution conflicts with religious teaching / Evolution is compatible with religious teaching
- Take good care of your body / Not pay attention to your body
- Use all available resources of the earth / Attempt to be a responsible caretaker of the earth
- Do not celebrate things that are not mentioned in the Bible / Celebrate birthdays
- Celebrate Christmas / Choose another way to celebrate Christ's birth
- Celebrate Easter / Choose another way to celebrate Christ's rebirth
- Keep the truth to yourself / Speak to people about the saving truth
- Serve my country in the military / Refuse to serve in the military

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 15: HANDOUT 2: EXCERPTS FROM COMMUNITY COHESION — A BAHA'I PERSPECTIVE

Public response by the Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom to government studies about the race-related riots in the UK in summer, 2001. NOTE: Full text available online at [Community Cohesion](#).

The world-wide Baha'i community has attracted members from more than 2,100 ethnic and tribal backgrounds and is active in more than 220 countries and territories. Along with this great diversity the worldwide Baha'i community is among the most unified bodies of people on earth. Its unity goes far beyond a shared theology. Baha'is of many backgrounds work closely together in daily community life, consulting and serving together on the faith's governing institutions, enjoying fellowship at regular gatherings for worship, and volunteering together on a wide range of social and economic development projects.

Centred on the need for unity and for social cohesion Baha'i belief states that this need can best be met by valuing and appreciating diversity rather than imposed

uniformity or the pretence that diversity and the issues it raises do not exist.

Another fundamental principle of the Baha'i Faith - the equality of women and men - offers a ready response to one of the concerns of the reports. Full and active participation of both sexes in the life and administration of the Baha'i community, lacking as it does a priesthood or clergy, is a cardinal feature of Baha'i life. The challenge facing the leaders of religious communities if they are to contribute meaningfully to building social cohesion in the country, is to submerge their theological differences in a great spirit of mutual forbearance, and work together for the advancement of human understanding and peace. The Baha'i view of religious truth as relative, not absolute, offers a framework within which they might work toward this goal.

The inclusive vision of the Baha'i community, its practical experience and example, and the existing participation of Baha'is in social cohesion projects offer a model and constructive input to the development and implementation of community cohesion strategies that can make community unity a proud claim of the United Kingdom.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 15: HANDOUT 3: 1800S RELIGIONS — FIVE FAITHS GRID

	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Baha'i Faith	Seventh-day Adventists	Church of Christ, Scientist	Jehovah's Witnesses
Known as...	Mormons	Baha'is	Adventists	Christian Scientists	Witnesses
Year	1830	1863	1863	1879	1879
Founder/ Prophet	P/F-Joseph Smith	P/F-Baha'u'llah	F-Ellen G. White, others	P/F-Mary Baker Eddy	F-Charles Taze Russell
Where	New York, USA	Iran	Maine, USA	Boston, MA, USA	Pennsylvania, USA
Sacred Text/Texts	Bible and Book of Mormon	Kitab-i-Agdas (Book of Laws)	Bible	Bible and Science and Health	Bible
Consider themselves Christian?	Yes	No, but recognize divinity of Christ	Yes	Yes	Yes
Considered Christian by Mainline Christian Denominations	No	No	Usually	No	No
Women Clergy	No	No clergy, highest leadership reserved for males	Yes	No clergy; women and men readers	No clergy, elders only men
Stance on homosexuality	Condemned	Contrary to scripture	Contrary to scripture	Officially: None	Condemned
Sabbath	Sunday	Every 19 days	Saturday	Sunday	None
Adherents	12.2 million	7 million	10 million	400, 000	6.5 million
Trinitarian	Yes and No	No	Yes	Not strictly speaking	No
Go to War	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

Some Identifying Beliefs:

Latter-day Saints (LDS) — Jesus visited and taught among the Native Americans in North America after his resurrection. Source of the Book of Mormon: Mormon was a prophet who left his gospel written on golden tablets which Joseph Smith translated under God's inspiration. The family is the fundamental unit of the church. At death, the soul is separated from the body, but, if you have been a good Mormon, soul and body will be reunited at the time of the resurrection.

Baha'i Faith — Prophets of all faiths were divine messengers of God, suited to different times and places, including Abraham, Mohammed, Buddha, Jesus, and others. The last and final Prophet is Baha'u'llah. No sects or branches of Baha'i are allowed; they value unity, and hard work is a form of worship. Respect for diversity is written into religious

doctrine. After death, the soul leaves the body and journeys toward or away from God. Heaven and hell are not places, but states of being. The purpose of human life is to develop the spiritual and moral qualities that lie at the core of an individual's nature.

Seventh-day Adventists — At Armageddon (the last day, when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead), the wicked will be punished a brief time in hell, then annihilated, rather than suffer in hell for eternity. Many are strict vegetarians in order to avoid breaking Mosaic dietary laws and to live purely. Some, as a spiritual discipline but not required by doctrine, do not drink, smoke, dance, play cards, read books for pleasure, or go to worldly movies.

Christian Scientists — Matter does not exist. Truth and goodness are real; evil, error, and physical existence are illusions. They refer to God as Father-Mother, and do not practice communion or baptism. Often do not accept medical care, believing a more complete understanding of God through prayer will bring about healing. However, the Mother Church encourages cooperation with authorities if there is conflict over medical care. This differs from Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jehovah's Witnesses — Christ returned secretly just before World War II, and the age of judgment is currently underway. They do not vote or serve in the military; do not use the cross as a symbol, or celebrate traditional Christian holidays or birthdays. Will refuse blood transfusions for themselves or their children because of a Bible directive to abstain from blood. Refused to join the Nazi Party in Germany and were targeted in the Holocaust. Have published "The Watchtower" monthly magazine continuously since 1879.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 15: LEADER RESOURCE 1: IF YOU BELIEVED

If You Believed the Bible was the inerrant word of God and everything in it was there for a reason and that...

- The Bible teaches allegiance and service only to the Kingdom of God
- The Bible mentions a Father, and a Son, and a Holy Spirit, but never a Trinity
- God created heaven and earth in six days, but each "day" equals thousands of years
- Those judged worthy after death will be given everlasting paradise on the physical earth in their restored physical body
- Every birthday celebration in the Bible is presented negatively
- No date, not even the month, is given for Christ's birth in the Bible; his birth is never celebrated in the New Testament; December 25th was chosen to coincide with a pagan celebration that took place around that date
- The anniversary of Christ's resurrection was not celebrated in the New Testament; Easter was a pagan springtime festival
- The Bible instructs against consuming blood, and people absorb the blood from blood transfusions, thereby consuming it
- The Bible instructs all followers of Christ to be Witnesses for the faith

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 15: LEADER RESOURCE 2: 1800S BACKGROUND

Our exploration of religions took us back thousands of years, and we have now arrived at a point on our timeline that is relatively recent—the middle of the 19th century. The Protestant Reformation began the break from the Catholic Church in 1517, and this major religious outburst began just over 300 years later, (Indicate 1830 on the time line.) A surge of activity resulted in the birth of five faiths in less than 50 years. Four of these emerged in the United States. One emerged in Iran. Briefly, what was happening in the world at that time?

Social and Religious Unrest

Write “Age of Enlightenment” on newsprint and leave room for bullet points.

The Age of Enlightenment, which lasted from about 1650 to 1800, set in motion vast social, cultural, political, and religious change. People were encouraged to question traditional institutions and customs, and came to value individual rights, human reason, and self-governance. [Make bullet points for “Critical questioning,” “Individual rights,” “Reason,” and “Self-governance.”]

The United States’ Declaration of Independence, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and other radical acts of freedom were direct expressions of Age of Enlightenment principles.

During this same period, in the 1730s and 1740s, a movement called the Great Awakening developed in the British colonies that would become the United States. [Add “Great Awakening” to newsprint.] The Great Awakening de-emphasized church doctrine and placed a greater importance on an individual’s spiritual experience. This was a period of great revivalism. New denominations, including the Methodists and Baptists, were created at this time, as congregations split over religious differences.

While exciting and growing, these social and religious movements also generated profound social unease. As the 1800s progressed, America, having won independence from England, was now struggling with the issue of slavery, and moving ever closer to war. This tension sent people to religion for support, sometimes to the faith of their upbringing, sometimes to a new religion, born of the principles of the new age.

Four faiths were born in America leading up to, during, and right after the American Civil War. [Write on the following on a new sheet of newsprint.]

- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons or LDS), 1830 (before the war)
- Seventh-day Adventists, 1863 (during the war)
- Jehovah’s Witnesses, 1879 (after the war)
- Christian Science, 1879 (after the war)

People who found comfort and stability in their current faith were not always supportive of people who went a new way. The United States was founded in part for religious freedom, but religious persecution had happened in its history, and was happening at this time. Among those persecuted for heresy in the mid 1800s were the Mormons. Latter-day Saints, or LDS as they usually call themselves, are commonly called Mormons because of their sacred text Book of Mormon, which was given to their founder by an angel named Moroni. When the persecution escalated, they headed to uncharted territory, just as the Pilgrims had more than 200 years before. Shortly you will hear a story about that journey.

All four of these faiths emerged in the northeastern United States [Point to United States map.]

- Joseph Smith, prophet and founder of the Latter-day Saints (Mormons), lived in rural New York State
- Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventists, lived in Maine
- Mary Baker Eddy, prophet and founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Scientist), lived in Boston, Massachusetts
- Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Ask participants if they recall another instance of a short span of years and a limited geographical area proving to be a dynamic birthing ground for religions. Perhaps they will remember that Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism all emerged within a few thousand miles of each other within a hundred years.

Meanwhile, across the globe in Iran, orthodox Shia Muslim leaders of the dominant faith there had to contend with Sufi mystics and other voices calling for greater freedom in religion and society. One of these voices was the man known as the Bab (the Gate), who preached that a new divine messenger, the final messiah, would soon arrive to deliver all humanity from its suffering. The Bab was executed by the government, but the movement he began lived on and identified its prophet and final messiah in Baha’u’llah, prophet of

Baha'i. Baha'i was founded in 1863, the same year the Seventh-day Adventists were formed across the globe in Maine.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 15: LEADER RESOURCE 3: DR. KELLOGG

John Harvey Kellogg was born in 1852 in Michigan. He grew up in a devout Seventh-day Adventist family and believed strongly the Seventh-day Adventist teachings about healthy living.

He attended medical school and returned to Michigan to begin a long and stellar surgical practice. With new clients, Dr. Kellogg first addressed diet and exercise; surgery was a last resort. When surgery was necessary, though, he had an unparalleled survival rate. Dr. Kellogg at one time performed more than 200 surgeries without losing a patient, an unheard-of accomplishment in a time before antibiotics.

His interest in nutrition and preventive health led him to invent foods for his patients: shredded wheat products, meat substitutes (he was a committed vegetarian), granola, and—most famously—corn flakes. The Kellogg Company was founded by John Harvey Kellogg and his brother William in order to sell John Harvey's corn flakes. William secretly acquired a majority of the company's stock, put his name on the box, changed the advertising emphasis from health to taste, added sugar to the flakes, and made a fortune. John Harvey sued, disassociated from the company, and did not forgive his brother.

John Harvey Kellogg wrote prolifically and lived solely on the income from his writing. He never charged his patients, not even for the most advanced surgery of the day. Dr. Kellogg became very famous, and for many years ran the posh Battle Creek Sanitarium where the rich and famous went to stay for a week or two to "get the cure."

Dr. Kellogg also wished to support the health of the homeless, who frequently suffered malnutrition. The Seventh-day Adventist Church ran a restaurant in New York City, serving fresh, healthy, vegetarian food. Dr. Kellogg made coupons available to wealthier people to give to panhandlers instead of money. The coupons entitled the bearer to a free meal at the Seventh-day Adventist restaurant. Dr. Kellogg contended that good food would be of greater benefit to the poor than anything else.

Dr. Kellogg held unique beliefs which some considered very odd. He had his patients given enemas every day, and had one himself, too. He adopted fourteen children but never had any of his own because he believed all sex was unhealthy.

But Dr. Kellogg also held beliefs we consider valid today. He insisted that smoking caused lung cancer a full half-century before the connection was accepted by the medical community. He advocated regular exercise, pure water, and whole grains long before it was popular advice. He rubbed his hands and arms, and had his operating rooms treated with carbolic acid because he believed it prevented infection—which it did.

John Harvey Kellogg—surgeon, inventor, and philanthropist—lived a life of contradictions, but one that strongly expressed his commitment to purity and optimum health in according with his Seventh-day Adventist faith.

FIND OUT MORE

Here are the official sites of the religions featured in the workshop: [Seventh-day Adventist Church](http://www.adventist.org/) (at www.adventist.org/); [The Church of Christ, Scientist](http://www.tfccs.com/index.jhtml;jsessionid=2DNVHSLP32NMVKGL4L2SFEQ) (at www.tfccs.com/index.jhtml;jsessionid=2DNVHSLP32NMVKGL4L2SFEQ); [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](http://www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=e419fb40e21cef00VgnVCM1000001f5e340aRCRD) (at www.lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=e419fb40e21cef00VgnVCM1000001f5e340aRCRD); [The Baha'i Faith](http://www.bahai.org/) (at www.bahai.org/); [Worldwide Association of Jehovah's Witnesses](http://www.jw.org/) (at www.jw.org/)

Other sites about the Baha'i faith include [Baha'i International Community Reference Library](http://reference.bahai.org/en/bic.html) (at reference.bahai.org/en/bic.html) and [Baha'i Worship and Spirituality](http://www.patheos.com/Library/Bahai/Ritual-Worship-Devotion-Symbolism/Worship-and-Devotion-in-Daily-Life.html) (at www.patheos.com/Library/Bahai/Ritual-Worship-Devotion-Symbolism/Worship-and-Devotion-in-Daily-Life.html).

Other sites you might want to read concerning LDS are [Role of Women in Mormonism](http://www.exmormon.org/mormwomn.htm) (at www.exmormon.org/mormwomn.htm), [Current LDS Beliefs about Homosexuality](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_lds1.htm) (at www.religioustolerance.org/hom_lds1.htm), and [The Mormon Pioneer Trail](http://www.legendsofamerica.com/we-mormontrail.html) (at www.legendsofamerica.com/we-mormontrail.html),

which is a very good, detailed, factual (and lengthy) site.

Religious Tolerance.org has a [very good Overview of Christian Science](http://www.religioustolerance.org/cr_sci.htm) (at www.religioustolerance.org/cr_sci.htm).

Jehovah's Witnesses are known for the publication of The Watchtower. Now you can read them [online](http://www.watchtower.org/) (at www.watchtower.org/), as well as find answer to questions about what Witnesses believe.

[The Most Segregated Hour in America](http://artlucero.wordpress.com/2009/01/19/the-most-segregated-hour-in-america/) (at artlucero.wordpress.com/2009/01/19/the-most-segregated-hour-in-america/) is not the MLK interview; but, rather, an article on a diversity blog focused on spiritual life, January 2009. Other resources on multicultural congregations are *Embracing Diversity: Leadership in Multicultural Congregations* by Charles R. Foster (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1997), *The Power of Stories* by Jacqueline Lewis (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), and D.J. Chuang has a [blog](http://djchuang.com/multi/) (at djchuang.com/multi/) with many multiethnic church resources. Be aware that most of these resources come from a Christian perspective. The UUA has a list of [multicultural resources](http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/) (at www.uua.org/multiculturalism/), too.

WORKSHOP 16: EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Christian scripture, Romans 6:22-23
You were made by God and for God and until you understand that, life will never make sense. — Rick Warren, founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, an Evangelical Christian congregation averaging 22,000 weekly attendees with a 120-acre campus and more than 300 community ministries to groups such as prisoners, CEOs, addicts, single parents, and those with HIV/AIDS. Recently, the church fed 42,000 homeless people —three meals a day —for 40 days.

Christian Evangelicalism is a significant movement in the United States today, both in its numbers and its prominence in our nation's political and cultural life. In this workshop, participants consider the popularity of Evangelical Christianity and the ways this faith movement meets its followers' religious needs. They observe how key theological tenets—for example, that the Bible is inerrant, and that salvation comes only through surrender to Jesus Christ—motivate some Evangelicals to bring their faith into the public forum through prosthelytizing and political activism. They learn that charitable work is another expression of Evangelical Christianity. The workshop describes extreme fundamentalism within the Christian Evangelical movement, and teaches youth to apply Unitarian Universalist Principles in interactions with Evangelical believers.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce fundamental beliefs of contemporary Evangelical Christians, particularly the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible and the concept of being born again (saved) through acceptance of Jesus as one's personal savior

- Describe a range of Evangelical Christian beliefs and practices, and explore the appeal these may hold for adherents
- Highlight a variety of expressions of Evangelical Christianity in our pluralistic society's cultural and political life, and guide youth to meet these expressions grounded in their own Unitarian Universalist faith.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Deepen understanding of the contemporary American Evangelical Christian movement—its theology and its religious, cultural, and political expressions
- Relate to the concept of being "born again" through reflection on their own experiences of rebirth or transformation
- Consider the theology, practice, and popularity of Evangelical Christianity in the United States today and explore how this movement meets its adherents' religious needs
- Explore how Unitarian Universalist values and principles can guide them in encounters with fundamentalist and/or evangelical Christian people, ideas, and practices.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Born Again	20
Activity 2: Background on Evangelical Christianity	20
Activity 3: Stories — Evangelicals in a Pluralistic Society	25
Activity 4: Evangelical Preaching — How Does It Feel?	20
Faith in Action: One Laptop Per Child	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	

Alternate Activity 2: Virtual Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 3: Biblical Authority	25
Alternate Activity 4: Satan	30
Alternate Activity 5: Music and Worship	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Evangelical Christianity's popularity and political power are undeniable, yet many Unitarian Universalists who reject its theology also fail to recognize its appeal to adherents. Prepare to help youth explore not only the beliefs and expressions of Evangelical Christianity, but also the reasons it engenders such enthusiasm and commitment.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Drawing paper; color markers, pencils, and/or crayons; and (optional) additional art supplies
- Optional: Recordings of Christian praise music, and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Use newsprint to make a sign that says "What Makes You Want to Shout?" and, in smaller letters, "Draw something that makes you so happy you believe others should enjoy it too!" Post the sign above a welcoming table.
- Place art supplies on the welcoming table.
- Optional: Prepare music. Download Christian praise music free, on the website Free Praise and Worship (at freepraiseandworship.org/). Explore the genre Christian rock (at www.christianrock.net/) online. Include selections from African American gospel. Set up and test music player. Begin playing music just before participants will arrive.

Description of Activity

Participants experience wanting to share something they love with others.

As participants enter, invite them to use the art supplies to draw something that gives them such joy that they believe others would surely enjoy it, too—something they would wish to share with as many people as possible.

Involve all participants in clean-up.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare a few words or phrases to prompt participants' prior knowledge of Evangelical Christianity. Make sure prompts are neutral in tone, and tailored to the group's likely knowledge. Suggestions:
 - If Evangelical Christianity is not prominent in your area, you might prompt with "Jesus." Ask the youth where they have seen or heard a

message promoting belief in Jesus as our savior.

- Say the name of a local faith community you know is Evangelical.
 - Mention evangelical preachers youth may know from television.
 - What symbols of Evangelical Christianity might the youth have seen? If "What Would Jesus Do?" bracelets or tee shirts are popular in your area, you might mention them. Youth may have seen tee shirts, posters, or billboards citing references from Christian scripture, perhaps without the full text. (For example, "John 3:16" is a popular tee shirt in some areas; the biblical text is "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.")
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Invite youth to sit in a circle, bringing their artwork from Welcoming and Entering. Answer questions remaining from the last workshop.

Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite youth to check in by saying their names and, if they have artwork, sharing the subject of their artwork, or, if they have none, answering the question, "What makes you so happy you believe others should enjoy it too?"

When all have checked in, invite participants to display their artwork around the room and then return to the circle.

Ask the youth for ideas, events, symbols, or people they associate with Evangelical Christianity. Write contributions on newsprint or have a volunteer do so. Use prompts, if needed. Finish the list by adding the prompt items that youth did not mention.

Post another sheet of newsprint, and invite participants' questions about Evangelical Christianity. Write the questions and tell the youth their questions may be

answered in this workshop. Commit to researching remaining questions and bringing answers to the next workshop.

ACTIVITY 1: BORN AGAIN (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: A Bible (Christian scripture), preferably the New Standard Revised Version
- Optional: Participants' drawings from Welcoming and Entering

Preparation for Activity

- Recall big and small ways you have experienced rebirth. Choose an appropriate example to briefly share.
- Optional: If you wish to read from a Bible, mark the passage to read aloud (John 3:1-6).

Description of Activity

Participants learn the Evangelical meaning of being born again, and explore what being born again might mean for them.

Ask youth if they are familiar with the term "born again." If they are, ask them to share what they understand it to mean. Ask if any know someone who says they have been born again. Ask what they think has happened to people who say they are born again.

Tell the youth the term "born again" comes from Christian scripture. Read aloud John 3:1-6:

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God."

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth: No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

Share that Evangelical Christians consider the rebirth Jesus talks about in this passage to be the religious conversion experience. When a Christian says they are born again, they mean they have been suddenly filled

with the Holy Spirit and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Explain that the next step after conversion is baptism, using these words or your own:

A baptism ceremony makes someone "born of water and the Spirit;" Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist to shed his former life and begin his ministry. Baptism is very important in many Christian churches, and essential to Evangelicals: A person who is not baptized is not saved. In some churches, no one can be baptized unless they first have changed inside; the conversion experience is first, followed by the physical transformation of baptism.

Remind youth that being born again is a defining experience for an Evangelical Christian. Point out that a transformation that happens in a moment is familiar to almost everybody—and that is essentially what a religious conversion experience is, at a very deep level. Invite youth to consider these events, large and small, which can seem like rebirth:

- You expect to get a horrible grade and you do not.
- Someone gives you a second chance.
- You or someone you love lives through a terrible accident or disease.
- Weather that has kept you indoors changes to comfortable, beautiful weather.
- Your family settles in a new home, after losing everything.
- After a devastating heartbreak, a day comes when you feel happiness again.

Ask participants to take a moment and remember a rebirth they have experienced. If you wish, prompt by sharing from your own experience.

Invite a few volunteers to share briefly. Ask if anything they have experienced comes close to the feeling they think someone might have when, with a sudden rush of joy, they feel the Spirit of God within them, and realize this means their eternal soul is saved and they will not have to suffer the torments of Hell.

Explain that most Christians believe humans are born sinful and damned, because we are the descendants of Adam and Eve, who disobeyed God by eating the apple in the Garden of Eden. Christians believe Jesus died for human sin and, by dying, created a portal through which humans could attain heaven and spend eternity with God. People cannot achieve salvation, unless they

accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior and become baptized.

Remind youth that Unitarian Universalists do not believe in original sin. We believe everyone is born innocent, with a capacity for goodness and evil. A UU might have a bumper sticker that says "Born OK the first time." Ask participants to share their opinion and beliefs about original sin. Ask:

- How might believing people are born in sin affect one's view of the world?
- How might believing in original sin make being "born again" attractive?
- If you believed in original sin, and you experienced being "born again" as a Christian, might you feel compelled to share your experiences with other people? How badly would you want others to join your faith? Why?

ACTIVITY 2: BACKGROUND ON EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Evangelical Christianity Background](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 1, [Amazing Grace Church — What We Believe](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [RiverTree Baptist Church — What We Believe](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 3, [The ATF Creed — Acquire the Fire](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1 so you will be comfortable presenting the information.
- Copy the handouts for all participants.
- Prepare and set aside a sheet of newsprint with these points (from Leader Resource 1):
 - Conversion experience—being born again
 - Only way to be saved is to accept Jesus as your personal savior
 - Called to express gospel in action—e.g., by spreading the faith, activism to promote fundamentalist Christian beliefs; service to people in need
 - The Bible is God's word, literally and absolutely true, and the only guide needed for life.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Share, in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 1, Evangelical Christianity Background. List important terms from the resource on newsprint.

Distribute handouts. Invite the youth to skim them for (1) phrases or theological concepts they would like to clarify and (2) common themes or differences they notice among the handouts.

Guide youth toward understanding the fundamental beliefs that define Evangelical Christianity.

ACTIVITY 3: STORIES — EVANGELICALS IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Feeding the Hungry — an Interfaith Story](#) (included in this document) "
- Story, "[Combating the Hate of Westboro Baptist Church](#) (included in this document) "
- Handout 4, [UU Response to Westboro Baptist Church](#) (included in this document)
- A poster or handout of the Unitarian Universalist Principles
- Optional: Computer with Internet access, and large monitor or digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Read the stories so you will be comfortable presenting them.
- Read Handout 4 and copy for all participants.
- Obtain or make a poster, or create and copy a handout, of the [Unitarian Universalist Principles](#) (at www.uua.org/beliefs/principles/index.shtml). Plan to display or distribute the Principles to help youth discuss questions related to our UU faith.
- Preview the discussion questions. Make sure you leave enough time for youth to explore Unitarian Universalist faith-grounded ways they might handle an interfaith encounter with an Evangelical Christian. If you think youth may have personal experiences to contribute, save time to unpack these.
- Optional: Preview video clips on YouTube. Consider their usefulness and appropriateness for your group and whether you will have time to screen any. Note: Do not share with youth the public comment section that appears under a YouTube video.
 - [Segment produced by GA Voice](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfhSKJ1eOfc&feature=related), Atlanta-based LGBT news organization, covering the Westboro Baptist Church demonstration at Grady High School in 2010 and the student counter-protest.

- [Interview with Becca Daniels](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0TC0UuzxcU) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0TC0UuzxcU) at 2010 demonstration.

Description of Activity

The youth learn about two different ways Evangelicalism acts in the world and consider their own, faith-based potential responses.

Say, in these words or your own:

We have seen how every religion has variety in terms of how followers live and show their faith. Here are two stories that show two very different expressions of Evangelical Christianity.

Share the story "Feeding the Hungry — an Interfaith Story" by Greg Damhorst.

Then, ask:

- What does Greg share about his beliefs, and what they call him to do?" [Help the group articulate "service," "family service project," "cooperation," "showing others the compassion of Jesus." Note that Greg grounds his values in quotations from Christian scripture—the word and example of Jesus.]
- In what ways does Greg's story sound as if it could have been shared by a UU youth? In what ways does it not?
- What does our UU faith tell us about engaging with people from other religions? Having friends whose beliefs are different? Working on projects together to help others? What do we believe in, that calls us to do it? [interconnected web, responsibility for one another, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, learning from the wisdom of many faiths]

Now invite the youth to hear the second story. Explain that this story is called "Combating the Hate of Westboro Baptist Church."

If you have decided to show one or more video clips, do so immediately after the story.

Then lead a discussion with these questions:

- [If you have not shown the video clip in which Westboro Baptist Church members speak.] Because this story is told about the Westboro Baptist Church and not by its members, we cannot be sure what beliefs called them to demonstrate against gay people. However, from what you have learned about Evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity, what beliefs might those be? [Affirm: a belief that the Bible gives rules for how we must live, and being gay is against those rules; a belief that a Christian

must tell other people they are sinners and explain to them what they need to do to be saved.]

- [If you have shown the video clip.] What beliefs do you think led the members of Westboro Baptist Church to bring an anti-gay demonstration to Grady High School? Think about what you've learned about Evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity. [Affirm: a belief that the Bible states rules for how we must live, and being gay is against those rules; a belief that a Christian must tell other people they are sinners and explain to them what they need to do to be saved.]
- If the Westboro Baptist Church were to stage a public demonstration in our community, or at your school, how might you feel? What might you do? In what ways can you relate to Becca Daniels' feelings? Her actions?

Distribute Handout 4, UU Response to Westboro Baptist Church. Explain that the Westboro Baptist Church in 2010-11 traveled to many states to stage anti-gay demonstrations, and this handout tells how some UUs in Virginia responded. Invite the youth to read the handout to themselves or have volunteers read aloud.

Then, ask:

- How is this UU response to Westboro Baptist Church similar to Becca's response? What similar feelings and actions did you notice?
- Does the UU response demonstrate any of our Principles in action? Which ones? How?

Distribute the handout or indicate the poster of the UU Principles. Encourage youth to apply phrases in the Principles to the UU action against Westboro Baptist Church.

Tell the group Becca Daniels is not a UU; she is Episcopalian, which is a Protestant denomination—so, she and the members of Westboro Baptist Church share a Christian identity. If you have time, share this self-description Becca provided to Building Bridges when she gave permission to share her story:

I graduated from Henry W. Grady High School, in Atlanta, GA, on May of 2011. I am now a freshman at the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC. I am undecided in my major but I am considering majoring in Sociology and minoring in Religious Studies. I was raised Episcopal, and as an adult I am choosing to stay with the Episcopal Church. I have learned a lot about my faith not only from church, but from an

Episcopal Church camp in Toccoa, GA, called Camp Mikell, and youth programs and weekends through my diocese. Socially, I am a very liberal thinker, so I consider myself very lucky to have grown up in the Episcopal Church, where open-minded thinking and all walks of life are welcomed. My home church's, St. Luke's Episcopal in Atlanta, slogan is "Where ever you are on your spiritual journey, St. Luke's welcomes you". As Episcopalians we focus on God's eternal and unconditional love, which has shaped me to view humans that way. I learned as a child that we are made in the image of God, so discriminating against someone is discriminating against God's work.

Invite the group to share ideas for how they might respond, in faith, to different kinds of encounters with Evangelical Christianity. Use any of these prompts that seem right as the conversation develops:

- Suppose you learned an extreme Evangelical fundamentalist group was planning to demonstrate in your community against some kind of freedom they believe goes against the Bible. What would you want to do in response? Which Principles and what UU values can you rely on to know what to do?
- Suppose a classmate of yours is an Evangelical Christian, and they inform you that you are a sinner and going to Hell. What would you say? What would you do? How do Unitarian Universalist beliefs support your answers? Which Principles and what UU values can you rely on to know what to do?

Ask the youth to consider:

What if we encounter someone from another religion who says our religion is wrong? An Evangelical Christian believes that you were born a sinner, and will spend eternity in Hell unless you accept Jesus Christ as your savior. Suppose another youth were to tell you this. How would you feel? What would you say?

There is a slogan on tee-shirts and bumper stickers that jokes, "If there's one thing I can't stand, it's intolerance." As a UU, do you have to tolerate intolerance?

ACTIVITY 4: EVANGELICAL PREACHING — HOW DOES IT FEEL? (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [Amazing Grace Church — What We Believe](#) (included in this document) ; Handout 2, [RiverTree Baptist Church — What We Believe](#) (included in this document) ; or Handout 3, [The ATF Creed — Acquire the Fire](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Evangelical Christian music and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Each handout offers an Evangelical belief statement for you or participants to present as if you were preaching it. Decide whether you wish to (a) present a handout yourself or (b) engage one or several volunteers to present one or more of the handouts. Give handouts to any volunteer presenters ahead of time. Invite them to prepare to share the material in a way that will convince and inspire listeners.
- Copy the handout(s) you are using for all participants.
- Arrange the room to resemble a congregation surrounding a pulpit.
- Prepare two sheets of newsprint, one headed "Ideas" and one headed "Emotions." Set these aside.
- Optional: Prepare a few minutes of Evangelical Christian music to play for the group. Download Christian praise music free, on the website [Free Praise and Worship](#) (at [freepraiseandworship.org/](#)). Include African American gospel selections or Christian rock praise music, as well.
- Optional: Set up and test music player.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and respond to a message one might hear at an Evangelical worship service.

Gather the group in the "congregational" setting you have arranged. If you have music, play some. Then bring the music down. Introduce yourself and say you are happy to have the chance to preach to this group today (or have a volunteer presenter do this). Then present, or have a volunteer present, one of the handouts. If you wish, at the conclusion of the presentation bring up the music for a few moments. Note: While this activity invites an intentionally dramatic presentation, be careful to respect the words and ideas

in the handout. Avoid extra dramatization or embellishment such as a made-up preacher name or a costume. Some youth may respond actively during the reading, for example, shouting "Amen!" If this happens, great—process it later. Invite the youth to share how the reading inspired them. Was it the words, or the way they were delivered? Something about the experience of being preached to in a group?

Now distribute the handout that was presented. Tell the group it provides the speech they just heard. Say:
Let's think about the presentation we just experienced. What was the message?

Post the two newsprint sheets you have prepared. As youth respond, write their contributions on the appropriate sheet: "Ideas" or "Emotions." Invite the group to tell you on which sheet each response belongs. Make brief notes—the point is not to build long lists but to show the distinction. Encourage the group to look over the handout for phrases that speak to "Ideas" and phrases that speak to "Emotions." Some may be both.

When the lists look full, lead a discussion with these questions:

- What is your reaction to these ideas? How do you think Evangelical followers find them appealing?
- What is your reaction to the feelings? What positive feelings might a follower experience while listening to this speech?

Now guide the group to reflect:

- When it comes to religion, are ideas and feelings both important? Is one more important than the other? Why?

Ask:

- What does our Unitarian Universalist faith have to say about this?

Say:

Unitarian Universalism offers different ideas and tends to inspire different feelings than Evangelical Christianity.

Ask for examples. [We do not believe in one idea of God or one theology; we are open to learn from science, the arts, history, other religions, etc.; we expect our ideas to change over time with new knowledge and experience.]

Nonetheless, for us too, both ideas and feelings are extremely important. Our fourth Principle is that we value a free and responsible search for meaning—we consider it religious to thoughtfully examine ideas and to diligently develop our own. Feelings are also

important; we trust our feelings to show us what is true and how we should live. Our first Source is "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life."

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to form a circle and join hands and say together (referring to poster as necessary):

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: ONE LAPTOP PER CHILD

Description of Activity

Youth participate in spreading the "good news," Unitarian Universalist style, by supporting One Laptop Per Child to provide computing capability to children in a developing nation.

Tell youth that Evangelical Christians aim to spread what they call "good news"—that is, the news that accepting Jesus Christ as your personal savior will bring eternal salvation. As Unitarian Universalists, we also have beliefs we like to share—our "good news." Remind the youth that our seven UU Principles express what we believe, and our fourth Principle is that all people have the right to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Tell the youth they can share our fourth Principle with children in impoverished parts of the world in a concrete way. Explain that by supporting the nonprofit

organization [One Laptop Per Child](http://www.wiki.laptop.org/go/The_OLPC_Wiki) (at [wiki.laptop.org/go/The_OLPC_Wiki](http://www.wiki.laptop.org/go/The_OLPC_Wiki)) (OLPC), the youth can help bring children computers to pursue learning and inquiry on their own. Tell youth about OLPC's mission to provide educational opportunities for the world's poorest children by giving each child a rugged, low cost, low power, connected laptop and software tools and content designed for collaborative, joyful, self-empowered learning. For \$199, OLPC can give a laptop to a child. Invite the participants to plan a fundraising project. Alternatively, does your congregation have a "sharing the plate" program where proceeds from the Sunday offertory are sometimes given to an organization doing good works in the world? Encourage youth to talk with congregational leaders about donating one plate to OLPC. Suggest that youth research the organization and tell the congregation about it during a service, explaining the need, what the money will provide, and how this effort expresses Unitarian Universalist beliefs. Help the group prepare their presentation to the congregation by leading a discussion with these questions:

- Do you have access to a computer at home, school, or a public library?
- When did you first use a computer for research?
- How do you think your life would be different without access to a computer and the Internet?
- How does your use of computers show your Unitarian Universalist values?
- What are your hopes for the donation the congregation is making? How do you hope it will change a child's life?

Remind youth to write a thank-you note after the donation activity and make sure it is published in the congregational newsletter.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. What worked? What did not? Plan to communicate your observations and learning to your religious educator to share with future leaders of this workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Christian scripture, Romans 6:22-23
You were made by God and for God and until you understand that, life will

never make sense. — Rick Warren, founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, an Evangelical Christian congregation averaging 22,000 weekly attendees with a 120-acre campus and more than 300 community ministries to groups such as prisoners, CEOs, addicts, single parents, and those with HIV/AIDS. Recently, the church fed 42,000 homeless people —three meals a day —for 40 days.

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we discussed the contemporary Evangelical Christianity movement. We explored the concept of being born again, considered the popularity of fundamentalist beliefs and Evangelical worship in the U.S. today, and grounded ourselves in UU faith-based responses to Evangelical expressions we might encounter in politics, culture, and our own lives.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is the "good news" of Unitarian Universalism? Should you share this good news with people who might need to know of our affirming faith? How do you do that?

Has someone ever attempted to "bring you to Jesus?" How did you respond? Were you offended? Why? Now that you know more about Evangelical beliefs, and understand that sharing their beliefs with you is part of an Evangelical's faith, might you respond differently?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Evangelical music in the U.S. comes in many flavors, including contemporary [Christian rock music](http://www.christianrock.net/) (at www.christianrock.net/) and [black gospel](http://www.blackgospel.com/) (at www.blackgospel.com/). Explore and listen online.
 - Do a keyword search on [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/) (at www.youtube.com/) to hear and see diverse gospel artists. [Rejoice and Shout](http://www.magpictures.com/rejoiceandshout/) (at www.magpictures.com/rejoiceandshout/) is a 2011 documentary, with singing by Mavis Staples, Smokey Robinson, Mahalia Jackson and others, that demonstrates the place of Christian gospel music in the African American experience and its impact on American music and culture.
 - [TobyMac](http://www.tobymac.com/) (at www.tobymac.com/) is a Christian recording artist whose genres include rap and rock. [BarlowGirl](http://www.barlowgirl.com/) (at

www.barlowgirl.com/) is an all-female Christian rock band.

- The website [Christian Music 4 Praise and Worship](http://4praise.com/) (at 4praise.com/) has extensive links to a variety of genres of Christian music.
- Evangelical preachers are a popular subject for feature films as well as documentaries. Common themes are the charismatic minister with a strong personality who fails to "walk the talk" in their personal life, and gets caught, or begins to question their beliefs. A good, older movie is *Elmer Gantry* (directed by Richard Brooks, 1960). In *Leap of Faith* (directed by Richard Pearce, 1992), Steve Martin plays a fake faith healer who confronts his own faith. In *The Apostle* (directed by and starring Robert Duvall, 1997, PG-13), a minister leaves his Texas town when his life is in crisis and becomes an evangelical radio preacher in Louisiana. *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* (directed by Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato, 2000) is a tongue-in-cheek documentary of television evangelist Tammy Faye Baker.
- Teenagers in the Evangelical movement are another popular movie topic. Watch the documentary *Jesus Camp* (2006) or [The Lord's Boot Camp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeivplkkPPc) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeivplkkPPc), a CBS television documentary about young people training to become Christian missionaries. The movie *Saved* (directed by Brian Dannelly, 2004, PG-13), with Mandy Moore and Macaulay Culkin, is a satire about a student at a Christian high school who gets pregnant.
- T.D. Jakes is a well known African American evangelist. He is the pastor of [Potter's House](http://www.thepottershouse.org/) (at www.thepottershouse.org/) in Dallas, Texas, which has more than 30,000 members, and a bestselling author of spiritual support books. His ministry is broadcast on television and online, and he has written, produced, or endorsed several feature films with faith messages that feature African American artists. Two that are rated PG-13 are *Not Easily Broken* (directed by Bill Duke, 2009) and *Jumping the Broom* (directed by Salim Akil, 2011).
- Tim Lahaye and Jerry B. Jenkins are co-authors of the bestselling fiction series *Left Behind*. The books chronicle the Rapture—the end of the world, according to some Christians, when the holy will ascend to Heaven and others will be left behind on a damaged, post-apocalyptic

earth. *Left Behind: The Kids* is about a group of youth left on earth after the Apocalypse. The [authors' website](http://www.leftbehind.com/) (at www.leftbehind.com/) tells more about their beliefs and describes their evangelical purpose in writing and promoting the book series.

- Well known contemporary evangelicals include Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, Rick Warren, Benny Hinn, and Joel Osteen. Osteen is the pastor of [Lakewood Church](http://www.lakewood.cc/pages/home.aspx) (at www.lakewood.cc/pages/home.aspx) in Houston, Texas. His services are available online. Weekly attendance at this church reaches 47,000. Watch a television evangelist with family of friends. Discuss their message—the ideas they offer and the feelings they seem to want to raise. Do parts of their presentation speak to you? Watch more than one and compare. What do you notice about different ministers' styles? Do African American ministers differ from European American ministers? How?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Bibles

Preparation for Activity

- Choose an Evangelical Christian congregation to visit. You might want to visit a traditional black church, such as an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) congregation, or a nondenominational Christian "megachurch" if you are near one.
- Contact a staff member or a member of the church and inquire about visiting. If possible, also arrange for your contact, or another member of the church, to talk to the youth before, or after, the service. Find out what the youth should know before their visit, such as how to dress, whether they should bring their own Bibles for the service, and the approximate length of the service. Ask whether there will be refreshments or a potluck meal after the service and whether youth are welcome to stay. Be prepared for the service to run longer than predicted; before worship, let your hosts know what time your group needs to leave. Be prepared to offer a financial donation.
- Gather information about the church's programs other than worship, such as religious education, service projects, or charity efforts. Be ready to

look for brochures, newsletters, or other items when visiting the church.

Description of Activity

Participants attend an Evangelical Christian worship service and process the experience.

Gather beforehand to be sure youth are properly dressed and to review courteous behavior guidelines. Remind the youth that the church members are generously sharing their faith with us and that you expect the youth to demonstrate respect for the worshippers, their beliefs, and their practices. If appropriate, distribute Bibles; explain that the youth may wish to use a Bible during the service when other worshippers do.

Engagement Questions

After the service, ask participants for their immediate responses. What was the experience like for them? How did it compare with engagements with other faiths? Continue discussion with these questions:

- What did youth notice about the appearance of the church? Was there an altar? Stained glass windows? What objects, art, or symbols did you notice?
- Was there music? What instruments, if any, were used? Was the music recorded? Was there singing?
- What kind of special clothing did anyone wear? Why?
- Did people of different genders behave differently? Different ages?
- Was there a mix of ethnicities in the congregation? Among the worship leaders?
- What differences did you observe between worship here and in our congregation?
- Was the speaker what you expected? How so? How not? Did the speaker say anything that surprised them? What? Why was it surprising?
- Were there readings from the Bible? If so, did youth try to follow along? Were they able to find the Bible verses? Was audio-visual equipment used, such as a projector for showing Bible verses on a screen? What was that like?
- Was there a sermon? If so, could youth imagine hearing the same sermon at a UU congregation? Why or why not?

Share the information you have gathered about the church's programs other than worship. What can the youth learn about this faith community from its additional offerings?

Thank the youth for their participation.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access and a large monitor or a digital projector and screen and (optional) extra audio speakers
- Optional: Bibles

Preparation for Activity

- Test equipment.
- Choose an evangelical Christian worship service to view online or as a DVD. Possibilities include:
 - [Lakewood Church](http://www.lakewood.cc/pages/watchonline.aspx) (at www.lakewood.cc/pages/watchonline.aspx) in Houston, Texas, the largest congregation in the United States. The pastor is Joel Osteen. His wife Victoria is also active in the service. Their weekly attendance (five services) tops 43,000. Their annual budget is \$70 million. Each Sunday service can be viewed live or watched online during the following week.
 - [West Angeles Church of God in Christ](http://www.westa.org/) (at www.westa.org/), a predominately African American congregation in California. Many celebrities attend, including Denzel Washington, Stevie Wonder, Angela Bassett, and Magic Johnson. The pastor, Charles Blake, Jr. is Bishop of the International Church of God in Christ. Their annual budget is \$15 million and weekly attendance averages 20,000. If you wish to view a full service, purchase it in advance from the church's website. You can watch clips on the church website's "media center."
 - Watch clips of both churches' services, to compare and contrast.
- Optional: Write on newsprint some of the engagement questions in the Description below, and set the newsprint aside. Or, you may wish to create a handout with these questions and make copies for youth to use while they watch the worship service.

Description of Activity

Youth engage with a megachurch by watching worship online.

Go to the website for the congregation you will visit. Tour the website, guiding the youth to explore and answer:

- What can you tell about connections between the members' faith and their daily lives? What classes or services are offered to the congregation? What notices and announcements are posted?
- What tools are provided for the virtual community to connect to other online attendees, to the on-site members, or to the ministry of the church at large?
- Do you think this church is part of a particular Protestant denomination, or is it non-denominational? How can you tell?
- What can you observe about the membership from the images on the website? Do the images show diversity of ethnicity/race? Gender? Age? Any other diversity noted?
- What else stands out about the website? Is it engaging? Interactive? Colorful? Attractive?
- Did people of different genders behave differently? Different ages?
- Was there a mix of ethnicities in the congregation? Among the worship leaders?
- What differences did you observe between worship here and in our congregation?
- Could the sermon have been delivered from a Unitarian Universalist pulpit? Why, or why not?
- How was the service like a typical worship service at your congregation? Did you hear anything in the service that resonated with your UU values?
- What was the message of the sermon? What actions did it ask of the congregants? Did you hear any themes from our workshop? E.g., being born again, accepting Jesus in order to be saved, or the call to share the belief in Jesus as savior with others, including people outside this church?
- How was the Bible used in the service?
- How diverse is the congregation in ethnicity/race, gender, and age? How diverse are the presenters?
- What else stands out about the service?

Tell the group they will watch a service from a megachurch online. Let them know which church and when the service took place. If you have prepared some of the engagement questions, post or distribute them now, and invite participants to review the questions and watch for the answers. If needed, remind participants to watch respectfully.

Engagement Questions

- How familiar did members seem with the service? Are explanations or instructions offered during worship? Does the entire congregation seem to know the order of service, the words spoken, the tunes sung? Are directions written or spoken in English and/or another language? If another language, which language?
- What are signs the members respect the service, its leaders, and the space in which it is held? How can you tell which spaces, objects, or moments are most sacred/least sacred for this congregation?
- What is the role of children in the service?
- Were the worship leaders as you expected? How so? How not? Did any speaker say anything that surprised you? What? Why was it surprising? Would you say the minister had a powerful presence, as a presenter—that they were charismatic?
- What did you notice about the appearance of the church? Was there an altar?
- Was there music? What instruments, if any, were used? Was the music recorded? Was there singing?
- What kind of special clothing did anyone wear? Why?

If you watch clips from both Lakewood and West Angeles, compare and contrast them. Lakewood is non-denominational Christian; West Angeles is C.O.G.I.C. (Church of God in Christ). Offer these facts to help the youth compare:

- Lakewood posts their weekly services online, free, in their entirety. You have to purchase services from West Angeles, though they are relatively inexpensive at \$4.99.
- Lakewood has a budget of \$70 million; West Angeles only \$15 million, less than a quarter of Lakewood's budget.
- Lakewood has 43,000 participants a week, a bit more than double West Angeles.

If you have Internet access, compare the websites of these two "megachurches." What links are featured on the home pages? Note that West Angeles features prominently a link to Save Africa's Children, an organization that provides support and care to orphans and vulnerable children, especially those with HIV.

Guide the group to discuss: Why might these differences exist?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: BIBLICAL AUTHORITY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Bibles — Hebrew and Christian scriptures

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain Bibles for everyone in the group—preferably a New Standard Revised Version, but use multiple versions if necessary.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Participants explore how they might talk with people who believe the Bible is inerrant.

Say, in these or your own words:

One feature of Evangelical faith is a belief that the Bible is the word of God and literally true—not stories and history witnessed, imagined, and recorded by different people over hundreds of years. Many Evangelicals believe the Bible is inerrant—that is, without error—and contains all the guidance needed for life. This belief is a cornerstone of Christian fundamentalism.

Ask: "What benefits can you see in accepting the inerrancy of the Bible? What basic needs might be addressed if you believe the Bible is literal truth?"

Record their ideas on newsprint. If no one offers these points, include:

- The Bible provides one, single source for answers to life's Big Questions.
- Concrete rules for right and wrong actions. Belief in the Bible's inerrancy removes the need to puzzle out complex moral and ethical questions.
- The Bible is like God speaking directly to you—your connection to something larger than yourself.
- You can feel a sense of belonging with like-minded believers.

Note that Evangelicals will fiercely defend their belief in the inerrant Bible. Say, in these words, or your own:

Trying to convince a biblical literalist that the Bible is flawed is not constructive. They have been challenged before. For every issue you can raise, an Evangelical believer will have an answer satisfying to them, but probably not to you. If you wish to respectfully engage in a conversation with a biblical literalist to learn their perspective, let's talk about where your conversation may lead.

Write on newsprint the primary areas in which challenges to biblical inerrancy are typically made, giving examples as you go:

- **Inconsistencies** within the Bible (e.g., stories told differently in different parts of the Bible)
- **Conflicts between biblical stories and science** (e.g., the first rainbow appeared after Noah's flood; the sun stood still during a battle; the world was created in six days; archaeological findings that suggest historical events occurred differently than described in the Bible)
- **Immoral teachings** (e.g., God appears to command or condone genocide, rape, slavery)

Invite the youth to suggest how a believer in biblical inerrancy might respond to each of these challenges.

Prompt, as needed:

- To the charge of inconsistency, literalists may answer: 1) Events might have been reported by humans in a different order than they appear in the Bible; 2) Some writers (guided by God) reported certain aspects of an event, others reported different ones.
- To the charge of conflicts with science, literalist answers are numerous and varied. Some literalists may insist that the earth is 10,000 years old and that evolution never happened; others may accept scientific findings about the age of the earth and the theory of evolution. For example, evolution could be understood as the mechanism by which God created all the life forms on earth, and the six days of creation were days as defined by God and could have been—by our system of measurement—millions of years.
- To the charge of immoral teachings, two common responses are: 1) The actions of people thousands of years ago cannot be judged by the moral standards of today; and 2) The ways of God are unknowable and while terrible things happen in the Bible, they were by God's direction and therefore must be right, fitting into a plan too big for us to see.

Share with participants the following statement:

If one starts with the foundational belief that the Bible is inerrant and that it is the will of God, with some creative ingenuity [these] conflicts can almost always be harmonized. (Ontario Consultants, cited on the [Religious Tolerance](http://www.religioustolerance.org/) (at www.religioustolerance.org/) website)

How does this statement strike the youth?

Invite the group to examine the idea of inerrancy by looking at biblical text. Distribute Bibles and have youth look up these passages, in the order given:

- Genesis 6:6-8 ("The Lord was grieved that he had made man ... ")
- Exodus 12:29-30 ("At midnight the Lord struck down ... ")
- 2 Kings 2:23-24 ("From there Elisha went up to Bethel ... ")
- Joshua 6:20-21 ("When the trumpets sounded ... ")
- 2 Samuel 12:29-31 ("So David mustered the entire army... ")

Ask for reactions:

- What do you think of the passages?
- In what ways could these passages have truth?
- If the truthfulness of a passage seems flawed to you, does that diminish the value of the text as guidance for living? How so? How not?

Invite youth to find, in Christian scripture, II Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God ... "

Have a volunteer read the text aloud. Ask:

- What do you think of this passage?
- What "instruction in righteousness" do you think can be found in the Bible?
- What material do you know of in the Bible that seems contrary to the statement in this text? What about atrocities and wrongdoing presented in the Bible?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: SATAN (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 5, [Names of Satan](#) (included in this document)
- Art supplies such as modeling clay, crayons, paper, color pencils, and pipe cleaners

Preparation for Activity

- Print several copies of Handout 5, Names of Satan.

Description of Activity

Participants learn the evangelical view of the devil and consider the usefulness of a personification of evil.

Share, in these words or your own:

Most evangelical Christians believe in a literal devil. The devil as it appears in traditional Christian doctrine is a being of pure evil that takes various physical forms. The devil's purpose is to lure or trick people into transgressing so they will fall out of grace with God and be

eternally damned. This belief is held not only by evangelicals; people of many faiths believe in a powerful, conscious being of malicious intent that they would call the devil.

Distribute Handout 5, Names of Satan. Explain that all these names for the devil, and more, appear in various translations of the Bible. Ask for initial impressions.

Then ask:

- What do these names for Satan tell us about what Satan is and does?
- Could there be a devil? Have you ever thought there might be a devil, one entity responsible for all the evil in the world?
- What do you believe causes evil in the world?

Remind youth that most UUs believe all people are capable of both good and evil behavior. We are most concerned with developing the human capacity for doing what is good and right.

Distribute art supplies and invite youth to create an image of the source of evil, as they perceive it. While they work, continue discussion with these questions:

- Why is it useful to some people to have a devil—a powerful, malevolent being whose purpose it is to create chaos and evil? [Could it help explain why bad things happen? Could it explain why people do immoral or hurtful things?]
- Does it make God more accessible, more human, if God has an arch enemy?

When youth have finished their artwork, invite them to share their work.

Involve everyone in clean-up.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 5: MUSIC AND WORSHIP (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Christian Evangelical music selections, Unitarian Universalist music selections, and a music player
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook and *Singing the Journey*, its supplement

Preparation for Activity

- Download Christian praise music free, on the website [Free Praise and Worship](#) (at [freepraiseandworship.org/](#)). Explore the genre [Christian rock](#) (at [www.christianrock.net/](#)) online. Include selections from African American gospel. Set up and test music player.

- Gather audio clips of Unitarian Universalist music or prepare to lead the group in song. You may wish to invite a musical person in your congregation to help lead "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Hear "[Spirit of Life" online](http://thegreatstory.org/video/spirit-of-life-dance.html) (at thegreatstory.org/video/spirit-of-life-dance.html), in a video of a dance to accompany the song, demonstrated by Penny Wollan-Kriel of Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation (Springfield, IL).
- Optional: Bring copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey*.
- Optional: Prepare to teach or lead a hymn from *Singing the Living Tradition* or *Singing the Journey* that has Christian roots or a message compatible with Evangelical Christianity. Some suggestions are Hymn 268, "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" or Hymn 348, "Guide My Feet" in *Singing the Living Tradition*, and Hymn 1045, "There Is a Balm in Gilead" in *Singing the Journey*.

Guide the youth to examine the hymns they have found. Ask them to point out phrases, tunes, and rhythms that suggest commonalities between UU beliefs and worship and Evangelical Christian beliefs and worship.

Description of Activity

Youth listen to a variety of genres of Christian Evangelical music and compare and contrast with Unitarian Universalist music they know.

Invite the youth to listen to Christian praise music you have selected. Then ask:

- What did you enjoy about this music?
- What, if anything, did you dislike?
- Did anything make you uncomfortable? Why?

Now play a recording of, or lead the group to sing, "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Ask:

- What do you like about this song?
- What, if anything, do you dislike?
- In what ways is "Spirit of Life" a UU song? How is the message UU? Do any phrases seem especially Unitarian Universalist to you? What about the tune and rhythm of the song?
- How do you think an Evangelical Christian might respond to "Spirit of Life?" What might they find appealing about it? Might this song make an Evangelical uncomfortable? Why?

Variation

Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey*. Invite the youth to look for hymns that have Christianity as a source or seem to have an Evangelical flavor or message. Suggest they look at Hymn 268, "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" or Hymn 348, "Guide My Feet" in *Singing the Living Tradition*, and Hymn 1045, "There Is a Balm in Gilead" in *Singing the Journey*. Optional: Lead the group to sing one of the hymns.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 16: STORY: COMBATING THE HATE OF WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH

By Becca Daniels. Combating The Hate of Westboro Baptist "Church." Used with permission.

The following account is one young person's encounter with a fundamentalist extremist group.

In June of 1998, I lost an uncle to an AIDS related illness. He was brilliant, he was Christian, and he was gay. I was only five years old when he died and I didn't know anything about AIDS. I just knew I was sad to lose such a great uncle.

Today, I find myself fighting a hate group in his honor. When my friend told me the [Westboro Baptist Church](#) (at [www.godhatesfags.com](#)) planned to picket my high school, I didn't know much about them, so I dug into stories about the group's ideology on the Internet. The so-called "church" (based in Kansas with no real Baptist church [affiliations](#) (at [primitivebaptist.info/mambo/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1434](#))) goes around the country protesting at [fallen soldiers' funerals](#) (at [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,305279,00.html](#)), saying their deaths are paying for the "sins" of the country. The church is anti-Semitic, anti-homosexual, anti-government and a downright hateful group. They've even picketed [President Obama's daughters' school](#) (at [www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/11/09/westboro-baptist-church-p_n_350766.html](#)) in Washington, D.C. (their website calls the girls "satanic spawn" as previously reported in The Huffington Post.)

The Westboro Baptist Church website says they picked my school, Henry W. Grady High in Atlanta, Georgia, because of our tolerance for homosexuality. They sometimes bring signs to their protest rallies that read, "Thank God for AIDS."

I cried when I read that.

How could a group of people thank God for a disease that has affected millions of people and left the families of the victims, families such as mine, devastated? I have never attended a protest in my life, and I contemplated ignoring the picketers and not giving them the attention they crave, but I knew this rally was my call to action.

Today, I'm holding a student led demonstration of my very own—a complete antithesis to Westboro's—and it's at the same time as theirs. I've created a group on [Facebook](#) (at [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=113068505390927](#))

that has 2600 fans and counting. People from all over the country, who I have never met, are posting words of encouragement to me.

Our actions today are about unconditional love, tolerance, and acceptance towards others. My friends and I coined the name A-T-L, standing for Acceptance, Tolerance, and Love. We will congregate with signs devoted to love, have stations for participants to make shirts with the A.T.L. logo on them, and collect donations for AID Atlanta, a non-profit organization helping people living with HIV/AIDS in the Atlanta area.

As soon as school gets out today, the Westboro Church is scheduled to be on our sidewalk. Our rally will be across the street, in Atlanta's 185-acre Piedmont Park. This experience will no longer be about Westboro. Grady High students are taking the story away from the church to tell a different one.

This is Atlanta: the home of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the cultural center of the South. Today, we'll live up to our city's slogan: "[too busy to hate](#) (at [www.atlantaga.gov/index.aspx?page=1064](#))."

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 16: STORY: FEEDING THE HUNGRY — AN INTERFAITH STORY

Excerpted, with permission, from an article by Greg Damhorst posted February 15, 2011 on the [Faith Line Protestants](#) website. Read the full article online: "[Feeding the Hungry: an Example that Compels us Toward Interfaith Work.](#)"

Just over a year ago I was on a train home to visit my parents in the Chicago suburbs when my cell phone rang. It was my mother, who was calling to gauge my interest in a family service project packaging meals for Haiti.

Envisioning a room somewhere in a church basement with a pile of canned goods, miscellaneous boxes, and a junior high youth group, I was shocked when we walked into a former hardware store in Elgin, IL to roughly 1,000 energized volunteers filling box after box with packages of a nutritious rice, soy, vegetable, and vitamin blend—all the while chatting and dancing excitedly. This is where the story of interfaith cooperation catches fire.

I brought the idea to a small group of friends... We were an Evangelical Christian, a Catholic, a Buddhist, a Hindu, and a Humanist, and we set out to plan an event at which our campus could package meals for Haiti. In a single weekend, 5,112 volunteers from every walk of life, faith and philosophical tradition passed through that site to lend a hand. In less than 12 hours, 1,012,640 meals were packaged for shipment to Haiti where they were protected by the 82nd airborne and distributed by Salvation Army humanitarian workers.

This is a story of coming together, it's a story of cooperation, and it's a story of interfaith work. As an evangelical, this is a snapshot of how I desire to live out my faith. To do so alongside people who I desire to show the compassion of Jesus makes it an even more compelling endeavor.

Jesus said "I was hungry and you brought me something to eat." (Christian scripture, Matthew 25:31-46). Consider the significance of inviting others to join in such an activity. If you ask me, this is a simple yet profound way to communicate the compassion of Christ, meet the needs of the world, and build a better community.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 16: HANDOUT 1: VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH — WHAT WE BELIEVE

From [Victory Baptist Church](#) of North Augusta, SC; used with permission.

What We Believe

God's word is the foundation of everything we believe as a church. Though some say it is out of date and too "old-fashioned," we still believe in the perfection and inspiration of God's word. We firmly stand upon every word of the King James Bible.

Life has a question for you...
"What if?"

What if you knew that today was your last day to live?
What if you died today? Are you 100 % sure that Heaven would be your FINAL DESTINATION?

The Bible says we can know we're going to Heaven, but there are four things we must first believe.

1. WE ARE ALL SINNERS

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Most people consider themselves to be a good person, but who is the standard of goodness? In other words, to whom are you comparing yourself to see if you are good?

But the Bible says the standard is Jesus Christ and compared to Him, the best person in the world is in trouble!

2. THERE IS A PENALTY FOR YOUR SIN

The Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23)

We get our wages on payday for the work we have done. The Bible says that sin also has a payday. Some think they can get their sins paid for by being good, getting baptized or joining a church. But the Bible says, "the wages of sin is death." So, according to the Bible, the only way you could pay for your sin would be to die and spend eternity in hell.

That is not very good news is it? So, here's the good news.....the reason we cannot earn eternal life through good works or any other way is because it is a free gift! Notice again, that the Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Eternal life is a gift, and a gift is always free. So, eternal life is a free gift because.....

3. CHRIST PAID YOUR PENALTY

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

The Bible says that when Jesus died on the cross, He was dying to pay the penalty for our sin.

4. PRAY AND RECEIVE CHRIST

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

If you believe that you are a sinner and that Christ died to pay your sin debt, then by faith call upon the Lord and ask Him to be your Savior.

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, you can pray, "Dear Jesus, I know I am a sinner, but I believe you died on the cross to pay for my sin. I trust you, and you alone, to forgive my sin and take me to heaven when I die."

If you received Christ as your Savior, please contact us and let us know.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

16: HANDOUT 2: RIVERTREE

CHRISTIAN CHURCH — WHAT WE BELIEVE

From the website of the [RiverTree Christian Church](#) of Massillon, Ohio. Used with permission.

There is ONE GOD who is the source of everything

God is one and He exists as three equal persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God has existed eternally and is the creator of everything that exists in the universe, both physical and spiritual. He is actively involved in sustaining life and matter in the universe and also supernaturally intervenes in human existence to achieve His purposes. He has made mankind in His image and has gone to great lengths to demonstrate that He wants to be in a love relationship with his people.

(Genesis 1:26; Exodus 6:7; Matthew 3:16-17; John 3:16; Acts 17:24-30; Romans 1:20; 2 Peter 3:9)

The Bible is the ABSOLUTE TRUTH

The Bible is the source of truth about the origin and purpose of the human race and reveals the nature of our Divine Creator. It communicates God's perfect standards concerning human life and is the truth by which every person will be judged. We believe the Bible was written under the guidance of God himself, that it contains no errors in the original texts, and that it is sure, safe, and reliable in all matters when appropriately read and interpreted.

(2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 Peter 1:24-25; Isaiah 40:8)

The Bible is COMPLETELY RELEVANT to life

We believe the Bible is entirely relevant to human existence today and provides the best information for living the highest quality of life on this earth and for all eternity.

(Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 19:8; Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16)

Jesus is the ONLY Son of God, the ONLY way to heaven

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only Son who was physically born as human being while remaining fully God. Because He was both fully God and fully human, His death was able to make the perfect and only payment for our sin and He is, therefore, the only way a person may have his or her broken relationship

with God restored and enter God's eternal presence in Heaven.

(John 14:6; Romans 3:21-25; John 11:25-26 ; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

We believe what the Bible says about Jesus is ENTIRELY TRUE

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived and born of a virgin through the power of God's Spirit, that He lived a sinless life, that He physically died on a cross, that He rose from the dead, and that He currently sits at the right hand of God. We believe He did all of this because He loves us.

(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 1:34-35; Luke 22:70; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 5:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Matthew 28:1-7)

Every human being is made in the IMAGE OF GOD and is also a SINNER

We believe that human beings are created in the image of God, but that through Adam's sin they now possess a sinful nature and also do actively sin. Because of this sin, without God's intervention, every person is doomed to an eternity of punishment and separation from God.

(Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:16-17; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 1:17-3:12; Romans 3:23)

Salvation is by GRACE through FAITH

We believe that salvation is a free gift from God given to any person who puts their faith in Jesus Christ, accepting Him as Lord and Savior. This gift of salvation includes an immediate restoration of a person's relationship with God and, through yielding to the Holy Spirit, a lifetime of continuing transformation of that person's character into the character of Jesus Christ.

(Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:21-22; Romans 10:9; Acts 16:30-31; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:29)

Faith is MORE than just believing

We believe that Biblical faith is more than just mental agreement with a list of facts about Jesus. It begins with a faith-decision to trust the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to be the final payment for your sin and to follow Him as the new leader of your life. This true faith in Jesus then naturally influences the thoughts and actions of the believer and is therefore evident in how the disciple actually lives.

(James 2:14-26; Matthew 7:21; Matthew 7:24-27; John 14:15)

Baptism is the PERFECT EXPRESSION of your faith

We believe that baptism by immersion is the perfect, outward expression of the faith decision to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that baptism of new

believers was the clear practice of the New Testament church as an integral part of the conversion experience.

(Mark 16:16; Acts 2:37-38; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3-4)

God lives IN YOU

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third, equal part of the Trinity (God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit) who influences the lives of unbelievers and who comes to live within every Christian. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to every believer so that the church might be built up and fully function as the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit also influences the thoughts and actions of every believer for the purpose of increasing the Christ-like character of that believer. The Holy Spirit's presence in a Christian is the assurance of God's acceptance and of a place with God in eternity.

(John 14:16-17; John 16:7-9; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

The LOCAL CHURCH is the hope of the world

We believe that the local church is the living, breathing body of Christ on this earth, whose purpose is to continue with the mission that Jesus had when He was here. We believe that all believers are meant to be an integral part of the local church where they will collectively use their God-given gifts to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the world around them and to grow together in community and character.

(Ephesians 4:4; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:41-47; John 14:12; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 16:18)

Jesus WILL be back

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to this earth to judge the world, to gather those who have put their faith in Him and to punish those who have continued to rebel against Him. While the exact moment of his return will not be known, the fact that He will return should cause us to live with urgency and should be a great hope to everyone who trusts in Him.

(1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Mark 13:32; Philippians 2:9-11; Titus 2:13)

Heaven and Hell are REAL

We believe that Heaven and Hell are both real places for human beings to exist after death and that every human being will exist for eternity either in God's presence or separated from Him. We believe that the Biblical descriptions of Heaven and Hell are meant to give us a basic understanding of these places; but that each will be more wonderful and more awful than we can comprehend.

(Ecclesiastes 3:11; Acts 24:15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:31-34,41,46; Revelation 21:3-5; Revelation 22:5; 2 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 14:9-12)

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 16: HANDOUT 3: THE ATF CREED — ACQUIRE THE FIRE

From the website of [Acquire the Fire](#), a touring event sponsored by Teen Mania Ministries, a Christian youth organization that reaches millions of young people worldwide with staged events that feature speakers and live music, and via its website. Permission pending.

1) WE WILL GROW

We know the word and truly walk with God engaging in constant conversation with him.

Joshua 22:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Proverbs 7:2&3

2) WE SEE THE BATTLE

We kill our flesh knowing it's the only way to take on God's nature.

Romans 8:3&4

3) WE WILL BE A SERVANT OF ALL

We give with everything we have, serve with everything we are and live for the benefit of others.

Matthew 20:28

4) WE LIVE THE COMMISSION

Understanding the world has yet to be reached and do everything in our power to rescue the lost here and around the world.

Matthew 28:18—20

5) WE CHOOSE LOVE

We are known by our love of everyone, especially our neighbor and choose love even when it hurts.

John 13:35

6) WE SEEK HEALING

With the world we live in, many of us have been traumatized by our family and our past. We realize Jesus is the one to restore us rather than mind numbing drugs or entertainment.

2 Corinthians 1:3&4

7) WE RESPOND TO OUR CALLING

We obey God's voice and choose to live for that which we are called, willing to pay any price God asks of us.

Ephesians 4:1

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 16: HANDOUT 4: UU RESPONSE TO WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH

Excerpted from the website of the [Standing on the Side of Love](#) campaign; used with permission.

Nov 16, 2010—UUs from Virginia didn't allow the Westboro Baptist Church's hate messages to go unchecked when the anti-gay group announced they were coming to town.

By Melodie Feather

On Wednesday morning last week, news broke in Prince William County, VA, that Westboro Baptist Church members were planning to protest at my local high school. No one really knows for certain why our high school was targeted. It might have been because our marching band wore rainbow ribbons on their uniform at a VA State Marching Band Festival in memory of a fellow gay student who had committed suicide. It could be that we have a strong, active ROTC program at our high school. No one knows for certain, but actually it doesn't really matter. We were on their calendar to protest.

So, when hate threatened to come knocking on my back door, I decided it was time to take action! This is the high school where my older son graduated in 2009 with an advanced degree certificate from the Fine and Performing Arts magnet program and where my younger son currently attends. The principal of Woodbridge High School sent a letter home with the students on Wednesday asking us not to counter protest. He was concerned about the safety of the students and faculty, and he was asking us to talk to

our children, explain the situation, and simply ignore the protesters. I understood his concerns and appreciated his request, but I simply could not be silent. If ever my faith would call me to action, this was the time. I simply could not ignore this opportunity to publicly witness my belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

...With the help of members of the Bull Run UUs, the UU Church of Arlington, and the Washington Ethical Society, we provided a non-engaging, peaceful presence this morning at Woodbridge High School. We sang songs of love and promise as we held Standing on the Side of Love banners and signs reading "God Really Likes You Too." Getting there early allowed us to have prominent places of visibility at the school entrances where the buses arrived and where the students who drive enter. Five Westboro Baptist protesters opted to stay on the other side of the 4-lane road. Their voices were drowned out by the noise of the traffic and the honking of the horns by those passing by.

But we were not alone on our side of the road. Alumni of the high school mounted a "Stand together against hate and the Westboro Church" counter protest through Facebook organization. They encouraged participants to bring and donate food items to benefit the Central Virginia Food Bank and contribute to the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. Together with other members of the community, we numbered 200 strong.

...As I reflect on all that happened in under an hour this morning, my heart is filled with hope for I know that my life has been blessed. Thank you Westboro Baptist for giving me such a wonderful opportunity to publicly witness my faith!

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 16: HANDOUT 5: NAMES OF SATAN

These are names by which Satan is called in the Bible:

Abaddon — Hebrew for "destruction"	King of the Bottomless Pit
Accuser	Lawless One
Adversary	Leviathan
Angel of Light (a being Satan can transform into)	Liar
Angel of the bottomless pit	Lucifer
Antichrist	Murderer
Apollyon — Greek for "destroyer"	Power of Darkness
Beast	Prince of the Power of the Air
Beelzebub — "Ruler of the demons"	Ruler of the Darkness
Belial	Ruler of this World
Deceiver	Serpent of Old
Devil	Son of Perdition
Dragon	Fallen Star
Enemy	Tempter
Evil One	Thief
Father of Lies	Wicked One

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

16: LEADER RESOURCE 1:

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

BACKGROUND

Evangelical Christianity is not a religion, nor an official denomination. It is a faith movement that has become especially significant in the United States over the past 50 years, in two ways:

1. Evangelical Christianity is popular, and growing. A [Pew Forum survey \(2007\)](#) (at religions.pewforum.org/reports) reported that 78.4 % of American adults identify as Christian, and about one third of these say they are Evangelical. Each Evangelical "megachurch" serves 2,000-plus Sunday worshippers at a time. A Forbes magazine article reported that the number of U.S. megachurches grew from 50 in 1970 to more than 1,300 in 2009.

2. The voice of Evangelical Christianity is prominent in American politics and culture. Evangelicals are the "base" for the politically and socially conservative Christian Right. Evangelicals often speak out, asking society to control personal behaviors they consider sinful according to the Bible. Evangelicals typically oppose equal marriage (marriage equality for same-sex couples), public school sexuality education, reproductive choice, and the teaching of human evolution in public school without offering the Bible's description of God's creation of the world as an alternate explanation.

Some Protestant denominations are Evangelical—for example, Southern Baptists, Pentecostals, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Missouri Synod branch of the Lutheran Church. The Christian Evangelical movement also includes large megachurches attended by thousands; "virtual" ministries that occur online or on television; many independent, local churches; and many individual Christians who do not regularly attend a particular church.

History

Today's Evangelicalism evolved out of the Christian Fundamentalist movement that began in the U.S. about 100 years ago. At the turn of the 20th century, new, modern ideas challenged traditional, core, Christian beliefs and brought conflict to Protestant churches, particularly Baptist and Methodist churches. Which ideas? Ideas like Darwin's scientific theory that humans evolved over billions of years, from and alongside other life forms. Changing ideas about the Bible's origins, in light of archeological evidence. Ideas from philosophy

and history that we might examine scripture critically, as a work written by people, and not by God.

According to William O. Beeman in "Fighting the Good Fight: Fundamentalism and Religious Revival," in *Anthropology for the Real World*, edited by J. MacClancy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001):

...[T]he movement took its name from a compendium of twelve volumes published between 1910 and 1915 by a group of Protestant laymen entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of the Truth*. These volumes were circulated in the millions and served as the concretization of a cross-denominational set of traditions with roots in previous centuries. It owes its existence particularly to the same evangelical revivalist tradition that inspired the Great Awakening of the early 19th Century and a variety of early millenarian movements. Spurred on by reactions to Darwin's theory of evolution, the original Fundamentalist Movement was seen as a religious revival. It came to embody both principles of absolute religious orthodoxy and evangelical practice which called for believers to extended action beyond religion into political and social life.

In other words, as a reaction to progressive ideas, The Fundamentalist Movement urged a return to orthodoxy, the spread of orthodox values to public life, and the preservation of "fundamental" truths of Christianity, most importantly:

- The Bible's inerrant truth, especially with regard to God's creation of humankind and Jesus Christ's literal resurrection after death.
- The belief that every human is born a sinner, and can find salvation only through acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's personal savior.

Today, the term "fundamentalist" is a label for various faiths' resurgent movements for religious orthodoxy—for example, militant Islamists, ultra-Orthodox Jews, Buddhist resistance fighters. Most often, fundamentalism is associated with social conservatism.

The Appeal of Evangelical Christianity

Like the early Fundamentalist movement, today's Evangelicalism attracts Christians who want a faith community with which to resist the loosening of social

rules in a modernizing, culturally diverse society. Evangelicalism offers absolute, definitions of sinful behavior, and the simplicity of a single path to salvation: accepting Jesus. For an Evangelical, the Bible is the guide for life. It is a God-inspired document, infallible in its intent and literal in its description of human history. Many Evangelicals believe that human beings were created by God—first a man, then a woman—about 10,000 years ago; that Jesus physically died and then was resurrected; that Satan is a real being; that Heaven is a real place where a "saved" soul will go after death to dwell with God. Clear, uncomplicated answers to many of life's Big Questions offer Evangelical Christians a sense of certainty.

Followers are attracted to the Evangelical worship atmosphere. From the small, non-denominational church to the "megachurch" where thousands pray together, Evangelicals are typically led in worship by a charismatic preacher. Whether a worship community is primarily African American; primarily Latino/Latina; an ethnic faith community such as Korean, Chinese, or Haitian; primarily white; or intentionally multicultural, an Evangelical service is likely to have an expressive, vibrant atmosphere, including rousing music. In many Evangelical communities, worshippers are encouraged to have a bodily experience of Jesus' presence; some may shout out or move physically, sometimes embracing one another. Sometimes while praying, people will "speak in tongues"—unintelligible, expressive vocalizations. This faith expression has roots in both the white and black Southern Pentecostal movements. Evangelicalism attracts Christians who seek a personal, emotional experience of God.

Salvation Beliefs and a Calling to "Save" Others

The crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is a central image in Christianity. Evangelical Christians believe that Jesus suffered and died on our behalf; by accepting Jesus and his sacrifice for us, we save our souls—that is, we go to Heaven after we die. Those of us who do not personally accept Jesus are excluded from salvation—that is, we are eternally damned. An Evangelical Christian is someone who has had, or is seeking, an experience of being "born again" through surrendering to Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

The word "evangelicalism" refers to the belief that one must spread one's faith to others. Some Unitarian Universalists who feel called to publicly express and act on UU Principles consider themselves "evangelical UUs." An Evangelical Christian is called to bring others into personal relationship with Jesus—that is, to convert others to Christianity—so that they, too, might be "saved." Evangelical Christians are called to publicly express Christian beliefs, particularly the beliefs that the

Bible is inerrant, and that we are all born sinners who can achieve salvation only through Jesus Christ.

Evangelical Christians are called to act publicly on their beliefs and may fulfill this call in diverse ways. Some focus on serving others in love and compassion, following the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. "Shouting it out"—proclaiming one's belief aloud—is seen as an expression of faith; some Evangelicals share their faith with "non-believers" through prosthelytizing. Some feel called to share their religious beliefs with society at large, Christians and non-Christians alike.

Extreme Fundamentalist Evangelicals, following their call, have promoted these ideas for which they find basis in the Bible:

- All gay people are going to Hell; the HIV/AIDS epidemic which began to spread among gay men in the 1980s was God's punishment for their sin.
- God punishes our nation with disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, because of our secular (non-religious) lifestyles; the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were a punishment from God.

Beliefs such as these have fueled extremist Evangelicals in hate speech and physical violence against gay and lesbian people, gender variant people, women seeking reproductive health services and the professionals who want to help them, educators who refuse to teach biblical creation as science, and others whose behaviors offend fundamentalist Christian beliefs.

Most contemporary fundamentalist Christians would probably consider themselves also evangelical. However, Evangelical Christians sometimes reject the label "fundamentalist," because of its association with the conservative political activism of the Christian Right and the violent speech and actions of some extreme Christian fundamentalists. Many Evangelicals adamantly oppose the hate speech and physical violence that some fundamentalist Christians have used.

A Christian who is both fundamentalist and evangelical most likely believes in:

- Conversion experience—being born again
- Only way to be saved is to accept Jesus as your personal savior
- Called to express the Gospel through actions—e.g., by spreading the faith, actively promoting fundamentalist Christian beliefs; serving people in need

- The Bible is God's word, literally and absolutely true, and the only guide needed for life.

FIND OUT MORE

Online, find reflections by Unitarian Universalists and by UU Christians that explore the contemporary Evangelical movement and seek ways for UUs to faithfully understand and interact with fundamentalist and evangelical Christians. Read or listen to the May, 2008 sermon given by Eric Hepburn at First Unitarian Universalist Church (Austin, Texas), "[Understanding Evangelical Christianity.](#)" (at austinuu.org/wp2013/understanding-evangelical-christianity/) A blogpost [Philocrites: Religion, liberalism, and culture](#) (at www.philocrites.com/) by Christopher Walton, editor of UU World magazine, offers:

...[O]ne reason I remain committed to a Christian vision of the world is that Christianity does offer a strong critique of personal and social sin and a vision of personal, social, and cosmic transformation—and this vision can catch fire even in the most establishmentarian of churches. I'm not so sure that contemporary Unitarian Universalism has similarly compelling resources at its core.

Evangelicals in Interfaith Settings

The organization [Faith Line Protestants](#) (at www.faithlineprotestants.org), founded by young adult Evangelicals, seeks to "...encourage Evangelical Christians toward relationships with people of other worldviews and faith traditions through social action based on shared values reflected in Jesus' example of compassionate love, and to do so through a platform

that is accessible to both Christians and non-Christians." One of the founders, Greg Damhorst, has posted an [article about an interfaith project](#) (at www.faithlineprotestants.org/?p=257) he led to alleviate hunger in Haiti.

Understanding an Evangelical World View

[The Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals](#) (at isae.wheaton.edu/defining-evangelicalism/) is a research center and academic program of Wheaton College, a Christian liberal arts college in Illinois. Start with its page that offers a [contemporary definition of "evangelicalism"](#) (at www2.wheaton.edu/isae/defining_evangelicalism.html) to explore the history and evolution of this religious movement.

[Field Guide to the Wild World of Religion](#) (at www.isitso.org/guide/index.html) is a website by [Pamela Starr Dewey](#) (at www.isitso.org/guide/dewey.html), a Christian who had a bad experience with an evangelical denomination. While one needs to keep the author's admitted biases in mind, the website offers useful explanations of a variety of Christian sects.

Megachurches

Find information on Christian megachurches and their demographics online at the Hartford Institute's [Megachurch Database](#) (at hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html) and [Fast Facts about American Churches](#) (at hrr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html#gro wlose) pages, and the Religious Tolerance's website's [Religious Trends in the West](#) (at www.religioustolerance.org/index_tren.htm) page.

WORKSHOP 17: THE QUAKERS—LAMB AND LION

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

A religious awakening which does not awaken the sleeper to love has roused him in vain. — Jessamyn West, novelist, in The Quaker Reader, 1962

The Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, is small in numbers—less than half the size of Unitarian Universalism, with only 300,000 adherents worldwide. Religious soul mates of Unitarian Universalists in many ways, Quakers have had a far-reaching social and political impact, as well as an influence on our own faith, through their commitment to peace, equality, justice, and humanitarian work.

There may well be someone in your congregation who identifies as Quaker who could meet with the group. Visiting a Friends Meeting is an experience UU youth find both enjoyable and educational.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce some core beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends
- Introduce the work of Lucretia Mott, dynamic Quaker abolitionist
- Examine Quaker beliefs in peace and equality, and how Quakers express these beliefs in the world
- Suggest parallels between the Society of Friends and Unitarian Universalism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Discuss important concepts of Quakerism
- Discuss the story of Lucretia Mott and the current state of women's rights
- Explore what it means to commit to living for peace
- Explore the value of simplicity or plainness, as espoused by the Friends (Alternate Activity 2)
- Appreciate the impact a small, courageous group of people can have on the world.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity

Minutes

Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story — Lucretia Mott, the Brazen Infidel	30
Activity 2: Peace Testimony	30
Activity 3: Fact Sheet	10
Activity 4: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Quakers and the Underground Railroad	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: The Virtue of Plainness	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

To better understand and represent the radical, calmly courageous Quakers, take time to establish a frame of mind that they strive for: open, balanced, and peaceful. A few days before the workshop, find a lovely, quiet place to take a 20-minute walk at a peaceful time of day. Allow the loveliness and peacefulness to flow through you. Fight nothing; release everything. Breathe evenly and feel your connection with all that surrounds you. Walk slowly, steadily. Stop occasionally and simply be. The purpose is not to accomplish anything, but to feel within you a sense of the sacred or inner peace. If there is no appropriate outdoor walk near you, find a quiet indoor place to meditate on a walk which would evoke such peace.

If you wish, after your walk or meditation, channel the peacefulness, energy, and hope you experienced by drawing or writing.

The morning of the workshop, take a few peaceful moments with your co-facilitator before participants arrive. Sit in silence for a few minutes. If moved to do so, share a thought from your walk or reflections during the week.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Display the [National Geographic website on the Underground Railroad](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/education/multimedia/interactive/the-underground-railroad/?ar_a=1) (at education.nationalgeographic.com/education/multimedia/interactive/the-underground-railroad/?ar_a=1) on the computer.

Description of Activity

Welcome youth as they enter and invite them to interact with The Underground Railroad: The Journey to learn about the Underground Railroad, a means used by some enslaved African Americans to reach freedom.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or an LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Quaker Background](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 2, Quaker Background so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Answer questions from the last workshop. Then, light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly sharing something they know or have heard about Quakers. Ask what questions they have about Quakers. Write the questions on newsprint. Tell the youth their questions may be answered in this workshop. Commit to research remaining questions and bring answers to the next workshop.

Read or share, in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 2, Quaker Background. Use the newsprint to list important terms from the resource.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — LUCRETIA MOTT, THE BRAZEN INFIDEL (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Lucretia Mott, the Brazen Infidel](#)" (included in this document) "
- Handout 1, [Declaration of Sentiments](#) (included in this document)
- Writing paper and pens/pencils

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Lucretia Mott, the Brazen Infidel" so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Read Handout 1, Declaration of Sentiments, and decide how best to share this rather long document. You may want to edit it for length, although all of it is fascinating.
- Post blank newsprint. Create two columns: "Equal" and "Unequal."

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the story of Lucretia Mott, examine the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, and discuss the progress of women's rights since 1848. Read the story aloud. Ask for initial reactions. What did the youth think of the story? Had they heard of Lucretia Mott before? If so, in what context?

Ask participants if they had heard of the first Women's Rights Convention, which was organized by Lucretia Mott, a Quaker, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a Unitarian, in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. Tell the group more than 300 women and men attended, and 100 signed the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments on the rights of women. The United States had become a nation only 72 years before.

Distribute Handout 1, Declaration of Sentiments. Invite volunteers to read it aloud, taking turns by paragraph. Then, ask for reactions.

Expand discussion with these points:

- Do you recognize the language of the introduction? What might be the purpose of echoing the Declaration of Independence? [Suggest, if no one does, that the language called attention to the lack of independence of a large portion of the United States population.]
- Do you think it was obvious to people at the time that women and men are created equal? Do you think most people believe this now?

- Do you think women and men today are treated equally? How so, or how not? [Among the offenses listed in the Seneca Falls Declaration, some have been addressed: Women can vote, keep their own wages, and attend most colleges. Husbands cannot legally deprive their wives of freedom or beat them. Have all the issues raised by Stanton and Mott been addressed? Point out that, as of 2007, women in the U.S. on average still only earned 78 cents for each dollar paid to men; although wage discrimination is illegal, women are frequently paid less than men even when performing the exact same job. Why would this still be the case?]

Distribute paper and writing materials. Invite participants to make two columns—"equal" and "unequal"—and use them to list observations from their own experience:

- Areas in which girls/women and boys/men are treated equally.
- Areas in which girls/women and boys/men are treated unequally.

If they do not bring it up, remind participants that inequity can work either way. There may be areas where males lack a freedom or an opportunity that females enjoy.

In this discussion of gender equality and inequality, be aware of the implications for LGBTQ people. How does gender injustice affect gay men and lesbians? How does gender bias and discrimination affect transsexual people? Perceptions that gender is binary (only two gender identities—male and female) and that there are appropriate roles for "males" and "females," limit the freedom and opportunities for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

Give the group about five minutes to write examples of "equal" and "unequal" on their papers. Then, lead participants to share their comments with the group, using this process:

- Go around the group, inviting each participant to read a single item from their page. Ask the first participant for an "equal" observation; ask the second participant for an "unequal" observation.
- Continue alternating "equal" and "unequal" observations, until one or the other runs out. Take note of when this happens.
- As participants speak, use the newsprint you have posted to record categories that are mentioned—for example, "employment," "voting," "sports," "dress code," etc.

- Ask participants to check off each item on their papers as it is read. Ask them to raise their hands if they also had an item someone else has shared. It is important to put a check mark on the newsprint next to categories that are repeated to show how common an equality or inequality is perceived by the group.
- Continue reading observations until all have been read.

After all have shared, ask participants:

- What are the findings of this exercise?
- Which column has more entries?
- What categories stand out? Where does society have the most work to do in the area of equal rights for all genders?
- What are Unitarian Universalists doing for gender equality and gender justice? What is our congregation doing?
- What would Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton think of the progress that has been made?

Including All Participants

Be mindful of the likelihood that someone in the group may be questioning their gender identity. Do not ask the youth to identify themselves as male or female. Avoid categorical remarks that indicate gender binary and do not make generalizations about boys and girls or "male" and "female" behavior or traits.

ACTIVITY 2: PEACE TESTIMONY (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Quaker Peace Testimonies](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 3, [Panel Questions](#) (included in this document)
- Writing pads for all participants
- Pens—blue, black, and red
- A stopwatch or a timepiece (seconds)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 2 for all participants. Read and become familiar with it.
- Make several copies of Leader Resource 3, Panel Questions.
- Place a pen with each writing pad. If the group has an even number of youth, place red pens with two pads, and place equal numbers of blue and black pens with the remaining pads. If the group has an odd number, place a red pen with one pad, and place equal numbers of blue and black pens with the remaining pads. (For

groups of four or fewer youth, omit the red pen.)

Description of Activity

Participants learn about peace churches and Quaker Peace Testimony, and debate the ethics and effectiveness of two strategies: Peace Advocacy and Just War Advocacy.

Tell youth they will examine the Quaker stance for peace. Say:

Only three Christian churches are historically considered "peace churches"—Mennonites (including the Amish), Church of the Brethren, and the Religious Society of Friends. Would you have expected Unitarian Universalists to be on the list of peace churches? Why or why not? [The Unitarian Universalist Association is not a Christian church, and has never taken a stand against all war.]

Explain that a fundamental expression of Quaker faith is the peace testimony. A Friends meeting ("meeting" refers to a group of Quakers) can create a peace testimony for the group; also, individuals often write peace testimonies for themselves as statements of faith.

Tell youth you will share examples of historic Quaker Peace Testimonies. Distribute, then read aloud Handout 2, Quaker Peace Testimonies. Make sure participants understand when each of these testimonies was written.

Ask participants for their initial reactions to the testimonies. Say, in these words or your own:

Most Quakers remain true to their commitment to peace, despite events like the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This commitment can be perceived by non-Quakers as naive, unrealistic, or unpatriotic. Some Quakers at times have consented to serve in the military for what they believed was a "just war." Many Friends, however, staunchly believe that violence will never be subdued with more violence.

Point out that the third testimonial is in response to the pacifism of the second and supports a military response to extreme military aggression.

Now invite participants to each take a pad of writing paper and a pen. Tell them they will form groups for a panel discussion. One group will be Peace Advocates, asserting that a comprehensive commitment to peace is

the only rational and ethical choice that will ultimately be effective. The other group will be the Just War Advocates, asserting that violence is the rational and ethical choice in some circumstances. If the group is large enough, one (if you have an odd number of youth) or two (even number) will be Facilitators.

Ask for a show of hands so youth can indicate which group they prefer to join, and whether they want to be Facilitator/s. If the youth form equal size groups, wonderful. If needed, divide them into groups by the pens they picked up: red pen = Facilitator/s, blue pens = Peace Advocates, black pens = Just War Advocates. If the group is very large, invite some youth to be observers.

Give facilitators Leader Resource 3, Panel Questions. If there are two Facilitators, have one operate the timer (otherwise, an adult facilitator can do this) and the other direct questions to the panelists. Allow two minutes for responses. If you have time, pose each question to both groups, keeping the two-minute limit and alternating which group answers first.

Conclude the forum by inviting all panelists to shake hands with all the others. If there were observers, ask which panel seemed more persuasive. Why?

Point out that the Society of Friends has gained worldwide respect and recognition for the impact of its faithful work in the world. In fact, the Quakers are the only religious organization to have been awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, in 1947, for outstanding humanitarian efforts saving hundreds of thousands of civilian lives in the two world wars.

ACTIVITY 3: FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 5, [Quaker \(Religious Society of Friends\) Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Description of Activity

Youth receive a fact sheet on Quakers to take home.

Distribute Handout 5, Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) Fact Sheet and review it with the group. Ask:

- What questions do you still have about Quakers?
- What beliefs and values do UUs and Quakers share?
- How does knowing about Quakers influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

If you will be engaging with a Quaker community, give participants any information they need.

ACTIVITY 4: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Display Religions Time Line.
- Set map or globe where all will be able to see it.
- Create and set aside a sticky note that says "Friends (Quakers), 1647."

Description of Activity

The time line is updated to add the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Ask if youth remember the year the Religious Society of Friends was founded by George Fox (1647). Hint that it was a little over one hundred years after the Protestant Reformation. Place the sticky note on the time line. Note the year Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses of Contention, 1517.

Ask participants where the Quakers emerged. Point out England on the map. Remind youth that the King of England had split with the Catholic Church but had declared the Church of England the national religion in the United Kingdom, and the Church of England in turn was engaging in corrupt practices. Note also that the Quakers formed at the very beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, which lifted up reason and philosophy.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster with closing words
- Chalice
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Reproduce handouts.
- Put up poster if necessary.
- Make copies of Taking It Home.

Description of Activity

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite them to form a circle, join hands, and say together (refer to poster if necessary):

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice flame together.

FAITH IN ACTION: QUAKERS AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Map of Underground Railroad Routes](#) (included in this document)
- Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Display the National Geographic website on the Underground Railroad on the computer.
- Make copies of Leader Resource 1 to pass around for viewing.
- Optional: Read more about Quakers and the Underground Railroad at [suite101.com](#) (at [suite101.com/](#)) and [How Stuff Works](#) (at [www.howstuffworks.com/](#)).

Description of Activity

Youth learn about the Quaker connection to the Underground Railroad.

Start by asking participants what they know about the Underground Railroad. Share with participants that Quakers played a prominent role in running the Underground Railroad, the system whereby people who were enslaved were helped to escape to northern states and Canada. The abolitionist movement - the movement to end slavery - began with the ministry of the Quakers, preaching abolition throughout the states and territories in the early 1800s.

Pass around copies of Leader Resource 1, which shows the routes taken in the Underground Railroad. The routes start in Southern U.S. states and end in Canada or Northern States.

Let participants take turns with the interactive site [The Underground Railroad: The Journey, created by National Geographic](#). (at [education.nationalgeographic.com/education/multimedia/interactive/the-underground-railroad/?ar_a=1](#))

Process the activity with these questions:

- Though Quakers were some of the earliest members of the abolitionist movement and active in the Underground Railroad, in the early days of the country's history, many Quakers were also slave traders and holders. Does this surprise you?
- The interactive site tells us that most slaves were encouraged to keep going into Canada. Why? Does this surprise you?
- What else did you learn from the interactive site?
- What happened to Thomas Garrett, the Quaker who was arrested for helping runaway slaves? What fate met runaway slaves who were

captured? Though the punishment for a white Quaker helping an African American slave was nowhere near as severe as the punishment for the slave, do you still think people who helped the Underground Railroad were brave? Many Quakers believe war is immoral. Many slaves were victims of war in Africa. How do you think this influenced Quakers' feelings about slavery? What role did faith play in convincing many Quakers to object to slavery?

ce_and_war_issues.htm). Make sure you check out the rating before watching.

- Unitarian Henry David Thoreau is famous for saying, "Simplify, simplify, simplify." Could you use a little more simplicity in your life? A website called Pioneer Thinking has [10 practical steps to help you](#) (at www.pioneerthinking.com/gns_simplicity.html).
- Read more about the Underground Railroad at [How Stuff Works](#) (at history.howstuffworks.com/american-civil-war/underground-railroad.htm).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. This workshop explored a small and quiet but powerful religion. Did participants engage in discussion with respect? Did they respond to the strong connection between Quaker faith and Unitarian Universalism? Did they seem to understand the concepts introduced? Which kinds of activities worked well with your group? How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

TAKING IT HOME

A religious awakening which does not awaken the sleeper to love has roused him in vain. — Jessamyn West, novelist, in *The Quaker Reader*, 1962

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we talked about the Society of Friends or Quakers. We heard the story of Lucretia Mott, discussed gender equality and inequality, debated peace and war, and reflected on the merits of simplicity.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- Is there such a thing as a "just war?" If so, how would you define it?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS FURTHER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

- Read the book *The Friendly Persuasion* by Jessamyn West (New York: Mariner Books, 2003; original copyright, 1940), a novel about a 19th century Quaker family, or watch the movie made in 1956 and directed by William Wyler. Ms. West also has many other books you might enjoy.
- Read the inspiring book, *The Power of Half: One Family's Decision to Stop Taking and Start Giving Back*, by Hannah Selwen and Kevin Selwen (teenage daughter and father), about a family of four who together changed their lives to make a difference in a dramatic way.
- There are many movies about peace and war. Quaker.org has a [good list](#) (at www.quaker.org/minnfm/peace/movies_on_pea

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 4, [What to Expect in Quaker Meeting](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Locate a Friends meeting in your area. Use [Quakerfinder.org](#) (at www.quakerfinder.org/) a service of the Friends General Conference or the phone book, if you are having difficulty. Arrange for your group to attend a meeting. Find out if it will be unprogrammed or pastoral.
- Copy Handout 4, What to Expect at Quaker Meeting, for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants attend a Quaker meeting and process the experience.

Either you or a Quaker host should inform youth of any guidelines as far as behavior or dress is concerned. For example, plain dress (not revealing, no loud patterns, etc.) Inform youth that Friends are warm, welcoming, and accepting. They are typically very calm and quiet. Participants should expect to sit quietly throughout the meeting without making distracting noises, chewing gum, etc.

Distribute Handout 4, What to Expect in Quaker Meeting and answer any questions the youth may have. Share whether the meeting will be pastoral or unprogrammed (descriptions in handout). Acknowledge sitting still for 20 minutes to an hour can be challenging. Provide this tip: the easiest way to be still and silent is to close the eyes and relax the body as completely as possible. Be sure to breathe, keeping it relaxed and slow. Gently, intentionally relax places you stockpile tension, often the hands, legs, shoulders, or lower back. The object is to create a feeling of openness and readiness, so promptings of the Spirit can be heard.

When the engagement is over, ask participants for their immediate reactions. What was the experience like for you? What was the space like? How were you treated? Were there other youth present? If so, did they welcome you? What about the adults? How did their welcome compare with what you have experienced in other congregations? Have any of you experienced a Friends meeting before? Was the silence comfortable? Why or why not? What might be the value of engaging regularly in such a practice? Did the Friends meeting experience feel like "church" to you? Why or why not?

- What did you see? Symbols of faith? Books? Decorations?
- Was there an altar? If so, what was on the altar?
- Who participated in worship and in what way? Were there gender differences in roles or participation?
- Were special garments worn?
- Was there music? What was it like?
- What was the atmosphere like? Was it more or less formal than your congregation?
- Were there children present? If so, were accommodations made for them?
- Was there ethnic diversity in the gathering?
- Were there familiar elements or themes?
- The most important values for Quakers are equality, balance, simplicity, and peace. Were these evident in the meeting? In the surroundings? In the people? What was most surprising about the event? What was most comforting or familiar?

Thank the youth for their respectful participation.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THE VIRTUE OF PLAINNESS (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- An array of gaudy costume jewelry, for males and females
- Garish makeup (preferably new, for health reasons) including eye shadow, blush, and lipstick, and makeup remover towelettes) or a variety of very silly fake noses and stick-on facial hair, for all participants
- Small mirrors
- Costume hats, the sillier the better, and academic or choir robes, preferably black but any dark color
- Handout 3, [Child Starvation](#) (included in this document)
- Camera

- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1993)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3, Child Starvation, for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants experience how externals can distract from things of greater significance.

Without explanation, bring out all the dress-up supplies and invite participants to dress up. Encourage the youth to bedeck themselves. The more extravagant the better!

After a few minutes, say:

The workshop can continue now.
Please be seated.

Act normal. Try not to react to their costuming.

Distribute Handout 3, Child Starvation. Invite participants to read the facts presented. Ask for initial reactions.

Invite serious discussion with these questions:

- Is it a public policy failure to have such food abundance in the United States while more than 12 percent of its children suffer chronic hunger?
- How much food do you throw away? Do you take measures to buy only what you need, and to throw away less? Would the amount your family throws away keep someone alive? Could you give the money you saved by not wasting food to an organization that feeds the hungry, or helps them feed themselves through help with agriculture, clean water or other necessary assets?
- In some economically depressed urban areas, over 50 percent of African American and Latino children are chronically hungry and malnourished. Whose job is it to see that these children are fed? Even if we do not live in a community with a large hunger statistic, do we have personal responsibility? How much?

At this point, approximately midway through the discussion, identify two youth at random, ask them to go with a facilitator. Have the co-facilitator leave the meeting space with the youth and help them remove their silly costumes and makeup, put on somber robes, then rejoin the group while discussion continues.

- Should Americans continue to celebrate bigger portions in restaurants when there is a high national obesity rate, and so much food is already wasted?

- Impoverished countries do not have the luxury of throwing away more than a quarter of their edible food. Do Americans, enormously wealthy by world standards, have a responsibility to share with those less fortunate?
- What can you, your family, and your congregation do to alleviate hunger in the world? What are you, your family and your congregation already doing?

a role such as distributing handouts, or helping to facilitate the discussion.

After a few more minutes, stop the discussion and process the experience. What did they notice about their reactions to each other? Was it hard to take each other seriously with the outrageous outer trappings? If they eventually did have a serious discussion, did it take some time and effort to get serious?

Did youth notice a difference in their reactions to youth in crazy costumes and those in robes? Did the youth in robes notice a difference in the way others reacted to them and their ideas after their change of garb?

Share that this was an exercise to reflect on simplicity, or plainness. Quakers value plainness because they believe fashions distract from substance. In the Quaker view, extravagance and stylishness make it harder to see the heart of something or someone, to see God in them. Ask:

- What do you think of the Quaker idea of simplicity?
- Style is often thought of as an expression of a person's inner self, but is it possible that your expressions of style might distract people and make it harder for others to perceive your real self?
- Do you think material possessions and a focus on acquiring and wearing fashionable clothes distracts you from more important values?
- If you had less, would others who need it have more? How would that happen?

If you have read the book, *The Power of Half*, you might briefly describe what that family chose to do to simplify and to share in an extraordinary way.

Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and lead the group in singing Hymn 15, "Tis a Gift to Be Simple." Or, read, or have a volunteer read, the lyrics aloud.

Distribute makeup removal towelettes and involve everyone in clean-up.

Including All Participants

Some youth may refuse to put on costumes or make-up; some of these may join when they see others participating. If a youth refuses, do not push. Offer them

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 17: STORY: LUCRETIA MOTT, THE BRAZEN INFIDEL

By Greta Anderson.

Born in 1793, Lucretia Mott was raised a Quaker in Nantucket, Massachusetts. The faith had made inroads on that island almost a century before when Mary Starbuck, a prominent woman merchant and civic leader, discovered that Quakers espoused the equality of the sexes.

Still, even the Quakers had something to learn from Lucretia. When she became a teacher at the Quaker boarding school she attended, she discovered that the girls received less education than boys, for the same tuition. She also discovered her salary was half that of her male colleagues. The administration was likely not surprised to hear her views on these matters. She had been known as a spitfire, and one whose passions were always focused on issues of justice.

Lucretia married at age 18 and moved to Philadelphia, where she set up her own Quaker school. Within a year, the student body increased from 4 to 40. Bearing six children of her own did not move her from this mission, but losing one of them did. She found herself sharing her grief at her congregation's worship times. In Quaker meetings, parishioners may speak at length on topics of the spirit. Lucretia's intelligence and passion had a new outlet in her eloquence. She was encouraged to join the ministry, and did, at the age of 25.

Lucretia became a minister at an exciting time in American religious history. The "Great Awakening" was underway, putting the Bible at the center of an emotion-driven Christianity. At the same time, William Ellery Channing, one of the founders of Unitarianism, was leading Christianity in another, more rational, direction. In 1818 he delivered his landmark sermon, "Unitarian Christianity," in which he proclaimed that the Bible was but a book, and should be interpreted in historical context. This belief resonated with Lucretia's developing conviction that Bible worship was a dangerous thing.

Nothing illustrated this idea more potently than slavery and its apologists. Lucretia was incensed to hear preachers justifying slavery on the basis of the Bible, and wrote, "It is the grossest perversion of the Bible." Yes, slavery was represented in the Hebrew scriptures (Yahweh even gave the Jews some rules about how to treat those slaves: for instance, freeing them every fifty

years!). Yet that did not justify slavery forever and for always.

The more she preached against slavery, the more Lucretia felt the rifts in her own Quaker religion. Quakers are, and were, ardent promoters of justice, but they are also peacemakers. To some of her fellow Quakers, "peace" meant "neutrality" not stirring up trouble. But Lucretia could not remain silent on the most important moral issue of her day. She forged ahead, demanding immediate, rather than "gradual", emancipation of slaves, inspiring and forming alliances with the leading abolitionists of the day, such as Frederick Douglas, William Lloyd Garrison, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Unitarian Lydia Maria Child.

Lucretia Mott preached of the inner light of truth, and lived by that light. Her husband had a business selling cotton cloth. Cotton was produced by slaves. Thus, his business was indirectly promoting the institution of slavery. At great financial sacrifice, they switched the business over to woolen goods. They had already stopped wearing cotton or using cane sugar.

As a woman, Lucretia could not join the American Anti-Slavery Association. Not to be deterred, she and others formed the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Men—even some prominent liberal preachers—howled in protest at this new public role for women. Some men went further than that. When the society gathered at Pennsylvania Hall for its annual meeting, a mob attacked the women on their way in and set fire to the hall.

Mott was demonized in the press, as well, particularly for walking in public with Blacks, inviting Black guests to her home, and other acts that were against city code. But this "brazen infidel," who preached at Black churches as well, had earned a special place in history.

Lucretia was the sole woman to speak at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, a role she did not particularly relish, as the rest of the women were forced to sit behind a curtain, literally out of sight of the male delegates. She, meanwhile, sat on a throne-like chair at the center of the assembly, a "lioness" as onlookers described it.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of the women who were cordoned off and she approached Lucretia about helping her address this other great injustice. Their collaboration led to the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848. Throughout the long campaign for women's rights, Mott found herself preaching against the same religious fundamentalists who thought the Bible justified treating women as property.

Mott died in 1880. At her funeral, there was a very long silence, as often happens in Quaker meetings. Finally, someone broke the silence, saying, "Who can speak? The preacher is dead."

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 17: HANDOUT 1: DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS

By Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, for the Women's Right Convention, Seneca Falls, New York, 1848.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming to all intents and purposes, her master--the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her. He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of

action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions embracing every part of the country.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 17: HANDOUT 2: QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONIES

I. George Fox, in Declaration to King Charles II, 1660

All bloody principles and practices we utterly deny, all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world. That spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight any war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

II. Religious Society of Friends, (Quakers) in America, 1917 (World War I) (Excerpted)

To Our Fellow Citizens:

In this time of crisis when our country's highest good is the common aim of all, we voice this deep conviction of patriotic duty.

We rejoice that even at this time, when the world is crazed by war, so many men are judging war by moral and, spiritual standards, and by ideals of sacrifice. The causes for which men fight—liberty, justice and peace—are noble and Christian causes. But the method of war is unchristian and immoral. War itself violates law, justice, liberty and peace, the very ends for which alone its tragic cost might be justified.

Further, the method of war is ineffective to these ends. Might does not decide the right, ideals cannot be maintained by force, nor can evil overcome evil. True national honor is a nation's own integrity and unselfish service. Only unswerving honesty and self-control maintain it. Rights, the rights of all, are securely defended between nations as between individuals by mutual confidence, not suspicion; by universal cooperation and law, not by private armed force. The alternative to war is not inactivity and cowardice. It is the irresistible and constructive power of good-will. True patriotism at this time calls not for a resort to the futile methods of war, but for the invention and practice on a gigantic scale of new methods of conciliation and altruistic service. The present intolerable situation among nations demands an unprecedented expression of organized national good-will.

Unpractical though such ideals may seem, experience has taught that ideals can be realized if we have faith to practice now what all men hope for in the future,
**III. Some Particular Advices for Friends and A
Statement of Loyalty for Others; used with
permission.**

*Being the Views of Some Members of the Society of Friends regarding Its Attitude toward the Present Crisis, Third Month, 1918 (World War I)
(Excerpted)*

There are certain fundamental principles of right and humanity which every man must feel called upon to defend, even to the extent of forcible resistance if long continued intolerable conditions caused by morally defunct people are to be ended before the world is enslaved. For more than two centuries the Society of Friends has stood steadfastly and consistently for peace to the limit of toleration. It is in matters of individual conflict, however, rather than in national wrongs that these principles have proved effective. Many distinguished Friends in the past have realized that in cases of great collective oppression mere submission only renders the objects of the oppressor more easily attained. ...

We believe that the majority of Friends are as earnestly opposed as anyone to the enthrallment of the world by a military caste, to the human slavery and slaughter imposed upon Belgium, Poland, Armenia and other countries, to the wholesale destruction of innocent, non-combatant women and children, to unparalleled atrocities and to the spread of organized barbarism. We think that a decent respect for the opinions of mankind makes it incumbent upon the Society of Friends to make such a statement... .

We do not agree with those who would utter sentimental platitudes while a mad dog is running amuck biting women and children, with those who would stand idly by quoting some isolated passage of Scripture while an insane man murdered him, ravished his wife, bayoneted his babies or crucified his friends, with any person who would discuss with some well and contented stranger the merits of various fire extinguishers while his wife and children are calling to him from the flames of his burning house.

We believe that wrong is relative and has degrees, that there are greater things than human life and worse things than war. There is a difference between peace as an end and peace as a means to an end. We do not want peace with dishonor or a temporary peace with evil. ... We therefore deem it consistent with our Quaker faith to act according to the dictates of our own consciences and proclaim a unity with teachings of

Jesus Christ and the messages of the President of our country. [To enter the war]

IV. After the Shock Has Passed: Quaker Commitments to Work for Healing, Justice, and Peace

A Statement from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the American Friends Service Committee, Friends General Conference, and Friends World Committee for Consultation (a week after September 11, 2001; used with permission of Arthur Larrabee and [Philadelphia Yearly Meeting](#) (at www.pym.org/).

Now that the initial shock of the terrorist attacks of last week has passed, deep grief and profound anger has set in for many of us. Now the critical questions that confront us all are several: How can we best comfort those who mourn? How can we begin to heal some of the wounds to all of our souls as well as our bodies? How can we see that justice is really done? How can we build bridges of understanding and reconciliation among all people so that there is no more harm done and no more hatred sown? How can we begin anew the work of creating a world where there can really be peace, addressing the injustice and despair which are so often the seeds of violence, so there will be no more victims?

These are the tasks to which a God of love calls all members of the human family. How will we respond?

As organizations of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and people of faith we find ourselves challenged to continue to respond to the tragic and horrific events of September 11. Indeed, we feel called—and believe all people of good will are called now—to respond to these events and the hurts they have caused in ways that are deeper and more sustained than our initial shock and grief may have allowed. In particular, we believe the work of building a different and better world, one in which all persons are seen as sacred because we are all children of God, one where this kind of act would not happen again, is the

calling of all of us who worship a God of truth, grace and mercy.

To our dismay, we have heard people in the highest levels of our government calling for retribution rather than justice. To our astonishment we hear the talk of war and plans for war in which our nation in turn would cause the death of innocents—the sin which so appalled us—asserting this will somehow put things right. To our sorrow, we have seen people from many walks of life in our own communities striking out in their anger against other people in our communities just because of the faith they profess, the color of their skin or the country of their origin.

We say with certainty that these statements, plans and actions will not lead us to healing, justice or peace; and we pray they will cease.

In contrast, we commit ourselves, to reach out to all who have been injured in any way by the events of the past week; and to offering comfort, solace, and practical support in any way we can. We commit ourselves to reach out to those whose backgrounds, cultures and faith may be different than our own; and to listen and learn, in hopes of building the foundations of understanding and respect on which peace can be built. We support the prosecution of those who perpetrated this horrendous crime; and commit ourselves to the achievement of justice under law and due process, including international law.

Finally we commit ourselves to praying and working for righteousness and reconciliation, as the God of Abraham, Jesus, and Mohammed has taught us, so that there may be no more victims of hate and terror anywhere.

Mary Ellen McNish, American Friends Service Committee
Thomas Jeavons, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Bruce Birchard, Friends General Conference
Cilde Grover, Friends World Committee on Consultation

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 17: HANDOUT 3: CHILD STARVATION

Statistics from: [Reference.com](#), [UNICEF](#), [Bread For the World](#), [Child Trends Data Bank](#), [Online Encyclopedia](#), [Hunger Notes](#), and [We Are Austin](#).

Child Starvation

- Every 3.6 seconds a person dies of starvation
- Conservative figures show that five million children under age five die from hunger-related causes
- One in eight children in the United States goes to bed hungry every night
- Hunger is twice as prevalent in minority households as white households in the U.S.
- Worldwide agricultural production is greater than 2,700 calories daily for every human being on earth
- Malnutrition causes pain, joint deterioration, dental decay, compromised immunity, impaired thought processes and muscle control, and slow growth
- In the United States, 27% of edible food is thrown away each year. Half of the wasted food could feed 40 million people, half the number of people who die of starvation on earth every year.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 17: HANDOUT 4: WHAT TO EXPECT IN QUAKER MEETING

From the [Friends General Conference website](#). Accessed July 18, 2011. Used by permission.

WELCOME

Everyone is always welcome at a Quaker meeting for worship.

In worship Friends gather into silent, expectant waiting. We hold ourselves open to the Light and reach for the divine center of our being. We know the center to be a place of peace, love, and balance, where we are at one with the universe and with each other.

We know from experience that revelation is continuing and that a divine power is at work in the world today, healing, guiding, gathering, and transforming. We call this power God, the Light, Christ, the Seed, the Inward Teacher. By whatever name it is known, its nature is love. It draws us toward a life of integrity, simplicity, equality, community, and peace.

Our meetings strive to be loving, nurturing communities. We celebrate diversity and encourage each person to find his or her true voice grounded in experience. We listen deeply to the Spirit and to each other as we seek to discern and embrace God's will for us individually and as a community.

We warmly invite you to join us. In most meetings, worship is held on Sunday mornings and usually lasts about one hour. "Unprogrammed" meetings are grounded in silent, expectant waiting and are spontaneous and open. When someone feels led to share a message, it is received in the gathered silence. "Pastoral" meetings have programmed or semi-programmed worship services culminating in a period of gathered silence. We generally close our worship by shaking hands and exchanging greetings. Programs for children and infant care are usually provided. Children are also welcome to join meeting for worship.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

17: HANDOUT 5: QUAKER FACT SHEET

Full Name: Religious Society of Friends

Founded: Great Britain, 1647

Founder: George Fox

Derivation of Full Name: Jesus said, "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (Christian scripture, John 15:14).

Derivation of Common Name (Quakers): Intended as an insult to George Fox by a judge during one of his blasphemy trials, it was gladly accepted by Fox and other Friends, who reminded people to, "tremble at the word of the Lord."

Adherents: 300,000 worldwide, concentrated in the United States, United Kingdom, and Kenya

Ranking: About 22nd

Texts: Bible-based; also recognizes wisdom in sacred literature of all faiths

Clergy: None; however, an individual congregation may choose to have paid religious leadership

Symbols: None

Imagery: In the 19th-century and earlier, Quaker plain dress served as an image of the Quaker faith (see this style worn by the man depicted on the Quaker Oats (TM) oatmeal boxes).

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

- Balance — work to create harmony between their inner journey and their outward (physical) one
- Equality — unequivocally, Quakers value all people equally
- Meeting — a group of Quakers gathered in community or worship, e.g., New England Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Worship (not a service), Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
- Peace — unwavering commitment to nonviolence and peaceful resolutions
- Peace Testimony — statement of belief and intent to live without violence
- Plainness — plain dress, plain speech, plain truth; an expression of a consistent effort to live simply and honestly.

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- Value peace and nonviolence
- Quakers: no hierarchy in Meeting; UUs: congregational polity
- Wisdom from sacred literature of all faiths is recognized
- Belief in individual revelation; that is, "Truth" is within each person
- Equality of all people
- Commitment to social justice and social service
- Religious diversity is actively valued, as a path to and means of refining truth

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 17: LEADER RESOURCE 1: UNDERGROUND RAILROAD ROUTES MAP

Produced by the [National Park Service Cartographic Staff](#) at Harper's Ferry Center.
Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/railroadmap.pdf) for printing.

Reproduce the map below as large as possible or reproduce a map for each team of participants and place a dot at the beginning of a different route on each map reproduced.



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 17: LEADER RESOURCE 2: QUAKER BACKGROUND

George Fox was a young preacher in England in the mid 1600s, at the dawning of the Age of Enlightenment. Fox was disgusted by political maneuverings and coldness among church members, and by empty pleasure-seeking in the wider populace. He saw that both in and outside the church, people were not living the teachings of Jesus. He longed for a life of greater integrity.

Fox believed he knew what could be done. Like Martin Luther, a little over a hundred years before him, he decided to share his insights and reform the church he valued. Fox had no wish to break away and start a new sect. However, his efforts at reform were firmly rejected. In 1647, he began widely teaching a way he fervently believed was better and within a few years created the Religious Society of Friends. The name Friends derives from the Bible passage in which Jesus says, "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14).

From the beginning, the Society of Friends differed radically from the Church of England, the state religion in England at the time.

[Leader: Write the heading "Friends = Radicals" on newsprint. List these concepts under the heading, as you name and explain them:]

His reform ideas included:

- Simplicity: Plain dress, plain speech. *[The Friends emphasized living with simplicity. Later they would adopt what they termed "plain dress" and "plain speech."]*
- Radical equality. *[Since God loves everyone the same, people should, too. Gender, race, wealth, education, community standing make no difference.]*
- Value religious diversity and freedom. *[This concept was revolutionary in that time and place. Friends thought religious monopoly weakened faith and created unspiritual attitudes.]*
- Personal revelation. *[Another radical idea at the time: Everyone has access to the truth if they are open to listen for it. This is best done by creating stillness and waiting for clarity and messages from the holy spirit.]*
- No literally sacred text. *[While Christian in its orientation and using the Bible as its primary textual resource, even in the beginning Friends recognized that since the Bible was written by*

humans, it should not be interpreted as the literal word of God. Other religious texts are acceptable as inspiration.]

- Consistency/commitment *[From the beginning, Quakers quietly, courageously tried to live their values, even in the face of violent persecution.]*

When George Fox began teaching, he was arrested for heresy, hauled before a judge, and questioned for hours. During the interrogation, Fox told those present they should "tremble before the word of the Lord," after which the magistrate sarcastically called him a "quaker." The term was laughingly adopted as an insult, but the Friends felt the description was honorable and it became a common name for Friends, even among themselves.

The Quakers were evangelists in their early years, preaching simplicity, truthful, peaceful living, and the value of inner experience. They proselytized and won thousands of followers, even though at the time it was illegal to practice any religion but the religion dictated by the King. Quakers also refused to swear oaths or to show respect by taking off their hats, and continued to hold banned religious meetings publicly.

[Leader: Ask: What would you expect would happen to them then?]

Like other gentle radicals before them, including Jesus, the Quakers drew the attention of authorities and were targeted for persecution. More than 6,000 Friends were imprisoned between 1662 and 1670 alone. This made the New World seem attractive, and Quakers were among the earliest settlers to the American colonies. However, freedom was not guaranteed there, either. Many Quakers in the American colonies were jailed and some executed for refusing to serve in the military. Because of their differences in lifestyle and their tendency to live on the outskirts of communities, Friends were even occasionally charged with witchcraft. One difference was not calling their religious gatherings "services." They called them "meetings," and mostly they sat in silence together, each seeking to create a stillness within themselves to allow the sacred to be heard. No one spoke unless moved to. Even a business meeting was considered worship, and was called, "Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business." Even today, gatherings are called "meetings." Quakers were constant to their faith, and their influence grew.

William Penn was a British aristocrat. He converted to Quakerism and had been jailed many times for illegally promoting the Friends movement. He proposed to the King a solution to the Quaker problem in England: let them establish a Friends settlement in the New World.

This idea was accepted, and the King named the large tract of land Penn and other Quakers purchased "Pennsylvania." The original Pennsylvania covered present day Pennsylvania and much of New Jersey. Penn considered Pennsylvania his "Holy Experiment," and while it was predominantly populated by Quakers, religious freedom was the law of the land. Religious minorities soon arrived from all over the world.

[Leader: Ask: What do you think Quakers would advocate in education, at a time when schooling was generally considered more valuable for boys than for girls? Affirm that Friends valued education for all and offered free public education in Quaker-run schools.]

Penn also created revolutionary egalitarian practices in government, law, education, and health care—all of which influenced developments in the United States.

The Quaker belief in simplicity in life and the importance of each individual's openness to inner truth was expressed by George Fox:

The Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that he did not dwell in these temples which men had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts . . . his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

17: LEADER RESOURCE 3: PANEL QUESTIONS

P= Peace Advocates

W= Just War Advocates

Panel Questions

- (Both) State your position on the use of violence in human interactions.
- (Both) State your position on the use of violence for self-defense.
- (P) Proverbs 15:1 (read, "Proverbs, Chapter 15, Verse 1") says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." What do you do when a soft answer doesn't work, and someone's anger grows, anyway?
- (W) The most common response to a violent situation is more violence (for example, someone hits you and you hit them back; a country is stockpiling weapons so another country invades them). What do you do when responding to a violent situation with violence does not work, and the violence persists?
- (Both) Martin Luther King, Jr., stated, "Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love." Do you agree, and if so, give an example of meeting the forces of hate with the power of love.
- (Both) Is there such a thing as a "just war?" If so, what makes a war just?
- (Both) State what you see as the most persuasive argument for the other's point of view.
- (Both) Do you base your point of view on your ideals and values, or on your personal experiences, or both?

FIND OUT MORE

These web pages provide good general facts on the Quakers: [QuakerFinder.org](http://www.quakerfinder.org/) (at www.quakerfinder.org/), [BBC Quaker Fact Page](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivision_s/quakers_1.shtml) (at www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivision_s/quakers_1.shtml), and [Earlham School of Religion Digital Quaker Collection](http://www.dqc.esr.earlham.edu:8080/xmlmm/login.html) (at [dqc.esr.earlham.edu:8080/xmlmm/login.html](http://www.dqc.esr.earlham.edu:8080/xmlmm/login.html)). More detailed information about the Underground Railroad and Quakers' role within it, can be found on the website for the [National Underground Railroad Freedom Center](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/j1.html) (at www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/j1.html). [The National Geographic Society](http://www.owensound.ca/live/owen-sounds-black-history) (at www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/j1.html)'s website includes an interactive activity called "The Journey" where participants learn more about the journey to freedom. [Owen Sound's Black History](http://www.owensound.ca/live/owen-sounds-black-history) (at www.owensound.ca/live/owen-sounds-black-history) includes a short article on runaway slaves' connection to this site in Canada. PBS' WGBH site includes good information on the hardships blacks faced in Northern States as part of the series, [Africans in America](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2957.html) (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2957.html). [What Every Woman Should Know about the Seneca Falls Convention](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2957.html) (at

www.thenewagenda.net/2009/03/09/what-every-woman-should-know-about-the-seneca-falls-convention-of-1848/) has more details on the convention.

The Nobel Prize website lists all the [organizations](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/lists/organizations.html) (at www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/lists/organizations.html) that have received the Peace Prize. These sites are good resources for hunger facts: [Food Waste in America, a Growing Concern](http://www.greenrightnow.com/kvue/2008/11/26/food-waste-in-america-a-growing-concern/) (at www.greenrightnow.com/kvue/2008/11/26/food-waste-in-america-a-growing-concern/), [World Hunger Facts](http://www.worldhunger.org/articles/Learn/world%20hunger%20facts%202002.htm) (at www.worldhunger.org/articles/Learn/world%20hunger%20facts%202002.htm), [World Hunger Facts, Figures, Stats](http://www.library.thinkquest.org/C002291/high/present/stats.htm) (at www.library.thinkquest.org/C002291/high/present/stats.htm). Read a short biography of Jessamyn West at the [Contemporary Authors database](http://www.jessamyn.com/jessamyn/jessbio.html) (at www.jessamyn.com/jessamyn/jessbio.html).

Books

Living Simply With Children: A Voluntary Simplicity Guide for Moms, Dads, and Kids Who Want to Reclaim the Bliss of Childhood and the Joy of Parenting by Marie Shelock (Three Rivers Press: New York, NY, 2003).

Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity by Catherine Whitmire (Sorin Books: Notre Dame, Indiana, 2001).

WORKSHOP 18: HUMANISM — JUST US... AND EVERYTHING ELSE

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone. — Humanist Manifesto III

UU Humanists believe that religion is too important to be based on unprovable beliefs such as a belief in God. They wish to base the meaning of their lives on something that they can be sure of, that is here with us, that gives us meaning and purpose. — Rev. Christine Robinson

Humanism refers to the affirmation of the worth and dignity of every person, a commitment to human betterment, and the necessity for human beings to take responsibility for themselves and the world. — Rev. William R. Murry
I believe in God, but I spell it nature. — Frank Lloyd Wright

Humanism affirms this physical, finite life as all we have—along with the ability and responsibility to fulfill it as ethically as we can using our experience, reason, and a deep acknowledgement of our interconnectedness to one another. In Humanism, there is no supernatural purpose or power, no meaning-maker or authority beyond humankind. It acknowledges the power of the *natural*, not the *supernatural*, and the strength of *community*, while holding up the agency and responsibility of the *individual*.

Humanism has roots in ancient Greek philosophy. It developed alongside science during the European Age of Enlightenment, coalescing as a philosophic and religious movement beginning with the French Revolution. It has continued to evolve through history to its flourishing in the 20th century when it became a basic tenet of Unitarianism, then Unitarian Universalism. In the United States, Unitarian ministers were prominent leaders of Humanism as both a philosophic and theological movement. While humanism is often equated with atheism, some forms are theistic, for example, Christian humanism. The religious humanism of Unitarian Universalism is nontheistic, as is secular humanism (a humanist philosophy outside any religion).

It is important to emphasize what humanists believe and what Humanism offers, not just what humanists do not believe. In this workshop, youth discover Humanism at the core of our Unitarian Universalist faith, tying us together across diverse theologies and spiritual practices. Further, they recognize humanistic beliefs in the foundation of our nation's political philosophy and institutions, popular culture, and values. They identify humanism in their own world views.

Since the mid-19th century, the term "secular humanism" has described a world view that relies on science and reason, and rejects supernatural beliefs. However, this workshop concentrates on those who choose Humanism as their religion which, like other religions, provides community with which to make meaning of life, death, and other great mysteries and to affirm a framework for knowing right from wrong.

Read this workshop, including the Alternate Activities, to choose the best experiences for your group. Note that for the Engagement activity, you may visit a secular humanist group, a UU congregation, or bring together a panel of participants from your own congregation.

Given the importance of Humanism in Unitarian Universalism, you may well want to spend two sessions on the topic.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Describe Humanism as a philosophy and as a religion, and explain its tenets
- Track the development of Humanism in Western history and thought
- Demonstrate how religious Humanism addresses needs for meaning, purpose, moral guidance, and faith community that other religions address
- Help youth identify Humanistic beliefs in themselves, in Unitarian Universalism, and in our society's culture and institutions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the history and tenets of Humanism
- Identify Humanistic tendencies in their own beliefs and values

- Understand Humanism's influence in Unitarian Universalism and in other institutions of our society
- Consider ways Humanism can function as a religion, and explore the compatibility of Humanism and spirituality for themselves.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	
Opening	10
Activity 1: What a Humanist Believes	20
Activity 2: Story — Hearts, Heads, and Hands: A Humanist UU Congregation	15
Activity 3: Happy Human Art Project	30
Activity 4: Time Line and Fact Sheet	10
Faith in Action: Star Trek Film Series	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: Song — Life is the Greatest	15

Gift of All

Alternate Activity 3: Core Values

15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Many Unitarian Universalists identify as humanists. Do you? With its emphasis on ongoing examination, the authority of empirical evidence and direct experience, and the importance of what we choose to do for ourselves and others in the here and now, religious Humanism is a fundamental underpinning of Unitarian Universalism.

Consider your core truths. Do you believe in democracy, equal rights, or the inherent worth and dignity of every person? Think about the everyday choices you make. Do they reflect a belief that people have power to better their lives, and the world? Do they acknowledge your human responsibility and capacity to take care of yourself and help others? Do you find the natural world, not a supernatural world, awesome? These are all aspects of humanism.

Unitarian Universalism is a humanistic faith, a free faith that encompasses a diversity of beliefs and understandings of life. How do the beliefs of Humanism affect your daily life? How do they relate to your Unitarian Universalist faith?

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Do You Believe... ?](#) (included in this document)
- Blue and red pens or pencils, for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants compare their personal beliefs with humanist beliefs.

As participants enter, give them Handout 1, Do You Believe... ? and a red pen or pencil. Invite them to circle every item they believe. Before the session begins, distribute blue pens or pencils and say:

Now circle, using the blue pen, all the items you think are supported by empirical evidence—that is, every item you believe because you know it can be scientifically proven to be true.

When they have completed the second round, invite them to compare the two color markings. How many of the ideas they believe can be established with empirical evidence? Point out that many things people believe fervently cannot be proved by science. Some people believed that malaria was carried by mosquitoes for years before it could be proved. It had not been proven by science, but it was still true. Love, itself, cited as one of the most powerful forces in human beings, is entirely intangible and immeasurable by science, yet few deny its existence. We can believe something that seems true and life-affirming to us, without empirical evidence.

Tell participants this activity is to get them thinking about Humanism, the subject of today's workshop.

OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post a sheet of newsprint. Title it "Humanism."
- Post another sheet of newsprint. Title it "Religion."

Description of Activity

Answer any questions you could not answer from the last workshop.

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Ask if the youth are familiar with the terms "Humanism" or "humanist." Ask:

- What do these terms mean?
- Where and how have you heard them used?
- What questions do you have about Humanism?

Briefly note responses on the newsprint titled "Humanism."

Now tell the group that Humanism as a religion is today's topic. Tell them that, like Buddhism or Confucianism, Humanism can be a philosophy or a religion, depending on how an individual uses it.

Invite the youth to recall the functions that religions serve. Write their contributions on the newsprint titled "Religion." Make sure these are included:

- making/finding meaning
- understanding one's purpose/the purpose of humankind
- moral guidance/knowing right from wrong
- sense of belonging/faith community

Conclude by affirming that a belief system that addresses these needs for someone can be their religion. Share that the philosophy of Humanism trusts human beings to assess what is best for them and make their own decisions, without guidance or consequence from a deity or supernatural being. Ask:

- Does a belief system need a deity, or an authority higher than humankind, to be a religion?

After some thoughts are shared, say, "Today we will examine how Humanism works as a religion."

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT A HUMANIST BELIEVES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Humanism Background](#) (included in this document)
- Paper and pens or pencils for all participants

- Optional: Leader Resource 2, [Humanist Manifesto III](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1 so you will be able to present it effectively.
- Tape newsprint together so you can write this statement large enough to mark up while leading the activity. Write, and post:
 Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. — The Humanist Manifesto III (2003)
- On another sheet, write "Humanism's Tenets" and list numbers 1-7, leaving room to write after each number, and post.

Description of Activity

The group learns the history and key tenets of Humanism, then explores its presence in their own lives and culture.

Take a few minutes to present the background information provided in Leader Resource 1.

Then, invite the group to deconstruct the opening statement of the Humanist Manifesto III. Explain that this process will help them relate important tenets of Humanism to their own lives and beliefs. Read the statement aloud, or invite a volunteer to read.

Then, circle the word, "progressive" and write a "1" above it. Ask the group what they think "progressive" means. On the numbered newsprint sheet, write:

1. Adaptive, Changing

Explain: "Progressive" suggests an optimistic world view—things will get better, rather than stay the same or get worse. To be progressive, one must respond and adapt to change—to new information and experiences. Ask if the youth can think of any religions they have studied that could be described as "progressive." Remind them that we speak of Unitarian Universalism as a "living faith" for this very reason. As Unitarian Universalists, we expect our beliefs may change as life brings us new experiences and we understand realities in new ways.

Now circle the word "life" and write a "2" above it. On the other sheet write:

2. Here and Now

Explain that a Humanist does not expect consciousness or meaning beyond their lifetime (after death). Humanists do not believe in a later reward (as in

Heaven), or punishment (as in Hell), or another chance to get it right (as in reincarnation). Humanism supports people doing everything they can to make this life all it can be.

Now circle "supernaturalism" and write a "3" above it. Complete the third list item:

3. Science and Reason

Explain: Humanism asserts that scientific methods, physical evidence, and human experience and reason can together explain any explainable mystery and solve any solvable problem in our lives and world. If the problems people face can be solved, it is people who will solve them. Humanists reject explanations that involve supernatural forces such as an act of God. This does not mean humans can explain all mysteries; it means everything has a natural explanation whether or not we have the means to explain it presently. And whether or not an event is understood scientifically, humanists can appreciate our place in the natural world, and experience awe and wonder in it.

Circle "ability and responsibility" and write a "4" above it. On the numbered sheet write:

4. Ability and Responsibility

Humanism affirms our ability to make good choices and live good lives. Our fate is in the hands of no one but ourselves. With this power comes the responsibility to use it well. With no cosmic force telling us what to do, we alone are responsible for making the most of our gifts in the brief time we have.

Suggest that this key tenet of Humanism may be the easiest one to recognize in our own lives, in Unitarian Universalism, and in our larger society.

Now circle "ethical" and write a "5" above it. On the numbered sheet write:

5. Ethical — Human Welfare

Explain that Humanism is a highly ethical philosophy or faith stance. It is concerned with knowing right from wrong, and living as ethically as we can. Humanism, like Unitarian Universalism, affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and says that once we accept that principle, we are each capable of figuring out what is ethical, and making choices that serve the interests of all people including choices to protect the welfare of the web of life which serves us all.

Now circle "personal fulfillment" and write a "6" above it. On the numbered sheet write:

6. Personal Fulfillment = service of ideals

Explain that Humanism asserts that every person will be most fulfilled by developing their full potential. This in turn requires a deep sense of purpose, commitment, and connection to other people and the heritage of humanity.

Finally, circle "good of humanity" and write a "7" above it. Complete the itemized list:

7. No One Is an Island

Explain that Humanism recognizes that humans are social and interdependent, and find meaning in relationships. Humanism requires us to live cooperatively, kindly, and without violence because (a) these choices will advance common goals such as freedom, peace, justice, equality, and (b) achieving these goals for everyone will promote each individual's happiness.

Ask:

- Which of these beliefs and values do you share?
- Which, if any, are very important to you personally?
- Which, if any, do you disagree with?

Encourage participants to think about ways they have lived any of these beliefs in their everyday lives. Prompt with an example: "Have you ever picked up litter, or recycled? Have you ever signed a petition to support human rights or another justice issue? What Humanist beliefs grounded your choice to do that?"

Suggest that Humanist principles may be guiding their lives more than they realize. Tell them:

- The Declaration of Independence and democracy itself are full of humanist tenets.
- The Green Movement, with its message of taking personal responsibility, rests on Humanist beliefs, as do many other progressive social justice movements.
- Does our society value scientific research? Is that a humanistic value?

Invite participants to turn to one or two partners sitting nearby. Give each group paper and a pen or pencil and ask them to brainstorm for five minutes. Challenge them to think of ways that humanistic beliefs are part of our world. Tell them no aspect of culture is off-limits—popular music, the economy, the health care system. After five minutes, share the lists in the larger group.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — HEARTS, HEADS, AND HANDS: A HUMANIST UU CONGREGATION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Hearts, Heads, and Hands: A Humanist UU Congregation](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Say, in these words or your own:

You may not be surprised to hear that many Unitarian Universalists and some UU congregations proudly identify as religious Humanists. Here's a story about one such congregation, First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Tell or read the story "Hearts, Heads, and Hands: A Humanist UU Congregation."

Then, help the group to explore the religious beliefs expressed and religious needs addressed by First Unitarian Society's social justice program.

- What social justice and service projects happen in our UU congregation?
- What beliefs and values motivate our congregation to take these actions?
- What motivates you to help other people and make the world a better place?
- Many faiths do service projects. Imagine one of the First Unitarian Society projects being done by an Evangelical Christian church, a Muslim mosque, or a Pagan coven. What religious beliefs might motivate them? Would any humanistic beliefs also be involved? How?

ACTIVITY 3: HAPPY HUMAN ART PROJECT (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, "[Happy Human](#)" (included in this document)
- Supplies for two-dimensional and three-dimensional art and craft work

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a place to make a gallery of Humanistic art to share with the congregation.
- Photocopy Handout 2 for participants and/or post a large copy of it.

- Decide which materials you will make available for the art.
- Optional: Enlist artistic volunteers from the congregation to lead art experiences.

Description of Activity

This activity is an opportunity for participants to engage aesthetically and spiritually with the humanist concepts they have been exploring intellectually.

Explain that participants will express some of their thoughts and feelings about humanist beliefs and values non-verbally. Remind them that an important tenet of Humanism is human happiness, attained through personal fulfillment and the achievement of the common good. We can each be happier if all can be happy.

Our well-being is connected to the well-being of all humankind.

Post or hand out the picture of the Happy Human and explain that the image was designed for the British Humanist Society and has since been adopted by many Humanists, primarily secular Humanists, in other countries.

Ask, "Why do you think it is important to secular Humanists to have a happy image?" (Possible answers: some religious people think you can't be happy without God; Humanists have a reputation for being very serious.)

Say, "Think about the Humanist values and beliefs we have talked about today, and think about your own. What do you think really makes a human happy? What would a happy world look like?"

Direct participants to the art materials you have gathered and invite them to take (at least) 15 minutes to express themselves non-verbally in response to those questions.

Tell them they will be invited to share their art and their feelings with the group. When time is up, gather the group in a circle for sharing and arrange to display their collective work for the congregation with an appropriate title, such as What Makes a Happy Human?

ACTIVITY 4: TIME LINE AND FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe
- Handout 3, [Humanism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Post the Religions Time Line where it will be visible to all participants.
- Place the map or globe where it will be visible to all participants.
- Create and set aside sticky notes saying, "Greek humanist philosophers, 500 BCE;" "Ethical Culture movement, 1876;" and "Humanist Manifesto I, 1933."

Description of Activity

The Religions Time Line is updated to add Humanism. Ask participants if they remember when humanist philosophy was first espoused (in ancient Greece). Place sticky note on time line. When Humanist movements became organized (Ethical Culture movement, 1876)? When the first Humanist Manifesto was written? (1933) When Humanism became an important part of Unitarian Universalism? (throughout the 20th century to the present). Remind participants that all the world's faiths have sometimes found humanist expression. Let them know that there are [Christian Humanists](#) (at www.christianhumanist.net/), [Jewish Humanists](#) (at www.shj.org/), and Buddhists Humanists (Humanistic Buddhism: A Blueprint for Life, by Venerable Master Hsing Yun (Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2005)

Point out Greece on the map, and the United States. Remind participants that Humanism has had global impact in religion, government, the arts, and the sciences.

Distribute Handout 3, Humanism Fact Sheet to take home. Ask:

- What questions do you still have about Humanism?
- What beliefs do UUs and Humanists share?
- How does knowing about Humanism influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

If you will be engaging with a Humanist community or a guest panel from the congregation, give participants the information they need.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for each participant.

- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to form a circle, join hands, and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together

FAITH IN ACTION: STAR TREK FILM SERIES

Materials for Activity

- Star Trek DVDs
- A DVD player and TV or monitor and projector

Preparation for Activity

- Some reading that might guide you in a discussion about Star Trek and humanism are Drones, Clones, and Alpha Babes: Retrofitting Star Trek's Humanism, Post 9/11, by Diana M.A. Relke (Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2006), Everything I Need to Know I Learned From Star Trek, by Dave Marinaccio (New York:Three Rivers Press, 1995), "[Star Trek Made Me an Atheist](http://www.thehumanist.org/humanist/09_jul_aug/Farantello.html) (at www.thehumanist.org/humanist/09_jul_aug/Farantello.html)" in Humanist online magazine, and a blog entry by smellincoffee "[Gene Roddenberry, Star Trek, Humanism, and Me](http://let-me-be-frank.blogspot.com/2009/03/gene-roddenberry-star-trek-humanism-and.html) (at let-me-be-frank.blogspot.com/2009/03/gene-roddenberry-star-trek-humanism-and.html)". An online search will lead you to many others.
- Test your electronic equipment.

Description of Activity

Participants offer the community a chance to explore humanist themes in the media.

After the release of the Star Trek movie produced in 2009, interest in the original television series was renewed. Consider offering a discussion session based on some of the more humanist-themed episodes.

Look at the episodes in light of the seven points discussed in the Opening:

- progressive = adaptive, changing
- life = here and now
- science and reason
- ability and responsibility

- ethics = human welfare
- personal fulfillment = service of ideals
- good of humanity = no one's an island

Here are some facts you might contribute to the conversation:

- Nichelle Nichols' Uhura was one of the first regular black characters on TV who was not a servant. Nichelle tells the story that she thought of leaving the series after the first year, but was urged not to by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, who told her she was an inspiration to young people and was opening a door that, once open, would never be closed.
- In 1991, Roddenberry was awarded the AHA's Humanist Arts Award. Roddenberry was a member of the Association.
- Star Trek's famous opening lines ended with "To boldly go where no man has gone before." Even in the sixties, there were protests about the word "man." In 1987, when Star Trek: The next Generation aired, the line was changed to "... where no one has gone before." At the end of Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country, Kirk says, "... boldly going where no man... where no one... has gone before."
- NBC was fearful of the interracial kiss in Plato's Stepchildren, so they required the director to film an alternate scene where the kiss does not take place. William Shatner and Nichelle Nichols purposefully flubbed the alternate take.

Suggested episodes:

- Plato's Stepchildren (first interracial kiss on a scripted television show)
- Where No Man Has Gone Before (two crew members develop god-like powers)
- The Cloud Minders (deals with classism)
- Turnabout Intruder (deals with sexism, though not in the most advanced way)
- Let That Be Your Last Battlefield (deals with racism)
- A Private Little War (written as commentary on the Vietnam War)
- The Corbomite Maneuver (the dangers of irrationality and fear)
- Taste of Armageddon (the dangers of a technology that distances us from the horrors of war)
- The Empath (sacrifices of the individual for the good of society)
- The Return of the Archons (mindless following of a cult-like figure)
- The Apple (ignorance is not bliss)
- The group should decide if they will offer one workshop or a series. Talk to the person in the

congregation who coordinates such workshops. Advertise extensively. Divide the work amongst participants. Who will secure the DVDs? Who will lead discussions? Will you serve popcorn and drinks? If so, how will you secure funds to purchase? A congregational committee might be able to help support this activity.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. In this workshop, we explored a philosophy/religion, which has become incorporated into many of the religions, governments, and social structures of contemporary societies: Humanism. Recognizing something which has become seamlessly incorporated into our ideology can be challenging; was this accomplished? Did participants engage the subject with respect? Did they seem to understand the deeper concepts involved in Humanism? Did they find the ideas less foreign than others they have examined? How did this affect their responses: are they developing a keener awareness of their own biases and moving toward a more disciplined intellectual process? How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

TAKING IT HOME

The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone. — Humanist Manifesto III

UU Humanists believe that religion is too important to be based on unprovable beliefs such as a belief in God. They wish to base the meaning of their lives on something that they can be sure of, that is here with us, that gives us meaning and purpose. — Rev. Christine Robinson

Humanism refers to the affirmation of the worth and dignity of every person, a commitment to human betterment, and the necessity for human beings to take responsibility for themselves and the world. — Rev. William R. Murry
I believe in God, but I spell it nature. — Frank Lloyd Wright

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we explored Humanism, a philosophy—and for some, a religion—that says humankind has the ability and the sole responsibility to strive to fulfill our highest ideals. We identified Humanistic tenets and explored their presence in Unitarian Universalism, our wider culture, and our own lives. We saw how religious Humanism can be

expressed, by learning about a UU congregation that identifies as Humanist. We learned how deeply Humanism grounds a Unitarian Universalist faith, even for those of us who do believe in a divine energy or higher power that transcends the human heart, spirit, and mind.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What basic tenets of Humanism seem like common sense to you? What humanist beliefs were you taught as a child? Do you remember particular incidents when growing up where your family, faith community or school reinforced humanist tenets? Which did you encounter only later in life?

EXPLORE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

- The American Humanist Association suggests books by the following authors as likely to contain humanist themes: Louisa May Alcott (Unitarian), Edgar Allen Poe, George Orwell, Beatrix Potter (Unitarian), Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain, H.P. Lovecraft, Dr. Seuss, Charles Dickens, and Kurt Vonnegut (Unitarian Universalist).
- Another author from the list is British author Phillip Pullman. Pullman's trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, is a complex fantasy tale about a battle between conservative religious authorities and humanists determined to create "heaven on earth."
- Movies suggested by the American Humanist Association include *Huckleberry Finn* (various versions), *Happy Feet* (dir. George Miller, 2006), *Toy Story* (dir. John Lasseter, 1995), and *Contact* (dir. Robert Zemeckis, 1997) Have you seen any of these movies? What is humanist about these stories?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a congregation, fellowship, society, or discussion group that identifies itself as Humanist and which sponsors gatherings that might be appropriate for the youth to attend. Some Unitarian Universalist congregations are explicitly Humanist. Alternatively, a Humanist Buddhist, Humanist Jewish, or Ethical Culture may meet in your area. While a worship service of a Humanist congregation is best for this engagement, a Humanist-sponsored discussion group, lecture, or social justice project may be easier to find. Your minister, a local interfaith group, or your community Chamber of Commerce may be able to suggest a local

Humanist group. Online, the New York Society for Ethical Culture provides links to affiliate groups in many states and to the online [Ethical Society Without Walls](http://www.eswow.org/) (at www.eswow.org/).

- NOTE: If you find no good opportunity for an engagement described above, arrange for a panel of guests from your own congregation who identify as Humanists, or have humanistic philosophies (many UUs are humanists without using the label) to speak to and with the youth. Make sure they can speak positively about what they believe and value, and what motivates them to make the world a little more peaceful, just and sustainable. In other words, do not have a panel whose primary message is, "I don't believe in God."
- Invite the guests to speak with the youth and then take questions about what humanism means to them, how their humanistic beliefs relate to their Unitarian Universalism, and ways they feel humanism is their religion.
- Contact presenters and arrange a date and time for the youth to attend an event. Tell your contact the age group and the number of participants you wish to bring. Ask specifically about dress and behavior expected of visitors, including any particulars that pertain to youth.
- Optional: Prepare observation questions as a handout, and distribute to all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants attend a Humanist gathering and process the experience, or engage with a panel of humanist Unitarian Universalists in your congregation.

Prepare the youth in advance. Describe the identity of the group you will visit: Are they a secular group, or do they consider themselves religious Humanists? Humanist UU groups often reject traditional Christian language; they may avoid words such as "church," "pulpit," "worship," "prayer," and "hymn." Many call themselves societies or fellowships instead of churches.

Invite youth to observe: What is the meeting space like? What is its character? What items are displayed? Does the architecture appear religious? Do the surroundings support quiet reflection, or do they seem designed to foster discussion?

If the youth will have a chance to talk with group members, you might offer them these questions to start:

- Do members consider their group a religious organization? Is their meeting place a house of worship?

- What do they think are the most important activities of the group? Which do they enjoy the most, and why?
- What do they think of exploring Humanism in a program on world religions?
- How did they, personally, come to be a Humanist?
- Was this group always Humanist, or has its Humanist identity evolved over time?
- How does the group get new members? Is the group growing?

When the engagement is over, ask participants for their immediate reactions. What was the experience like for them? How did it differ from other visits they have made? How was it similar?

How did the average age of this gathering compare with others the youth have experienced? If it was notably different, did that alter the experience? In what way?

Other possible questions:

- What did you see?
- Was there an altar? If so, what was on it?
- Who participated in the gathering and in what way? Did genders have different roles?
- Were any special garments worn?
- Was there music? What was it like?
- Were there children present? If so, how did they participate? Did the others seem welcoming toward children?
- Did you notice any youth, besides yourselves? How did youth participate?
- How were you welcomed by members?
- Were there familiar themes in the sermon or discussion? Could you have heard similar ideas in a Unitarian Universalist worship service or meeting? Why or why not?
- What ideas or practices were familiar from your study of Humanism?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: SONG — LIFE IS THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: A recording of "Life Is the Greatest Gift of All" and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain enough copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* for all participants.
- Post two sheets of newsprint side by side, with no space between. Title the left-hand sheet

"Religious" and the right-hand sheet
"Humanist."

- Optional: Plan to teach and lead Hymn 331 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "Life Is the Greatest Gift of All." You might invite a music leader or accompanist in the congregation to help.
- Optional: Obtain a recording of Hymn 331 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "Life Is the Greatest Gift of All" and set up a music player to share the song with the group.

Description of Activity

This activity uses music to reinforce participants' understanding of Humanist beliefs, Unitarian Universalist beliefs, and their commonalities. It highlights a religious expression of Humanism—the use of ritual, in this case song.

Remind the group that Religious Humanism and Unitarian Universalism overlap in their beliefs and values; many UUs also identify as Humanist, and many UU beliefs, traditions, and ways of living our faith are grounded in humanist philosophy. Say, "Let's see what we can learn about UU/Humanist connections from one of our UU hymns."

Distribute copies of *Singing the Living Tradition* and invite the youth to find Hymn 331. Ask the group to pay attention to the lyrics as you read them aloud (or, as you play the recorded song). Then, if you or a volunteer are prepared to do so, teach and lead the song.

Indicate the newsprint and invite the youth to call out phrases or ideas from "Life Is the Greatest Gift of All" that seem religious to them. Ask them to explain what is religious about each example. Once you have a few responses, ask them to turn to the term "humanist" and call out phrases or ideas they think are humanist and to say why. Before writing a new suggestion, challenge the youth to decide if it actually belongs on both sheets. If any youth say it does, write it in the middle.

It is not necessary to reach consensus on where to write every suggestion. Rather, focus on exploring the beliefs and ideas embedded in the song and how and why these are religious and/or humanist ideas. Use these prompts as needed:

- "Mind...seeks creation's hidden plan" could mean we are constantly looking for more truth about the natural world and how it works. Or, it could mean someone or something (God?) has made an actual plan.
- The second verse describes the amazing things the human mind can do. Does it suggest we are capable of solving all the mysteries of the universe, and controlling the natural world, as

well? ("...it reins the wind, it chains the storm, it weighs the outmost stars.")

- "Life...the measure of all things" suggests there is no supernatural life-after-death; it suggests, too, that what really counts is what we do in our lifetimes.
- When it talks about "life and its creatures great and small" as the greatest gift and then says (third verse) "We are of life," is the song lifting up our responsibility to an interdependent web of life? Or is it saying something else?
- What does the phrase "our vision soars on wings" mean for a UU? What could it mean for a Humanist?

Invite the youth to discuss:

- God is not in this hymn. Does God need to be involved for a sentiment or experience to be religious? Why? Why not?
- If not God, to whom or what we are grateful for the gift of life? Can we have gratitude without someone/something to thank? Is gratitude in and of itself a religious feeling? How?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: CORE VALUES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 4, [Core Values](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 4 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants compare the UUA statement of Principles in children's language to the statement of core values for children in the humanist American Ethical Union communities. The comparison will demonstrate humanist influence in UUism.

Give participants a copy of Handout 3, Core Values. Give them time to read it silently, or have volunteers take turns reading one line at a time.

Ask:

- How are the two statements similar?
- How are they different?
- What do you agree with, or disagree with, in the American Ethical Union value statements?
- Would you change or add anything to the UUA Principles?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 18: STORY: HEARTS, HEADS, AND HANDS: A HUMANIST UU CONGREGATION

With thanks to Jan Devor, Director of Religious Education, First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis. At the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, Minnesota, people of all ages carry their own Passport to Justice. They are on a journey to help others. By the end of the church year, this congregation's members, young ones and older, will have passports filled with stamps from the places they have been. But where have their travels taken them? Not Amsterdam, Bangkok, or Caracas. No place far, at all. Just destinations in their own community where their presence can make a difference.

Why volunteer at a soup kitchen? Why tutor younger children after school? Why work in a community garden? What is this journey all about? It is a journey to follow the call of justice, simply because that path is the right one, and for what other purpose are we here on earth but to find and walk the right path? In the Passport to Justice program, people let their hearts turn them toward a place the world is hurting and they can help. They use their heads, to discover a way their time and talents can make things better for others and the world. Then they put their hands to work making, teaching, witnessing, doing—and earning a new travel stamp.

First Unitarian is one of Unitarian Universalism's explicitly Humanist communities. A few years ago, the minister of First Unitarian Society, Reverend Kendyll Gibbons and a committee of members crafted these words to help explain what that means. Here is what they wrote:

The First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis is a Unitarian Universalist congregation in the Humanist tradition, offering personal growth and service opportunities without supernatural beliefs. We affirm the radical notion that human connections and human resources solve human problems, and help us to become the people we hope to be. We welcome diversity of people, ideas, and questions as we build community together.

Personal growth and service, without supernatural beliefs. It's humans that the people of First Unitarian believe in—what we are, what we are capable of, and how we should help one another. No god or rule book tells them where to follow the call of justice, what to do when they get there, or why. The Passport to Justice holders are Humanists. They love, and care, and act because they know it is right.

If you are called to justice not by a god of any kind, simply by your belief in human potential, your moral sense of responsibility to others, and a wish to use science and reason to determine how you can help, then you're ready for a Passport to Justice, too.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 18:

HANDOUT 1: DO YOU BELIEVE... ?

Which of the following do you believe in (or think are likely)? Circle with a red pen.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Existence of one God | Most people feeling need for religion |
| Existence of many goddesses/gods | People needing faith in something |
| Physical existence of Jesus | Healing by laying on of hands |
| Divinity of Jesus | Existence of sin |
| Virgin birth | Gods/goddesses taking human form |
| Holy Trinity | Spiritual energy accumulation—karma |
| Religion helping people do the right thing | Everything in the Bible is true |
| Divine inspiration | There is wisdom in the Bible |
| Evolution | Bible as a historical document |
| Reincarnation | Everything in the Koran is true |
| Enlightenment | There is wisdom in the Koran |
| Prayers being answered | Koran as a historical document |
| Prayers being beneficial | Inherent wisdom of children |
| Faith helping people live better lives | Inherent wisdom of elders |
| Ritual is comforting | Humans are just another kind of animal |
| Moses receiving the Ten Commandments on stone tables | Humans are special animals, blessed beyond other creatures |
| Muhammad spoke with an angel | Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem |
| Muhammad was divinely inspired | Jews are God's Chosen People |
| A great flood nearly destroyed the earth | The Pope is infallible (cannot be wrong about Church teachings) |
| Communion materials become actual body and blood of Christ | Taking communion makes people feel closer to the divine |
| Existence of evil | Marriages are blessed by God |
| Existence of Satan | Relationships are sacred |
| Everything happens for a reason, planned by a higher power | Some divine power made things, but doesn't control what is going on |
| Ultimately things happen for the best | Earth was created in six literal days |
| Life is random; that's how it goes | |

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 18: HANDOUT 2: HAPPY HUMAN

From the [British Humanist Association](#).

Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/happyhuman.pdf) for printing.



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

18: HANDOUT 3: HUMANISM FACT SHEET

Origin: Dates from Greek and Roman antiquity; then, the European Renaissance; then as a philosophic and theological movement in the U.S. and Europe, mid-1800s and again in 1920s and 1930s, through today.

Adherents: Number unknown. Two national organizations are the American Humanist Association and the American Ethical Union. Humanist movements and individuals exist in Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and especially Unitarian Universalism. Humanism plays a role in many people's beliefs or spirituality without necessarily being acknowledged. Humanism also plays a role in most faiths without always being named.

Influential Figures/Prophets: Protagoras (Greek philosopher, 5th c. BCE, "Man is the measure of all things"), Jane Addams, Charles Darwin, John Dewey, Abraham Maslow, Isaac Asimov, R. Buckminster Fuller (also a Unitarian), Margaret Sanger, Carl Rogers, Bertrand Russell, Andrei Sakharov

Texts: No sacred text. Statements of humanist beliefs and intentions are found in three iterations of The Humanist Manifesto: 1933, 1973, and 2003; these are considered explanations of humanist philosophy, not statements of creed. The motto of the American Humanist Association is "Good without a God." To humanists, the broadest range of religious, scientific, moral, political, social texts and creative literature may be valued.

Clergy: None. Humanism is not a formally organized religion. Many Unitarian Universalist and other, especially liberal, clergy are Humanists or humanist-influenced. For congregations in the [Ethical Culture movement](#) (at www.eswow.org/what-is-ethical-culture), professional Ethical Culture Leaders fill the roles of religious clergy, including meeting the pastoral needs of members, performing ceremonies, and serving as spokespeople for the congregation. The Humanist Society website offers directory of [Humanist Celebrants](#) (at humanist-society.org/celebrants/) who conduct memorials, baby namings, and other life-cycle ceremonies.

Symbol/s: Happy Human (unofficial); "Evolve" fish (unofficial)

Imagery: None

Terms and Fundamental Precepts

1. Humanists believe religion is a product of human history and culture. (God did not invent religion; people invented religion

2. This is the only life we know of and understand. (Whatever we may think happens after we die, Humanists agree this life on earth is the only life we can be sure of—the one we experience, understand, and can take responsibility for.)

3. We—and no other, supernatural force—are each responsible for ourselves, for others, and for the Earth.

4. We have values, ethics, and a sense of right and wrong which we activate without threats of judgment, punishment, or reward from a supernatural force.

5. Reason, logic and our own observations and experiences are the natural and valid bases for human knowledge.

6. We should be agents of peace and justice. Religious Humanists believe meaning-making and ethical living are strengthened when sought in community.

Terms

Religious Humanism—a humanist philosophy within a religious tradition.

Secular Humanism—a humanist philosophy fully separate from religious tradition or beliefs.

Ethical Society/Ethical Culture Society—a humanistic religious and educational movement inspired by the ideal that the supreme aim of human life is working to create a more humane society. No centralized organization; all societies are independent.

Shared with Unitarian Universalism: Belief in...

- the inherent worth and dignity of all people
- value of science, scientific process, and rigorous intellectual processes
- individual responsibility for choices and behavior
- interdependence of living beings, an interconnected web of life
- humans as part of nature
- natural selection/evolution
- service to others and working for social justice
- maximizing personal fulfillment through living highest ideals

In the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: UUA Publications, 1993), Readings 466, 470, 521, 530, and 567 and Hymns 93, 115, 374, 378, and 380 are from the Humanist tradition.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 18: HANDOUT 4: CORE VALUES

Unitarian Universalist Principles in Children's Language

1. We believe that each and every person is important.
2. We believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly.
3. We believe that we should accept one another and keep on learning together.
4. We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.
5. We believe that all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them.
6. We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.
7. We believe in caring for our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.

Religious education in the **American Ethical Union** is based on these values:

Every person is important and unique.

Every person deserves to be treated fairly and kindly.

I can learn from everyone.

I am part of this earth: I cherish it and all the life upon it.

I learn from the world around me by using my senses, mind, and feelings.

I am a member of the world community which depends on the cooperation of all people for peace and justice.

I can learn from the past to build for the future.

I am free to question.

I am free to choose what I believe.

I accept responsibility for my choices and actions.

I strive to live my values.

I view ethics as my religion.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

18: LEADER RESOURCE 1:

HUMANISM BACKGROUND

Explain that the term **humanist** has various meanings. A person described as a humanist might have all the opinions we just discussed. But the word "humanist" is also used to describe when something is being looked at through human experience and with regard to its effect on human beings. For example, a **Christian Humanist** can believe in the divinity of Christ - a supernatural belief - but will think of Christianity as having the obligation to make people's lives better now, not making them wait for a better life in heaven.

Judaism is often humanist, and **Confucianism** is a completely humanist faith, having no reference beyond people's current lives and no purpose but to make their lives better.

Share that the two major categories of humanists are **Secular Humanists** and **Religious or Spiritual Humanists**. Secular Humanists prefer to keep religion out of the discussion altogether. Religious Humanists practice their humanist beliefs within a religious tradition, with a focus on serving the needs of human beings in the here and now.

History

Humanist philosophy first surfaces in historical records about 500 BCE in ancient **Greece**, which was not so incidentally the birthplace of democracy, as well. (Show Greece on the world map.) Ask youth: why would democracy be considered humanist? Because it confers power on everyday people, trusting them to make decisions about things that affect their lives. Humanism appears throughout the years in every field from time to time: humanist authors, scientists, theologians. Frequently they were seen as enemies of religion and persecuted, but in the **Renaissance** in **Europe** (14th -17th centuries), there was a strong intellectual humanist movement. (Show Europe on the world map.) This led directly in to the **Age of Enlightenment** (1650-1800), and the humanist movement contributed to the burst of religious activity during that time, including the Protestant Reformation. With the movement to the New World came the opportunity for a **humanist revolution**, literally. Humanism is the guiding philosophy behind the American Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. As democracy has spread through the world, so has humanism, and humanist philosophy has contributed to fundamental changes in nearly all civilized societies, including the abolition of the death penalty nearly worldwide (but not in the United States)

and the gradual dismantling of the caste system in India.

Numbers

Hard to tell how many humanists there are. Humanism pervades Western culture. While an extremely tiny percentage of the population would identify their religion as "Humanism" a large majority of people in the industrialized world view life, public policy, and events with a humanist perspective. Many Unitarian Universalists identify as humanist and others would certainly say they have a humanist view of life.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

18: LEADER RESOURCE 2: THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO III

From the [American Humanist Association](#); used with permission.

HUMANISM AND ITS ASPIRATIONS

Humanist Manifesto III, a successor to the Humanist Manifesto of 1933

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

The lifestance of Humanism - guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by experience - encourages us to live life well and fully. It evolved through the ages and continues to develop through the efforts of thoughtful people who recognize that values and ideals, however carefully wrought, are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance.

This document is part of an ongoing effort to manifest in clear and positive terms the conceptual boundaries of Humanism, not what we must believe but a consensus of what we do believe. It is in this sense that we affirm the following:

Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis. Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies. We also recognize the value of new departures in thought, the arts, and inner experience—each subject to analysis by critical intelligence.

Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humanists recognize nature as self-existing. We accept our life as all and enough, distinguishing things as they are from things as we might wish or imagine them to be. We welcome the challenges of the future, and are drawn to and undaunted by the yet to be known.

Ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience. Humanists ground values in human welfare shaped by human circumstances, interests, and concerns and extended to the global ecosystem and beyond. We are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity, and to making informed choices in a context of freedom consonant with responsibility.

Life's fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals. We aim for our fullest possible development and animate

our lives with a deep sense of purpose, finding wonder and awe in the joys and beauties of human existence, its challenges and tragedies, and even in the inevitability and finality of death. Humanists rely on the rich heritage of human culture and the lifestance of Humanism to provide comfort in times of want and encouragement in times of plenty.

Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships. Humanists long for and strive toward a world of mutual care and concern, free of cruelty and its consequences, where differences are resolved cooperatively without resorting to violence. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all.

Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness. Progressive cultures have worked to free humanity from the brutalities of mere survival and to reduce suffering, improve society, and develop global community. We seek to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, and we support a just distribution of nature's resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.

Humanists are concerned for the wellbeing of all, are committed to diversity, and respect those of differing yet humane views. We work to uphold the equal enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties in an open, secular society and maintain it is a civic duty to participate in the democratic process and a planetary duty to protect nature's integrity, diversity, and beauty in a secure, sustainable manner.

Thus engaged in the flow of life, we aspire to this vision with the informed conviction that humanity has the ability to progress toward its highest ideals. The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone.

[Signers—Complete list of signers unavailable. Eighty-eight persons (including 22 Nobel laureates) are listed as "notable signers" on the American Humanist Association website.]

Note: Humanist Manifesto is a trademark of the American Humanist Association (C) 2003 American Humanist Association

FIND OUT MORE

Making the Manifesto: The Birth of Religious Humanism by William F. Schulz (Boston: Skinner House, 2002). Trends in Western thought and culture that led to Religious Humanism as a movement in the early 20th century.

Becoming More Fully Human: Religious Humanism as a Way of Life by William R. Murry (New Haven: Religious Humanism Press, 2011)

Find out more about Unitarian Universalists Humanists at [HUUmanists](http://www.huumanists.org/) (at www.huumanists.org/)

Unitarian Universalism is not the only declared humanistic religion. [Ethical Culture](http://www.nysec.org/) (at www.nysec.org/) is a religion "centered on ethics, not theology, whose mission is to encourage respect for humanity and nature and to create a better world." [Humanistic Judaism](http://www.shj.org/) (at www.shj.org/) "combines the celebration of Jewish culture and identity with an adherence to humanistic values and ideas."

WORKSHOP 19: ATHEISM AND AGNOSTICISM—NOT IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

I am neither Jew nor Gentile, Mahomedan nor Theist; I am but a member of the human family, and would accept of truth by whomsoever offered -- that truth which we can all find, if we will but seek—in things, not in words; in nature, not in human imagination; in our own hearts, not in temples made with hands. — Frances Wright, freethinker and social reformer

This workshop introduces atheism and agnosticism. The combined category of "nonbelievers" is the third largest religious group on earth, comprising 1.1 billion, or one in every six, people. Mostly, though, it is a silent crowd. The exception is the tiny but expressive subset of vocal atheist political activists. This group campaigns tirelessly for separation of church and state—work that benefits everyone—and for freedom from religion, that is, for freedom from governments or other organizations forcing religious views or practices on religious minorities or non religious people. This workshop explores the religious philosophies of atheism and agnosticism, the impact of atheism on Western society, and some important issues associated with atheism. It raises awareness among participants of the high percentage of atheists in Unitarian Universalism and the resultant importance of related issues to our denomination.

Expect youth who identify as atheists or agnostics to be in the group. They will therefore be quite engaged in this workshop. Make sure that youth who not identify in this way are heard and respected, too.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce participants to fundamentals of atheism and agnosticism
- Acquaint participants with some important legal successes of the American atheist movement
- Learn how novelist Mary McCarthy went from believer to nonbeliever in a God
- Consider the importance of atheists and agnostics to Unitarian Universalism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Deepen their understanding of the many forms of religious belief, including nonbelief
- Explore feelings associated with losing or changing religious faith
- Become familiar with and able to discuss important accomplishments of atheist activists, especially in separation of church and state, and consider effective approaches to advocacy.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Story — Losing Faith	15
Activity 2: Separation of Church and State	25
Activity 3: Why Atheists Go to Church	20
Activity 4: Fact Sheet	10
Activity 5: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Finding Faith	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	60

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

If you identify as atheist or agnostic, this workshop could remind you of times in your life when your faith has put you at odds with others. Many youth identify with one of these categories and may also have had uncomfortable experiences in the larger community. Hopefully, you have found a spiritual home in your congregation where your beliefs are honored and can be publicly claimed. Think of what this feels like in the time before facilitating this workshop. Know that by introducing this topic to the youth, you are helping create a safe space for young people to question and explore without ridicule or fear of reprisals.

If you do not identify as atheist or agnostic, your facilitation of the workshop will still enable youth to question and explore. Do not be surprised if many

youth identify as atheists. Be thankful that you have helped create such a safe space for all participants.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Small hand mirrors, enough for all participants to have one
- Writing materials
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Create sign reading: "What Do You See? What Can This Person Do?"
- Place sign, writing materials, and mirrors on welcoming table.

Description of Activity

Participants look at themselves and write objectively about what they see.

As participants enter, invite them to the welcoming table and suggest that each take writing materials and a mirror. Invite each to take a centering moment where they clear their thoughts of the way they usually think of themselves, then with clear eyes and as near as they can get to no assumptions, look in the mirror. Write without judgment what they see. Impressions are fine to add, too, but they are not to criticize themselves. After they have described the person in the mirror, look again, recalling now their abilities, talents, and strengths. What does this person do well? What have they learned? What contributions do they make? What are their hopes? Write these as well.

If asked the purpose of this activity, share that today's workshop is about atheism and agnosticism. One of the most important tenets of people who do not believe in God is honesty—seeing things as they really are. And as with any spiritual journey, the place to start is at home. We cannot be honest with others until we are honest with ourselves. So, that is where we are starting, with an open-eyed look at the person in the mirror.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [Atheism/Agnosticism Background](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1, Atheism/Agnosticism Background until you are comfortable presenting the information in it.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions remaining from the last workshop.

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and sharing one or two observations they made during the welcoming activity. If participants did not do the welcoming activity, suggest they share, as objectively as possible, one of their strengths or things they do well.

Tell participants that this workshop explores atheism and agnosticism, which are faith stances or religious philosophies, but not religions in an organizational sense.

Share, in your own words the information in Leader Resource 1, Atheism/Agnosticism Background. Use newsprint to list important terms.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — LOSING FAITH (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Losing Faith](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story until you are comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Youth hear a story about a woman who loses her belief in God.

Tell or read the story. Ask for participants' initial reaction. Ask additional questions, such as:

- Does the way McCarthy first encounter atheism surprise you? What do think of her attempt to get attention?
- The incident described in the story happened when McCarthy was twelve, but she did not "come out" as atheist until years later. Why not? How do you think atheists were perceived in the 1920s?

- Have you heard other people talk about "losing faith" before? Have you ever lost faith? Have you ever experienced a major change in your faith? [Encourage participants to share as they are comfortable.]
- McCarthy says the devil gave her the idea to pretend to lose her faith. Do you think she meant this literally?
- What do you think of the quote, "I do not mind if I lose my soul for all eternity. If the kind of God exists who would damn me for not working out a deal with Him, then that is unfortunate. I should not care to spend eternity in the company of such a person."?

ACTIVITY 2: SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Currency of different denominations, coins and bills
- Leader Resource 2, [The Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Put money in shallow container.
- Write the Lord's Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance on newsprint and post.

Description of Activity

Participants explore issues of separation of church and state.

Ask participants what they would think would be some of the top social or political issues for atheists in the United States. These include freedom of religion, freedom from religion, and, most importantly, separation of church and state. Ask youth if only atheists are concerned with separation of church and state. Participants will probably know that Unitarian Universalists and many other faiths, including both Christian and non-Christian, believe in enforcing this doctrine, too.

Share with the group that the first amendment to the United States Constitution states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The two parts, known as the "establishment clause" and the "free exercise clause" respectively, form the textual basis for the Supreme Court's interpretations of the "separation of church and state."

Atheism has been granted protection as a religion under the law for purposes of freedom of religious expression and protection from religious persecution. It

was established that not believing in a god or gods is a religious belief, and deserves equal protection under the law. Ask youth for responses to this.

However, Christian values and expressions were so dominant in the early days of the United States that they were interwoven throughout documents and practices largely without challenge. By the time the American atheist movement grew strong in the mid-twentieth century, these references had the force of 200 years of cultural habit, and opposing them was seen by many as un-American. Swearing on a Bible to be seated on a jury was not seen as a mixing of government and religion, but as a harmless act everyone should feel comfortable with. If you opposed the practice—and some faith traditions as well as atheists did—you could risk hateful, even violent, attack. This was the environment in which atheists pursued the separation of church and state in the United States.

Invite youth to choose a piece of money and examine it carefully. Do they see anything which might violate the doctrine of separation of church and state? When they mention "In God We Trust," share that this was not always on U.S. currency. The phrase first appeared during the Civil War, in 1864. Over a hundred years later, in 1956, the U.S. Congress made it the official motto of the United States.

Ask the youth if they are aware of some issues that have gone to court over separation of church and state. Record on newsprint. Some practices atheists and others have tried to end include:

- Oath to take office or be seated on a jury; practice was changed from "swear" to "swear or affirm" ("I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God" has been modified for those who do not choose to use this language)
- Requiring use of the Bible to take oaths
- Ten Commandments publicly posted in courthouses
- "In God We Trust" on U.S. currency
- Pledge of Allegiance in schools and at public events because of the words "under God."
- Removal of the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance—words that were added by Congress in 1954.
- Prayer in schools, including reciting the Lord's Prayer and Bible readings
- Prayers to open public gatherings, especially at governmental institutions
- Crosses, pictures of Jesus, and other religious images in public buildings
- Christmas Nativity scenes, other religious decorations on public property

- Use of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. for religious services (for example, a mass by the Pope)
- Political ads attacking an opponent for being atheist
- Christmas as a federal holiday
- Nonprofit, tax-exempt status for religious organizations.

Ask participants what they think of this list. Do they agree with all of these goals? Some of them? Why or why not?

Point out that these efforts to separate "church and state" has raised awareness of religious minorities and their rights, since often the presence of religion in the public sphere is Christian, and therefore impacts non-Christians, minority Christians, Muslims and Jews. Has it increased hostility in the public arena? Why or why not? Is it important to adapt to growing religious diversity in the United States? Why or why not? Share that the landmark Supreme Court ruling that banned prayer in public schools was in 1963, but the Lord's Prayer was very commonly used in public schools, especially in the southern United States, until the mid 1970s. Refer to the newsprint with The Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Ask if any youth ever recited the Lord's Prayer in school. Share whether you had this experience in school. Note that the Pledge of Allegiance did not always have the words "under God"; they were added by Congress in 1954. Challenges to remove the words have so far been unsuccessful. Invite participants to recite the Pledge without the words "under God." Ask if they like it better, or not as much. Why?

Share that the issue of prayer in schools is still being fought: new lawsuits are filed on both sides every year. What are participants' thoughts about this?

ACTIVITY 3: WHY ATHEISTS GO TO CHURCH (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Why Go to Church?](#) (included in this document)
- Index cards
- Writing utensils

Preparation for Activity

- Consider why you belong to your congregation. Be prepared to share with the group.

Description of Activity

Participants discuss reasons why people, including atheists, belong to a religious community.

Ask participants to say why they come to this faith community. If their answer is "Because someone makes me," then ask what they most like or value about it. Then ask why they think the adults they are closest to come. Express appreciation for the varied reasons the youth offer.

Distribute index cards and writing implements. Invite participants to write the reasons they come to their congregation—not just their top reason, but all the reasons—on the cards. Every reason gets its own card. Also, write down the reasons the adults closest to them come, again with each reason on a separate card. Allow time for all reasons to be written down.

Invite participants to spread out all the cards they have written on the floor or a table and group them into categories: for example, if one reason is "pot luck dinners" and another is "holiday parties," these could be grouped under the category Social Gatherings. If some reasons fit in more than one category, allow the youth to problem-solve. Creating labels for categories can help clarify groupings.

Once the cards have been categorized (and there may be categories of one), create a tally on newsprint of the reasons for coming and the numbers associated with each category. Are the results what the youth would have predicted? Would the results differ if they polled the whole congregation? If so, how might they differ?

Distribute Handout 1, Why Go to Church? How do these results of a nationwide U.S. poll differ from this group's? Are there ways they could agree more than it seems at first? For example, "freedom to pursue my own spiritual path" is not a doctrine, but could fit under the category Doctrine/Beliefs because the person values the support the congregation provides to her beliefs.

Ask, "Looking over the reasons you gave for yourselves and your families to come to your congregation, how many of them could apply to atheists? Could atheists and agnostics find support and opportunities at Unitarian Universalist congregations in all the categories the youth identified? Would there be barriers for their involvement in the congregation?"

Ask the youth what religions offer people. Add or summarize that religions help us discern meaning and purpose in a context of caring community. Would some atheists and agnostics want this as well as some believers?

Including All Participants

If any participants have mobility issues, a table would be preferable to the floor for this activity.

ACTIVITY 4: FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 2, [Atheism/Agnosticism Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Do an internet search for famous Atheists and Agnostics to share with the group names of people they will recognize from various professions.

Description of Activity

Distribute Handout 2, Atheism/Agnosticism Fact Sheet and review it with the group. Ask,

- What questions do you still have about Atheism/Agnosticism?
- What beliefs of do UUs and Atheists/Agnostics share?
- How does knowing about Atheism/Agnosticism influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

If you will be engaging with an Atheist community or group, give participants any information they need.

ACTIVITY 5: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line
- Sticky notes and fine point markers
- World map or globe (optional)

Preparation for Activity

- Hang Religions Time Line visibly in the space.
- Have map or globe handy, if you are using it.
- Create two sticky notes, one saying, "Atheists/Agnostics, prehistory," the other saying, "Atheists/Agnostics, 1650." Keep them out of sight.

Description of Activity

The time line is updated to add Atheism/Agnosticism.

Ask participants if they remember how far back in history atheists or agnostics are presumed to have existed. Comment that, since doubt is as strong a human characteristic as belief, it is safe to imagine that all human societies, dating back to the very earliest people, included doubters and nonbelievers. (Place a sticky note at farthest left edge of timeline.) Ask if participants remember the date at which some people began being more public about their disbelief. You could remind them that this arose with the Age of Enlightenment. (Place second sticky note at 1650 on the timeline.)

Ask participants where atheists and agnostics can be found. Affirm that nonbelievers can be found wherever human societies are, which is to say on every continent on earth.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Poster with closing words
- Chalice
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Reproduce handouts.
- Put up poster if necessary.

Description of Activity

Distribute handouts to youth. Invite them to form a circle, join hands and say together (refer to poster if necessary):

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: FINDING FAITH

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Video camera

Description of Activity

Participants gather stories about finding faith.

Remind participants of McCarthy's story. Through one lens, it is a story about losing faith. Through another, she found her true beliefs. Our stories are important: they are uniquely ours and hold our truths.

Invite youth to launch a project to gather stories from the congregation of how people "found" their current faith: Unitarian Universalism and current beliefs—Atheism/Agnosticism, Christian, Buddhist, etc. Gathering the stories face-to-face would be best. If your congregation holds a regularly scheduled potluck, seek permission to set up a table where congregants can come share their stories. Consider videotaping them. The group could compile the stories and use them as part of a worship service (see Workshop 23) or post them on the congregation's website. Remember to get release forms signed if youth plan to share the videotapes.

After the group has viewed all the videotapes, discuss the stories. How are they different or similar? What

themes exist in the stories? Do youth hear their own stories echoed in these? If not, they might want to videotape their story for the collection.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop together. Did participants deepen their understanding of their personal beliefs and Unitarian Universalism through the discussion of atheism and activism? Have their understanding of different faiths and concepts become more sophisticated over the course of the program? Are they aware of their own growth in spirit and intellect? How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

TAKING IT HOME

I am neither Jew nor Gentile,
Mahomedan nor Theist; I am but a
member of the human family, and
would accept of truth by whomsoever
offered -- that truth which we can all
find, if we will but seek—in things, not
in words; in nature, not in human
imagination; in our own hearts, not in
temples made with hands. — Frances
Wright, freethinker and social reformer

DURING TODAY'S WORKSHOP... We explored Atheism and Agnosticism. We acknowledged the struggles people with these beliefs sometimes experience in our country. We discussed the connection between these beliefs and Unitarian Universalism, and the social or political values they share.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Why do you think more and more people identify themselves as non-believers?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS FURTHER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

- Want to read a nice, short, article about one person's atheist's faith? Read [What Is Atheism Really All About?](#) (at www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/atheism.html) by Richard Carrier.
- Have you ever questioned your faith, like Mary McCarthy? Was someone there to help you process your thoughts? What about your friends – have they questioned their faith?
- Do you and your friends discuss religion? Some people never discuss religion, afraid that it will be too divisive. Have you found this to be true? How can you have a healthy discussion about

religion with your friends where no one gets hurt or angry?

- [Atheists Nexus](#) (at www.atheistnexus.org/group/youngatheists) has a website for young atheists. Many websites for "young atheists" are geared primarily for college students. Why do you think this is so? This site welcomes younger members and people not in school.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (60 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Ask your minister for recommendations for one or more guest who are atheist. Members of the congregation would be best.
- Once contact is made, invite the guest(s) to share their faith journey with the group. Make sure they are comfortable answering questions the youth may have. If the guest is an atheist activist, also ask that they share some of the ways in which they have advocated for related social or political issues.
- Remind youth that, although this engagement does not involve an organized church, it is a long-standing faith tradition. The guest's generosity and trust deserve the same consideration and respect offered any other faith group.
- Optional: Instead of engaging with a guest, the group could engage with an outside group. [Atheists Meetup Groups](#) (at atheists.meetup.com/) is a website that helps you find atheists groups and free thought societies near you. As always, contact the group ahead of time to inquire about visiting. Find out what youth should expect and anything else they should know before visiting. If your contact is willing, set up a time for them to talk to the group before or after engagement. If pursuing this form of engagement, process the event using the general questions in the program introduction, Implementation.

Description of Activity

Participants interact with an atheist guest.

Share with youth this starting list of questions to augment, if necessary, those naturally prompted by the guest's comments.

- What do you believe in?
- Would you describe your beliefs as a faith? As a religion?

- When did you become aware that you did not believe in God? Was it a moment, or a longer process? Was it liberating? Was it scary?
- If you used to believe in God, has that change altered the way you look at the world? Do you interact with other people differently?
- If you are a life-long atheist or agnostic, was your family atheist or agnostic? If not, what was that like?
- How do you feel about fervent believers?
- Do you try to convert—or convince—people not to believe in God?
- Have you ever been verbally attacked for your beliefs?
- If you have children, how do you answer their religious questions? Do you tell them you think your conclusions are best, or encourage them to draw their own conclusions?
- Is there anything you would consider a sacred text?
- Do you participate in worship? If so, what are you worshipping?
- From where do you derive your moral code?
- Robert Ingersall said, "Belief is not a voluntary thing. A man believes or disbelieves in spite of himself." Do you agree with this? Would you believe in a higher power if you could?
- [If the guest is UU] What is it like being a UU and an atheist? Do you always feel at home in UU congregations? How does your atheism feed your Unitarian Universalism and vice versa?
- Do you know atheists who do not attend any faith community? Do you think they experience their atheism differently from you because of this?

After the guest leaves, ask participants for their first impressions: what did they think of the experience?

Continue discussion with questions such as:

- Have you had in-depth discussions with atheists about their beliefs before?
- What is appealing about atheism?
- What could make atheism unappealing?
- People's religious beliefs generally are in concordance with their strongest held values, providing validation and comfort. How would belief in God give people validation and comfort? How would believing there is no God provide validation and comfort?

Thank participants for their thoughtful participation.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

19: STORY: LOSING FAITH

Mary McCarthy's parents died in the influenza epidemic of 1918 when she was six years old. She lived first with an aunt and uncle, who mistreated her cruelly, then was taken in by her maternal grandparents in Seattle. Her grandmother was Jewish and her grandfather Episcopalian, but to honor the intentions of Mary's Catholic parents, she was sent to a prestigious Catholic boarding school. Mary's education was excellent, but she remained questioning about matters of religion.

When Mary was twelve, she was attending a new school and decided to create a sensation in order to be noticed. But how was it to be done? One day, the perfect idea dawned:

People are always asking how I came to lose my faith, imagining a period of deep inward struggle. The truth is the whole momentous project simply jumped at me, ready-made. ... "Say you've lost your faith," the devil prompted, assuring me that there was no risk if I chose my moment carefully. Starting Monday morning, we were going to have a retreat, to be preached by a stirring Jesuit. If I lost my faith on, say, Sunday, I could regain it during the three days of retreat, in time for Wednesday confessions. Thus there would be only four days in which my soul would be in danger if I should happen to die suddenly. ... The idea seemed so obvious, like a store waiting to be robbed.

Mary refused to take communion and declared that she had lost her faith. The nuns and priests of the convent considered this a disaster and her fall from grace caused all the stir she had hoped. Father Dennis, the convent's head priest, spoke seriously with Mary and as she disputed points with the priest, Mary became more and more excited.

... It had come to me that Christ really could have been a man. The idea of Christ as simply man had something extraordinary and joyous about it that was different, I perceived, from the condescension of God to the flesh. I was glad I had started this discussion, for I was learning something new every second. All fear had left me and all sense of mere willful antagonism.

But once more he cut me off. "You must accept what I tell you," he said, almost sharply. "You are too young to understand these things. You must have faith." "But you're supposed to give me faith, Father," I protested. "Only God can do that," he answered. "Pray, and He will grant it." "I can't pray," I said automatically. "You know your prayers," he said. "Say them." He rose, and I made my curtsy. "Father!" I cried out suddenly, in desperation at the way he was leaving me. "There's something else!"

He turned back fatiguedly, but the wild look on my face must have alarmed him. "What is it, my child?" He came a little nearer, peering at me with a concerned, kindly expression. "My child," he said gravely, "do you doubt the existence of God?" "Yes," I breathed, in exultant agony, knowing that it was true.

When Father Dennis failed to restore Mary's faith, the visiting priest spoke with her.

... "Natural reason, Mary," expatiated Father Heeney, will not take you the whole way today. There's a little gap that we have to fill with faith." I looked up at him measuringly. So there was a gap, then. How was it that they had never mentioned this interesting fact to us before?

Mary McCarthy pretended to regain her faith in order to restore her standing in the parochial school, but in fact her life was changed. The title refers to this change: the "first step" was what started out essentially on a whim, but with results that were dramatic, unintended, and permanent. McCarthy "came out" as an atheist in her early 20s and was forthright about her non-belief in God for the rest of her life. She rather famously stated, "I do not mind if I lose my soul for all eternity. If the kind of God exists who would damn me for not working out a deal with Him, then that is unfortunate. I should not care to spend eternity in the company of such a person."

McCarthy became a bestselling author, theatre and social critic. Her writings on women's lives, high society, and the Vietnam War were often scathing and scandalous, but she was never one to mince words. She held a mirror up to the country and asked if Americans liked what they saw. In 1984, she was honored with the National Medal for Literature. She died in 1989.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 19: HANDOUT 1: WHY GO TO CHURCH?

Thom Rainer, 2001.

TOP FIVE REASONS UNCHURCHED PEOPLE CHOOSE A CHURCH

- 1. Pastor/Preaching
- 2. Doctrines/Beliefs
- 3. Friendliness of members
- 4. Other
- 5. Someone witnessed/invited me

TOP FIVE REASONS CHURCH ATTENDERS CHOOSE A CHURCH

- 1. Doctrine/Theology/Beliefs
- 2. People caring for each other
- 3. Preaching
- 4. Friendliness of members
- 5. Children's programs

TOP FIVE REASONS FORMERLY UNCHURCHED STAY ACTIVE IN CHURCH

- 1. Ministry involvement
- 2. Sunday school/children's programs
- 3. Obedience to God
- 4. Fellowship/friendliness of members
- 5. Pastor/preaching

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

19: HANDOUT 2:

ATHEISM/AGNOSTICISM FACT SHEET

Atheism/Agnosticism

Existence/Reemergence: Prehistory/mid 1600s

Adherents: 1.1 billion

Ranking: Third—behind Christianity (2.1B) and Islam (1.5B)

Influential Figures/Prophets: There are many famous people in many walks of life who identify as Atheists or Agnostics. Google "famous atheists" and "famous agnostics" for extensive lists of authors, scientists, entertainers, etc. with these identities.

Texts: None

Clergy: None

Symbol/s: Nothing official; Atomic Whirl, Darwin Fish for some

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

Atheism—Non-belief in god or gods; belief that a supernatural deity does not exist

Strong or Positive Atheism—Positive belief that no god or gods exist

Weak or Negative Atheism—Simple lack of belief in god or gods

Positive Atheism (second meaning)—Atheist movement to live atheism in a positive way, esp. through consistency and truthfulness in personal ethics

Functional Atheism—Living without reference to religious teachings concerning god/s, but without self-identifying as an atheist, possibly attending church, etc.; a 'closeted' or unrealized atheist

Agnosticism—Lack of either belief or disbelief in God; a sense of "I do not know" if a god or gods exist; or a sense that "no one can know" whether a god or gods exist. One who believes there can be no proof of the existence of God, but does not deny the possibility that God exists.

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- value of science and the use of reason
- personal definition of truth
- insufficiency of unexamined beliefs
- value of living in consistency with one's beliefs
- concern for the protection of minorities, especially religious minorities
- imperative to oppose active or passive religious persecution
- dedication to separation of church and state, including raising public awareness of violations
- openness to learn from many sources of knowledge and wisdom

- UUs resist defining God or god in one way; do not share one understanding of "god" and may use the word to mean "love" or "spirit of life" and not a deity at all as commonly understood in other religions.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP

19: LEADER RESOURCE 1:

ATHEISM/AGNOSTICISM

BACKGROUND

Atheism has been granted protection as a religion under the law for purposes of freedom of religious expression and protection from religious persecution. It was established that not believing in a god or gods is a religious belief, and deserves equal protection under the law.

Atheism is often understood only by its seemingly negative nature: it is defined by what is not believed.

The word "atheist" comes from the roots "a," meaning "without," and "theos" meaning "a god." Therefore, it literally means "godless" or "without a god."

Write the word "Atheism" at the top of a sheet of newsprint. Share that atheism is, like other religious beliefs, not uniform. Some atheists do not believe in the existence of a god, but do not assert that the existence of a god or gods is impossible. Other atheists believe absolutely that no god or gods exist or can exist.

Atheists may be called, or call themselves "non-believers" meaning they do not believe in the existence of a supernatural deity described in Christianity and other Abrahamic traditions. Atheists, of course, believe in many things, including values, ethics, human capacity, reason, love, and so on. It is important that people describe themselves in terms of what they do believe and care about, rather than be labeled by one theological position.

Write "Agnosticism" on the newsprint. "Agnosticism" is neither believing nor disbelieving in a god or gods. From its roots, it means "without knowing." ("a" meaning "without or not" and "gnosis" Greek for "knowledge") The word, "agnostic" was coined by British scientist Thomas H. Huxley in the 19th century. Most people who consider themselves agnostic believe they cannot know for sure whether God exists or that no one can know for sure whether God exists. Some are interested in knowing; others, like many Unitarian Universalists, are comfortable without knowing and believe there are more important questions to pursue.

Because Atheism and Agnosticism are commonly defined by what they DO NOT believe, it is easy to forget that they DO believe in a great many things, including many beliefs shared with Unitarian Universalism. They believe that humans are responsible for our own actions and should be held accountable. They believe that the here and now is

important and most would say we should work to make this world a better place. An atheist or agnostic is as concerned with what is right and wrong as much as anyone else; they simply do not believe that God is necessary to keep people good.

Ask youth if they would describe themselves as atheist or agnostic. If atheist or agnostic, would they say they always have been so, or have their beliefs changed over time?

Ask how old participants would guess atheism is. Almost any age is a good guess—the twentieth century is when atheists came into their own politically, fighting for the freedom to be open about their beliefs. In the mid seventeenth century, during the Age of Enlightenment, atheists began openly discussing their doubts. Throughout time, there have been atheists, although until recently most have kept their beliefs to themselves. Ask, why do you think this was so?

Atheism could be said to be among the oldest as well as among the newest religious traditions. Before people became what we would recognize as human, their thoughts were similar to those of other animals, and largely unknown to us. There is no indication, though, that belief in god was part of those thoughts. As humans came to seek safety in numbers, use tools, and think beyond immediate survival, they began to seek meaning the moment and religion began to emerge. Just as more people describe themselves as believers during hard times, and as religions are born during hardship and crisis, it is reasonable to conclude that in a prehistoric human society, with subsistence-level lives full of toil and danger, there would be very few nonbelievers. The Bible itself acknowledges this phenomenon:

O Lord, in affliction they visited thee —
Isaiah 26:16

Of course, what believers believed varied greatly around the world, in different cultures.

In today's world, there are many more nonbelievers. Grouped together, atheists and agnostics account for about a sixth of the world's population. It is the third largest faith tradition on earth—and has the least organization of any other faith stance. Ask, do you remember what the two biggest religions are? Christianity, at 2.1 billion adherents, is largest. Islam, with 1.5 billion, is next. Atheism/Agnosticism is third, with 1.1 billion human beings who say they do not believe in God or they just do not know. Until very recently, though, it was mostly a silent crowd.

Ask the youth if they have a guess about what percentage of Unitarian Universalists are atheist? In the

most recent denominational poll, 19 % of Unitarian Universalists stated they did not believe in any God. Having just explored Humanism, ask the youth: Why do you think we are talking separately about atheism? What differences do you see in Humanism and atheism? Many people fit both descriptions; are they the same thing? Does a person have to be atheist if they are humanist? Not necessarily—recall that a large number of humanists call themselves spiritual or religious humanists. What about the other way around: Does a person have to be a humanist to be an atheist? Probably so. Denial of a higher power implies that the only control over our lives is our own—a decidedly humanist point of view.

Share that the biggest challenges of atheism are not being accepted by society at large, and being forced, by

expectation or law, to participate in faith practices they do not believe in. This is farther-reaching than one might suppose. While current celebrations of Christmas and Easter seem commercially secular to devout Christians—that is, virtually stripped of religious content—there is religion enough to make non-believers and non-Christians feel uncomfortable or marginalized.

Ask the youth: Is there harm in having an Easter egg hunt on the Capitol grounds? What is wrong with a nativity (Christmas manger scene) on the front lawn of the courthouse? Should Christmas be a national holiday? Some see these as state-sponsored religious observances in violation of the doctrine of separation of church and state. Do youth agree?

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 19: LEADER RESOURCE 2: THE LORD'S PRAYER AND THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father Who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
On earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever,
Amen.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation (under God), indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

FIND OUT MORE

Basic resources: [Investigating Atheism](http://www.investigatingatheism.info/index.html) (at www.investigatingatheism.info/index.html) is a University of Cambridge site, incredibly rich and deep. [Definition of Atheism](http://www.investigatingatheism.info/definition.html) (at www.investigatingatheism.info/definition.html) is an especially useful article on the Cambridge site. Go here for [Basics of Atheism & Agnosticism](http://atheism.about.com/od/aboutatheism/u/AtheismBasics.htm) (at atheism.about.com/od/aboutatheism/u/AtheismBasics.htm).

A Candid Word has this interesting article, "[Persecution Today: Atheists Are the New Jews](http://acandidworld.com/2008/11/22/persecution-today-atheists-are-the-new-jews/)" (at acandidworld.com/2008/11/22/persecution-today-atheists-are-the-new-jews/) — November 2008 *Little Book of Atheist Spirituality* by Andre Comte, translated by Nancy Huston (New York: Penguin, 2008) will give you a nice sense of what many atheists do believe in.

[Atheist Centre](http://www.iheu.org/node/1429) (at www.iheu.org/node/1429) of the International Humanist and Ethical Union is committed to promoting Positive Atheism (per second definition on Fact Sheet) worldwide, especially in India.

Here are sites that explore the relationship between Unitarian Universalism and Atheism: [Nexus, a UU Atheist Website](http://atheistnexus.ning.com/group/unitarianuniversalistatheists) (at atheistnexus.ning.com/group/unitarianuniversalistatheists); [Faith of an Atheist](http://www.uucpa.org/sermons_02-03/sermon020310.html) (at www.uucpa.org/sermons_02-03/sermon020310.html) is a sermon by Rev. Darcey Laine and [Why Atheists Go to Church](http://jesspages.net/bestofuu/08/we-all-offer-gratitude-and-reverence-to-and-for-many-things) (at jesspages.net/bestofuu/08/we-all-offer-gratitude-and-reverence-to-and-for-many-things) is another by Reverend Matt Tittle

Short biographies of Mary McCarthy: from [Pegasus](http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/marymcc.htm) (at www.kirjasto.sci.fi/marymcc.htm), a Finnish literature website and [Vassar College Library](http://specialcollections.vassar.edu/marymccarthy/mmbio.html) (at specialcollections.vassar.edu/marymccarthy/mmbio.html). Read part of *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood* on [Googlebooks](http://books.google.com/books?id=0MJZ5T7VFi0C&printsec=frontcover&cd=1&source=gbs_ViewAPI#v=onepage&q&f=false) (at books.google.com/books?id=0MJZ5T7VFi0C&printsec=frontcover&cd=1&source=gbs_ViewAPI#v=onepage&q&f=false).

[The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture](http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=963) (at tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=963) has a short, interesting article on the utopian, free slave colony of Nashoba started by Frances Wright.

WORKSHOP 20: CULTS—LOSE YOUR WILL, LOSE YOUR SOUL

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

When theology erodes and organization crumbles, when the institutional framework of religion begins to break up, the search for a direct experience which people can feel to be religious facilitates the rise of cults. — Daniel Bell, sociologist

This workshop introduces the topic of cults, creating a working understanding of what a cult is—not in its classical definition as "any system of religious worship," but in the term's common usage: a group that engages in religious practices but also controls, isolates, and makes escalating, often destructive demands on members. The intention is to create an atmosphere of intelligent inquiry with the youth in which they maintain their ability to judge for themselves the merits and defects of a group's offerings and to recognize with compassion the human impulses that draw people into cults' spheres.

Youth in Western culture often are protective of their right to decide things for themselves. In the case of cults, members radically trust the leader—to care for them and their children, to tell them what truth is, even to save their souls. Youth might not understand why someone would want someone else to make all the decisions, but they certainly understand a betrayal of trust. They can have empathy for people who are victims of abuse or who are being taken advantage of. Discovering that Unitarian Universalism is considered a cult by some very conservative religious groups can cause different reactions in UU youth. Remind them that words are used to mean different things to different people. Someone believing that we are a cult *by their definition* does not make us a cult.

Cult leaders often engage in behavior that is harmful to other people in order to benefit themselves and their organization. It may be appealing to set these leaders, or their followers, apart from oneself, to cast them as the "other"—nothing like us. It is important to stress that self-serving human beings are still human beings, however dangerous they may be. While it seems reassuring to characterize someone who has done something very troubling as hardly human, essentially saying, "We real people could never do that," it is a false comfort. The world actually becomes safer when

we recognize that all of us have the capacity for causing harm. To quote Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

Recognizing every human's powerful capacity for good and ill does not contradict our Unitarian Universalist commitment to honor the worth and dignity of every person. We all have the spark of divinity, but that does not mean we will always act divine.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Establish a working definition of a "cult" and introduce some fundamental characteristics of cults
- Provide resources for analyzing the behavior of groups
- Introduce the story of the growth and tragic end of the Peoples Temple
- Acquaint participants with ways in which Unitarian Universalism is sometimes considered a cult.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Deepen their understanding of the fundamental human longing for trust and simplicity and how that longing can be exploited
- Better understand abusive behavior, both in an individual and a systems context
- Discuss ways they can avoid becoming involved with a cult and ways to help others who are involved
- Practice countering allegations of cultism concerning Unitarian Universalism.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	25
Activity 1: Story — Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple	30
Activity 2: Unitarian Universalism — CUUlt?	15
Activity 3: Help! A Friend Is in Trouble!	15

Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Cliques	75

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Not all cult practices are dangerous, and not all cults degenerate to tragic ends. However, a primary feature of all cults, as they are defined for this workshop, is the relinquishment of individual choice to the authority of the leader, and this feature alone makes them seem foreign and sinister to Unitarian Universalists.

Spiritual preparation for most workshops in this program involves creating the mindset or emotional tenor of the faith being explored. Clearly, this is not possible or desirable in a discussion of cults. Instead, we can create a mind free of fear, resting calmly in reality, and seeking no authority but its own.

To begin, think back to a time when you were influenced by a group or a very influential individual to do something that made you feel uncomfortable. Nearly everyone is strongly, even painfully, conscious of such times in their past.

Try to remember that state of mind—*anxious, eager, malleable, suggestible, nervous, scared*. Place yourself there again, ready to take the step you have wished ever since that you had done differently... and then see yourself taking a different path. Give yourself the gift life does not allow you of making the choice you wish you had made. In the rich reality of your thought, have the conversation you did not have, offer the reasons you couldn't formulate at the time, argue like a trial lawyer, or simply decline to argue or discuss it at all. With perfect clarity of decision and purpose, with your mind as your witness, do what you think was right.

After you emerge from this affirming vision, allow yourself to process the experience. What was different? What allowed you to take a different path this time? Would it have been possible—or impossible—to have taken a different path the first time around? Give yourself the benefit of the doubt. Acknowledge that people always, always are doing the best they can, including you, even when you make mistakes. Accept yourself, and accept your judgment. Decide that no one could have done better under identical circumstances.

Expand your thoughts to other people who have made mistakes, perhaps who have let other people make their decisions for them and discovered to their lasting regret that those decisions were bad ones. Expand your heart to offer compassion and sympathy for their mistakes, and optimism for their future. Not everyone can recreate the past and change decisions they regretted, but everyone has a future that mostly depends on the decisions they make today. Where there is life, there is hope.

Turn your thoughts to decisions you have made that were fully in keeping with your ethical values, decisions you are proud to know you made. These decisions make up the person you are, too, the complex, interesting, hard-working human being that is you.

Consider those decisions, ones you would consider good as well as bad. Recognize that all decisions you make contribute to your growth and understanding. Take the radical step of embracing reality—all of reality, exactly as things are—and being at peace with your heart, your soul, your mind. This mind of yours, this calm, peaceful mind, will take good care of you. Your task is to trust it.

Take a deep, cleansing breath, all the way in and all the way out. Take heart: You are the captain of your own destiny. Further, you are ready to provide loving guidance to other young souls on their journeys.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [What Do Cults and Religions Do?](#) (included in this document)
- Bowl or dish to hold folded slips
- Glue stick or tape

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare a large sheet of newsprint according to the Poster Guide at the bottom of Leader Resource 1. Post it where it will be accessible to all participants.
- Print three copies of Leader Resource 1. Keep one copy for yourself, and cut apart the others along the grid lines to separate each item. Fold each slip and place it in a bowl or dish on a table near the newsprint you have posted.

Description of Activity

Participants consider what types of behavior are characteristic of religions or cults.

As participants enter, invite them to take a few slips. Have them read their slips aloud and discuss with the group where on the poster each behavior belongs. Explain that the less cultish a behavior, the higher on the poster it should go: Behavior that is only and always associated with cults goes at the bottom, behavior that could be either or both goes in the hatched area in the middle, and behavior that is only and always associated with religions goes at the top. As the group decides where on the poster each slip belongs, have the youth tape their slips in the appropriate spot.

If the group is unable to reach consensus, a behavior can be placed in two locations on the poster since there are two of each slip.

As more youth arrive, invite them not only to place additional slips but to review and discuss the placement of slips already on the poster.

Ask the group:

- Is every behavior easy to place?
- Why did you place the behaviors where you did?
- Did you always agree on the placement of each slip?
- If there was disagreement, what did you disagree about?

OPENING (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [What Makes a Cult?](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Cults Background](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Cults/Religions poster the group created in the Welcoming and Entering activity

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 2, Cults Background, so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Copy Handout 1, What Makes a Cult? for all participants.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Youth learn about and discuss some basic information about cults.

Answer any questions you could not answer from the last workshop.

Invite the youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and sharing briefly a memory of a time when they were happy to be taken care of—when they were sick, perhaps, or exhausted, or sad, and someone took care of them.

Share with the youth that today they will explore the idea of cults. Cults are a tricky subject because people have many different ideas of what a cult is. Ask participants what they understand a cult to be and/or what they have heard about cults. Note aloud the interesting and varied ideas. Ask what questions they have about cults, and write their questions on newsprint. Answer the ones you can. Tell the group that during this workshop, many of their other questions will be answered. After the workshop, you will seek the answers to any remaining questions, which you will share at their next meeting.

Go over with the group the information in Leader Resource 2, Cults Background. Start by asking what the youth think of as notable differences between religions and cults. If they have made a poster, and they need prompting, refer to the poster.

Ask participants, "Have you ever wished for things to be simpler—to just be able to float along without having to make constant decisions?" Refer to the memories they shared of times when they felt happy to be taken care of.

If their answer is no, they do not ever want things simpler, ask:

- Have you ever felt completely worn out?
- Have you ever wished you could share your load—that someone else would take responsibility, even for a short time, for everything that usually falls on you?

Suggest that if the youth know the safe feeling of being cared for, or if they can understand the wish for some relief from their responsibilities, they can understand the appeal of cults. The promise of a cult is simplicity—everything is decided, all is provided.

Post a blank sheet of newsprint and say, in these words or your own:

The term "cult" is used in so many ways and to mean so many different things, the Religious Tolerance website offers the conclusion that "the term is essentially meaningless." We need to clarify how we are using the word in today's workshop.

Read a comment from Leo Pfeffer:

If you believe in it, it is a religion, or perhaps "the" religion; and if you do not care one way or another about it, it is a sect; but if you fear and hate it, it is a cult.

Ask the youth for their reactions to this statement.

Say, in these words or your own:

While amusing, there's truth in Pfeffer's comment. [Write "Cult" at the top of the newsprint.] Here are some common uses of the word "cult."

[Write "Not Christian" on the newsprint.] Among conservative Christians, any religious group that does not teach strict Christian doctrine is considered a cult.

[Write "Pop fad" on the newsprint.] "Cult" is used casually to describe a phenomenon supported with outspoken

exuberance, for example, "the Facebook cult."

[Write "Personhood stealers" on the newsprint.] The most common use of the word, though, is to describe a group that seems to take over people, to make them slavishly devoted to the group and its leader and to lose the power to think for themselves.

So, how should we define "cults" for this discussion?

Distribute Handout 1, What Makes a Cult? and give participants time to look it over. Ask for their initial thoughts. Engage the youth in discussion with questions such as these:

- What role do you think trust plays in cults? Could cults be successful without creating trust among their members? Can any religion be successful without creating trust among its members?
- Cults usually present themselves as religions. The human religious impulse springs from our need for meaning and stability in an ever-changing, mysterious world and our need to connect with others. How do cults fulfill those needs?
- Cults stem from an unscrupulous willingness to take advantage of human needs, weaknesses, and insecurities. Can we protect ourselves from people who want to take advantage of us by increasing our awareness of our own needs, weaknesses, and insecurities?
- Do you think cults generally work more through people's hopes or their fears? Why? Which do you think is the stronger force in people, hope or fear? Which is more primal?
- Psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed that human beings' fundamental needs—physiological, safety, love and belonging, and self-esteem—must be met before we can focus on our higher-level needs—self-actualization and self-transcendence. What would be the effect of keeping people off-kilter, uncertain about basic details of their lives—where they will sleep, what they will eat, what they will be told to do? Would this support or undermine their higher reasoning and spiritual advancement?
- Many religious groups—including Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Wiccans—were considered cults early in their existence but gradually gained greater public acceptance. Do you think this is due to changes in the organizations over time, or is it more likely that over time people got used to them? Could

growing numbers of people in these groups gradually force public acceptance of them? Is that inherently a good thing—is the sheer number of participants a good reason to confer validity on a religious system? Is a relatively small number of members a reason to deny validity? Are growing numbers a reliable indicator of religious worth?

- The human drive to be together, to enjoy the communal experience, to like caring for other people and being cared for, has contributed to our surviving and thriving as a species. This deep impulse is what cult leaders exploit. How might you start a discussion with someone you think might be involved in such a group in a way that honors this primary, positive human urge yet suggests less self-sacrificing ways of feeding it?
- How might you safeguard yourself from exploitation while pursuing the primal drive to care for and be cared for by others?

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — JIM JONES AND THE PEOPLES TEMPLE (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple](#) (included in this document) "
- Handout 2, [Behavior of Abusers](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story "Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple" so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Copy the handout for all participants.
- Look up and have available the phone number for a local abuse hotline.

Description of Activity

Participants hear and discuss the story of the Peoples Temple and discuss abuse.

Read the story aloud.

Ask for initial reactions. What did youth think of the story? Had they heard of the tragedy at Jonestown before? Acknowledge that this story is frightening and that the Peoples Temple is an extreme case. It is the largest, though not the only, example of a United States cult resulting in suicides. However, most cult memberships do not end in death.

Continue to discuss the story by asking questions such as these:

- Have you ever found yourself in a situation that you never would have chosen, because things changed bit by bit and took you by surprise? Have you ever been drawn into activities you did not like, or hung around with people who changed and were not good for you any more, or had a friendship that deteriorated so slowly that one day you realized things were terrible but you did not know how it had gotten that way?
- At what point do you take action to get out of a destructive situation?
- Is there ever a point of no return? Many people in Jonestown did not leave because they did not know how or had no place to go. In a case of dire emergency, with no resources, what would you do?
- What might the purpose have been of frightening members? Do you think Jones believed the scary things he told members? If he did believe them, and also truly believed that members' only hope for survival was the Peoples Temple, would his tactics of violence, threats, and coercion be justified?
- Many cult members say of the first cult member or representative who approached them, "They said exactly what I'd always wanted to hear." What would that be for you? What beliefs or promises would sound particularly appealing to you?
- What are deal-breakers for you? What beliefs, actions, or requirements of a religious group would be so counter to your values that you would immediately leave?
- Which, if any, of your values would you be willing to compromise for a group you believed had something important to offer? What could be important enough to compromise your values for?
- Is it amazing to you that most Peoples Temple members drank the poison willingly? If so, why? If not, why not?
- We like to think of ourselves as strong-willed and independent, but in ordinary circumstances, most of us go along to get along, just like everyone else. Which of our beliefs and practices could protect us from being lulled into dangerous situations? How can we make sure they do? How can we try to make sure that our awareness is intact when situations gradually turn sour?
- Have you ever gone along with something you did not want to do because everyone else was going along with it, and you did not know how to get out of it? If so, did that do any harm in

your life? Did it harm the way you think about yourself? If it did not do any harm, could it have? Would you do it again if you were put in the same situation?

- In situations where you did not go along, how did you avoid it? What did you say to people? Is there always a way out? What if your life were at stake?

Distribute Handout 2, Behavior of Abusers, and give participants time to look it over. Ask:

- What parallels do you see between the behaviors described on the handout and Jim Jones's leadership in the Peoples Temple?
- Just as we can enter into an abusive organization, we can enter into an abusive relationship. In a personal relationship with an abuser, the abuser can at times be generous, kind, and supportive. These feelings, and the occasional unpredictable return of loving behavior, make it much harder to leave. Can you see an emotional parallel with cult members who feel loved and cared for?
- Are any of the behaviors on the handout acceptable to you? If so, which ones, and why?
- What is a self-affirming response when someone exhibits one of these behaviors toward you?
- Some of the behaviors listed can be done or experienced by a group as well as an individual. Have any of you ever behaved in any of these ways? Who do you think you could turn to if you ever became a victim of these behaviors?

Let participants know that if they should find themselves in an abusive relationship, there are places and people who can help. On newsprint, post the number for your local abuse hotline. Note that there are also organizations that help people involved with cults. Remind the youth that when they are in an uncomfortable situation—or know someone else who is—there are people they can talk to. As a group, brainstorm a list of such individuals. Make sure that the list includes school guidance counselors, ministers, and religious educators.

ACTIVITY 2: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM — CUULT? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [What Makes a Cult?](#) (included in this document)

- Optional: Cults/Religions poster the group created in the Welcoming and Entering activity

Description of Activity

Participants learn and discuss why some people might consider Unitarian Universalism to be a cult.

Ask youth if anyone has ever asked them if Unitarian Universalism is a cult. Tell them this question may come up sometime. Some people confuse Unitarian Universalism with the Unification Church, whose members are often called "Moonies," after the founder Reverend Sun Myung Moon. So, if someone does ask them this question, they should make sure the asker is not confusing us with the Unification Church.

Ask if youth can think of other reasons someone might believe Unitarian Universalism is a cult.

Refer to Handout 1 and, if the youth created a poster (Welcoming and Entering), to the Cults section of the poster. Ask:

- Given what you have just learned about cults, does Unitarian Universalism have any "cult-like" characteristics? Why or why not?
- What are the "uncult-like" characteristics of Unitarian Universalism?
- If someone does believe that Unitarian Universalism is a cult, how could you respond to their observation in a calm, non-defensive manner?

ACTIVITY 3: HELP! A FRIEND IS IN TROUBLE! (15 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Participants consider what might make a cult attractive to a prospective member and how they might intervene if a friend became involved with a cult-like group. Engage participants to recall the reasons a cult might be attractive to someone which they generated in Activity 1: "What would draw you in to a different religion or belief system?"

Then, lead a discussion with these questions:

- If someone in your life became involved with a group that seemed to you to have cult-like tendencies, what would you do? What *could* you do and still be respectful of their right to make their own decisions?
- Could you still respect and value the person even if they made decisions that to you seemed very destructive to their welfare?
- If you discovered they were being punished for listening to you say critical things about the group, what would you do? Would you stop talking to them about it?

- If they were allowed to continue a friendship with you, could you continue the friendship if you believed there was no way of convincing them to disassociate from the group?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for each participant.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all that seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: FILM AND DISCUSSION

Materials for Activity

- The PBS American Experience documentary *Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple*, either on DVD or online at [Top Documentary Film](#) (at topdocumentaryfilms.com/jonestown-the-life-and-death-of-peoples-temple/)
- DVD player and monitor, or a computer with Internet connection, projector, and screen
- Optional: A copy of the discussion questions from Activity 1

Preparation for Activity

- Preview the film to ensure it is appropriate for the youth in the group.
- Check the congregational calendar and consult congregational leaders, as needed, to decide on a date, time, and place to show the film.

- Advertise the event, making sure to include information about the film's age-appropriateness.
- Test any equipment you will be using.
- Optional: Make copies of an interesting PBS article on [race and Jonestown](#) (at www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/jonestown-race/) for participants, or plan to give them the URL in advance so they can read it online.

Description of Activity

Youth host a film discussion group.

Introduce the film to the viewers. Show the film.

Afterward, discuss the film. You might process the story by using some of the questions you posed in Activity 1.

Including All Participants

Make sure the room you choose for showing the film is accessible to all participants. If possible, arrange for closed-captioning or use the subtitles feature to assist any participants with hearing impairments.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

This workshop dealt with slippery subject matter: Discussion of cults can reveal people's prejudices, and the word "cult" is used in so many ways, it can be hard to reach a common understanding. Review the workshop with your co-leader:

- How did you navigate this complex landscape?
- Did participants engage the subject with respect?
- Did they seem to understand the deeper human concepts discussed?
- Which activities worked well with the group? Which were less successful?
- How will the answers to these questions affect future workshops?

Plan for any adjustments that could make future sessions run more smoothly, and decide who will seek answers to the remaining questions about cults that arose in the workshop.

TAKING IT HOME

When theology erodes and organization crumbles, when the institutional framework of religion begins to break up, the search for a direct experience which people can feel to

be religious facilitates the rise of cults.
— Daniel Bell, sociologist

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we looked at characteristics of cults. We saw that often they exhibit abusive behavior, and we discussed how to recognize and get out of abusive relationships. We reflected on how to help a friend who might be attracted to a cult-like belief system or community.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Whom do I trust that I can turn to when I need a reality check? Can my friends and family trust me in that way?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Rent and watch the movie *Join Us* (NR, 2007, directed by Ondi Timoner). You can also visit the movie's [website](#) (at www.joinusthemovie.com/culttest.php) to take a cult vulnerability test. After you take the test, you will receive a score and links to more information about protecting yourself from cult recruitment.
- The Advanced Bonewit's [Cult Danger Evaluation Form](#) (at www.neopagan.net/ABCDEF.html) is a useful online tool for rating the destructive behavior of groups.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CLIQUES (75 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- One episode of the MTV program *If You Really Knew Me*
- Computer with Internet access, projector, and screen
- Handout 1, [What Makes a Cult?](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose an episode of [If You Really Knew Me](#) (at www.mtv.com/shows/if_you_really_knew_me/series.jhtml), an MTV series about Challenge Day, a nonprofit, nationwide effort to break down barriers between segregated groups or cliques at high schools. The episode titled "[Colusa High](#) (at www.mtv.com/videos/if-you-really-knew-me-ep-105-colusa-high-school/1643149/playlist.jhtml)" might work well. Note that some episodes mention drug use, sexual behavior, and mild violence, but not in a glorified manner. Some episodes also deal with suicide and death, which might be difficult for a youth currently dealing with loss to watch.
- Watch the episode you have chosen before showing it to the group so you are aware of controversial topics and ready to discuss them

with the youth. You might also read the [Introductory Guide](#) (at www.challengeday.org/mtv/downloads/IYRKM_IntroGuide.pdf) to the program.

- If needed, copy the handout for all participants.
- Test any equipment you will be using.

Description of Activity

Youth watch a video about and discuss cliques. Tell the group that in 2010, MTV ran a series called *If You Really Knew Me*. Twelve high schools were filmed as they participated in Challenge Day, a program designed to break down barriers between cliques in high school.

Show the episode you chose.

Engage the youth in discussion by posing these questions:

- What did you think of the program?
- How do the stories of these youth reflect your experience?
- What does this program have to do with cults?

Say that though cliques are not the same as cults, there are some similarities. Refer the youth to Handout 1, *What Makes a Cult?* Discuss these points:

- Often, cliques have one charismatic leader who approves group practices. Clique members may be overly dedicated to this leader, supporting them even when they do something a member believes is morally wrong.
- Asking questions or behaving in a way that does not abide by the rules of the clique, both explicit and implicit, is not tolerated. If you disagree, you may be thrown out of the clique.
- Clique leaders dictate or approve where members sit for lunch, what they wear, whom they associate with, which boyfriends or girlfriends are acceptable, and other details of daily living.
- Group humiliation is a common tool used to keep members obedient.
- Cliques are elitist. Members feel as if special status is bestowed on them by membership. Often, the high school environment validates this idea. Certain cliques feel secure in knowing the homecoming court or the class valedictorian will be chosen from among their members.

Ask the youth if they can identify any of these behaviors from the episode of *If You Really Knew Me*.

Note that while these points sound destructive, the reality is that some of these points can be made about most groups, just to a greater or lesser degree. What groups do participants belong to that manage to avoid

the above behaviors? How do the groups behave instead? What groups exhibit some of these behaviors but use them in a more positive way?

Including All Participants

If any participants have hearing impairments, arrange for closed-captioning or use the subtitles feature when showing the episode of *If You Really Knew Me*.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 20: STORY: JIM JONES AND THE PEOPLES TEMPLE

The Reverend James Jones was a charismatic young man of 24 when he founded the Peoples Temple in Indianapolis in 1955. He preached racial equality, and, amazingly, more than half the Peoples Temple members were of racial minorities—a level of diversity almost unheard of in the 1950s. The church quickly grew to more than 900 members. Jones preached social awareness, too, and the church soon ran a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, food bank, and job placement service. City leaders honored Jones by appointing him to the Indianapolis Human Rights Commission.

In 1961, Jones had a vision of a nuclear apocalypse. He told members they needed to move where they would be safe from nuclear attack. Jones and about 140 loyal followers moved to Ukiah, California.

Jones became more protective and controlling. He urged members to live communally and pressured them to give their money and homes to the church. He began punishing those who had contact with "outsiders," including family members. Jones told parents when and how to punish their children. Eventually, he started publicly punishing children and adults himself, with verbal humiliation or a heavy wooden paddle. Jones's shift from being kind to controlling was so gradual that the members who were drawn into this oppressive culture were hardly aware of it. No one outside the Temple had any idea what life was like on the inside. Members protected the Temple's privacy, and armed guards allowed only members inside.

Peoples Temple was a favorite with California politicians. The Temple provided relief for the poor and voted as a bloc however Jones told them to. By 1970, the Peoples Temple had 3,000 members, and attracted 20,000 to Sunday services at its three California locations.

Life inside the Temple grew more intense. Jones told frightened members that the fascist American government wanted to gas African Americans like the Germans gassed the Jews; he assured them the Temple was their only protection. Jones punished anyone who disagreed with him—disagreement was betrayal. He required what he called loyalty tests, involving sleep deprivation and physical pain. Pressure intensified for members to give the church all their possessions. Jones said the church would always take care of them. But then, if members wanted to leave,

they had no money and no place to go, and they were threatened with physical harm.

Through all this, Jim Jones still preached love, diversity, acceptance, and a New Eden on earth after the nuclear holocaust he said was inevitable. Members' hope in the New Eden and their trust in Jones kept most of them in the group willingly. Others stayed because they were scared, or thought they had no choice, or wanted to protect their family.

In 1973, the group came under investigation, and Jones's paranoia grew. He told members they needed to be ready to commit suicide as a form of protest. Routinely, the entire Temple membership practiced mass suicide. They lined up to drink cups of "poisoned" fruit drink, then fell down, pretending to be dead.

Jones dreamed of escaping from prying eyes and interference. The church bought a tract of land in British Guiana, now called Guyana, in South America. A few dozen members moved there and began building their private paradise. They called their little community Jonestown. In 1977, Jones and his closest aides moved to Jonestown. During the next year, more than 900 men, women, and children followed.

As more people relocated to Jonestown, reports of problems there increased. Family members in the States grew alarmed, reported human rights abuses, and feared their relatives were being kept against their will.

U.S. Congressman Leo Ryan initiated a new investigation. With Jones's permission, Ryan and a news crew arrived in Jonestown on November 17, 1978. Congressman Ryan, the reporters, and a camera crew toured Jonestown and interviewed Jones and others. Several families asked to leave with Ryan's group. Jones agreed to let them go, but a team of Peoples Temple gunmen attacked the entire group at the airstrip, killing all but a few who fled into the jungle.

When the killers returned to Jonestown and reported that Congressman Ryan was dead, Jones immediately announced that the group had no choice: They had to commit "revolutionary suicide," right now. If they did not, all of them would be taken prisoner, mistreated, and brainwashed by the U.S. government.

Jones's aides mixed up vats of fruit-flavored drink, with real poison this time. Most members drank the mixture willingly. A few escaped by pretending to be dead or hiding. Those who resisted were forcibly killed. Jones himself did not die by poison but from a gunshot wound, although it is not clear whether he shot himself. In all, 914 Peoples Temple members died in the mass murder/suicide; 217 of them were children.

The Peoples Temple dissolved after this horrific event, but it made a lasting impression on American culture. The term "drink the Kool-Aid," meaning to completely buy in to something or follow a crowd without questioning, comes from the Jonestown tragedy. It is not a phrase to be used lightly.

Until the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, the Jonestown Massacre, as it is sometimes called, was the largest loss of civilian life in one event outside of natural disasters in American history.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 20: HANDOUT 1: WHAT MAKES A CULT?

The information in this handout was compiled from the [International Cultic Studies Association](#), particularly the [article](#) "Characteristics Associated with Cult Groups—Revised" by Dr. Janja Lalich and Dr. Michael D. Langone (2006); a Wikipedia entry on [Robert Jay Lifton](#); and "Common Characteristics of How the Cults Operate" (2009) on the [Let Us Reason Ministries](#) website.

What Makes It a Cult?

The answer depends on how you define the word and to whom you are talking. For purposes of liberal religious examination, this is our working definition of a cult:

A religion or sect, generally considered to be extremist or false, under the guidance of an authoritarian, charismatic leader for whom members exhibit fixed, even religious, veneration.

Groups that meet this definition tend to have an escalating negative impact on the lives of followers. These groups exhibit many common characteristics:

- One charismatic leader is the group's sole authority on truth; only this leader decides, or has the right to approve, all policies and practices.
- Members are zealous, protective, and unquestioningly committed to the leader.
- Members regard the leader's beliefs and practices as truth and law; the leader affirms and enforces this idea.
- Questioning, doubt, and dissent are discouraged or punished.
- The group's leadership dictates how members should think, act, and feel. Members require the leader's permission to change jobs, date, marry, or have children. The leader tells members where they can live and how to teach and discipline their children.
- The group uses public humiliation or punishment, debilitating work, sleep deprivation, or other practices to create group-think and to suppress individualism and doubt.
- Criticism or jokes about the leader or group are taken very seriously and likely punished.
- The group is elitist, claiming special status for itself, its leaders, and its members.
- The leader and members maintain theirs is the only path to truth and salvation.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 20: HANDOUT 2: BEHAVIOR OF ABUSERS

Abusers can be hard to identify because at first they can be completely charming. Skilled at gaining people's trust, they often seem approachable, honest, generous, and kind, as they ease into people's lives and hearts. Slowly, though, things start to go terribly wrong. The abusive behavior escalates as the relationship advances, gradually becoming more controlling, demeaning, and aggressive. Only after the victim feels hopelessly trapped does the situation become unbearable.

It is essential not to let positive impressions blind one to a person's behavior as it develops over time.

The list below includes many common behaviors of abusers, though it does not include the most obvious forms of violence, such as screaming or hitting. An extremely manipulative, predatory abuser might never physically harm a victim. Nonetheless, all behaviors listed here should be considered violent.

Abusers:

- Insist that their own thoughts and feelings be respected, but are not respectful of others' thoughts and feelings
- Blame the victim for inciting abuse: "You made me do it."

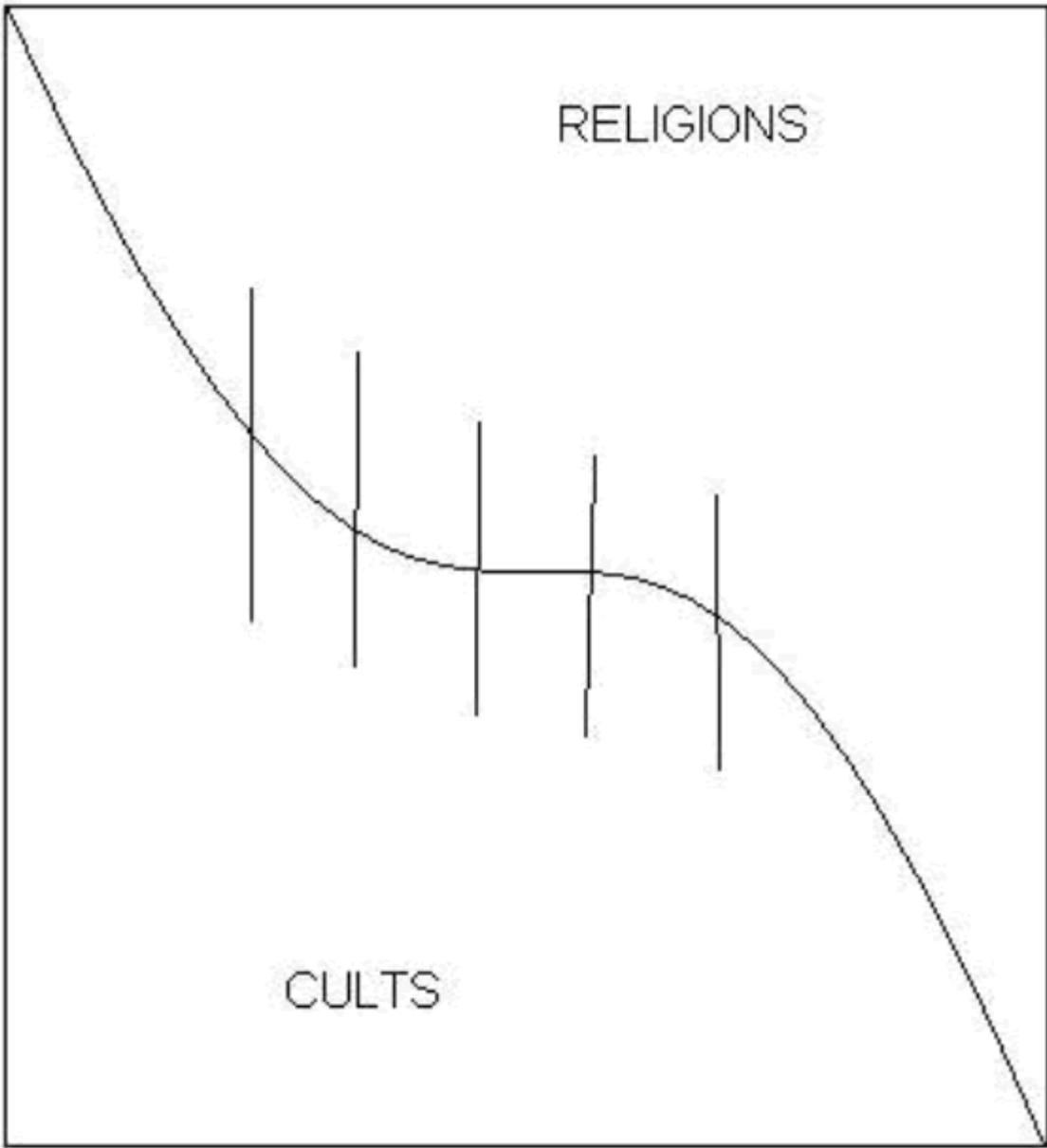
- Generally will not take responsibility—constantly blame everyone and everything but themselves
- Keep people isolated by preventing or discouraging contact with friends or family
- Shove, push, block the way, or stand or behave in a threatening manner
- Threaten to hurt people or their friends or family
- Discount other people's worth and opinions
- Encourage dependence; tell others they cannot get along by themselves
- Control access to finances, telephones, television, computer, cars, and other family resources
- Criticize, devalue, insult, humiliate, and otherwise make people feel small, worthless, stupid, clumsy, helpless, unwanted, or inferior
- Use intimidation or manipulation to get their way and control people
- Abuse or threaten to abuse pets
- Destroy or threaten to destroy things other people value
- Act distrustfully; intrude on privacy (e.g., barging in, reading mail)
- Withhold conversation or affection to control or punish
- Exhibit jealousy; make unfounded accusations
- Have unpredictable outbursts of anger or rage
- Cite authoritative sources to justify their oppressive behavior (e.g., quoting a religious text to justify physical punishment or assert superiority)

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 20: LEADER RESOURCE 1: WHAT DO CULTS AND RELIGIONS DO?

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/chartreligioncults.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/chartreligioncults.pdf) for printing.

Recreate the image of the poster on newsprint. Cut the phrases into slips of paper.

Make everybody eat together	Pressure people to give their houses, cars, money, etc. to the group
Track down and/or kill people who leave the group	Punish people for criticizing the group or the leadership
Pressure people to give a set portion of their income to the group	Excommunicate or shun people for very bad offenses
Require doing unhealthy tasks, such as going without sleep, to prove loyalty	Require specific behavior to demonstrate one's faith
Discourage contact with family or friends outside the group	Declare that opponents or enemies should be tricked, sued, lied to, or destroyed
Make members feel guilty about making life choices for themselves	Encourage or require all members to live together or in the same area
Insult members, diminish their sense of self-worth	Require that children attend schools run by the group
Publicly punish or humiliate members, both adults and children	Strongly encourage parents to send children to group-run schools
Assure members the group will always be there for them	Assure members the group will always completely take care of them
Encourage members to be somewhat dependent on the group	Encourage members to be independent thinkers
Encourage members to be totally dependent on the group	Want children to grow up to be members of the group
Require that children become fully indoctrinated members for life	Require children to be taught group doctrine, but allow them to leave
Rely on the gratitude and generosity of members to perpetuate itself	Specify certain texts as the only acceptable sources of ultimate truth
Interpret the world for members, who must accept this interpretation	Create a mindset of "us versus them"
Perpetuate themselves by playing on members' insecurities and fears	Offer members reassurance that they matter and others care about them
Maintain that its teachings are the only path to eternal salvation	Punish misbehavior in social, unofficial ways
Require members' attendance at group events to be in good standing	Require a financial contribution to be a member in good standing
Require a large financial contribution to be a member in good standing	Require occasional proof of loyalty



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 20: LEADER RESOURCE 2: CULTS BACKGROUND

The first dictionary definition of "cult" is "a system of religious worship." In other words, by the first definition, all religions everywhere are cults. This is different, however, from the way the word is most commonly used today.

The number of cult members worldwide changes radically based on which definition is used:

- *A cult is any religious group that does not teach strict Christian doctrine.* By this definition, more than 6.5 billion people are cult members, since even Catholicism is considered a cult by the most conservative Christian groups.
- *A cult is a phenomenon supported with outspoken exuberance and devotion from its adherents.* In this colloquial usage, actual membership is not the issue; the word "cult" is more a description of behavior or enthusiasm.
- *A cult is a group that seems to take over people so that they lose the power to think for themselves.* In this definition, cult membership is still impossible to determine because of disagreement about which groups qualify. The Chinese government considers Falun Gong a cult, but many people would not agree, including its 100 million practitioners. Some consider the Latter-day Saints (Mormons) a cult, though many do not—there are 12 million Mormons in the world. Many consider Wicca a cult, and many do not—there about 3 million practicing Wiccans. Many consider Scientology a cult—though the 500,000-plus Scientologists would disagree.

To make matters even more complicated, some religious groups choose not to collect or to share their membership numbers, for many reasons. Estimating cult membership remains impossible without a widely agreed-on meaning of the term and reliable figures for membership.

FIND OUT MORE

The [Ross Institute Internet Archives](#) (at www.culteducation.com/) offers links to many articles on Jones, the Peoples Temple, and the tragedy in British Guyana.

[Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple](#) (at jonestown.sdsu.edu/), posted by the Department of Religious Studies at San Diego State University, provides a number of resources, including memorializations of those who died and primary source documents from Peoples Temple members.

"[Inside Peoples Temple](#) (at jonestown.sdsu.edu/AboutJonestown/PrimarySources/newWestart.htm)," on the *San Francisco Chronicle's* website, is a pivotal article first published in *New West Magazine*, August 1, 1977.

"[Doomsday Dream Believer](#)" (at www.culteducation.com/reference/jonestown/jonestown40.html), an article about Stanley Nelson's documentary

Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple, appeared in *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*, April 4, 2006.

In January, 2011, National Public Radio's Story Corps aired a [reflection by Erin Ryan](#) (at www.npr.org/2011/01/14/132869886/rep-leo-ryans-daughter-recalls-his-1978-murder), the daughter of Congressman Leo J. Ryan who was assassinated at Jonestown.

Find general information about abuse at a number of online sites, for example, Dr. Sam Vaknin's article "[How to Spot an Abuser on Your First Date](#)" (at www.narcissistic-abuse.com/abuse7.html)."

Websites with general information about cults include [International Cultic Studies Association](#) (at www.icsahome.com/) (a collection of resources on various groups about whom they have received inquiries) and the Biblical Discernment Ministries' Christian website (read "[The Marks of a Cult](#)" (at www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Cults/marksof.htm)).

WORKSHOP 21: NEO-PAGANISM—THE SACREDNESS OF CREATION

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

When one defines oneself as Pagan, it means she or he follows an earth or nature religion, one that sees the divine manifest in all creation.

The cycles of nature are our holy days, the earth is our temple, its plants and creatures our partners and teachers. We worship a deity that is both male and female, a mother Goddess and father God, who together created all that is, was, or will be. We respect life, cherish the free will of sentient beings, and accept the sacredness of all creation. — Edain McCoy, Wiccan author

This workshop looks at aspects of Neo-Paganism, touching on a few branches of this large and diverse movement. If you or your co-leader identify as Pagan or know members of the congregation who do and are willing to participate, consider adding personal experiences to this workshop.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce participants to some aspects of Neo-Paganism
- Connect the seasonal celebrations on the Wheel of the Year with the story of the Great Goddess and Great God
- Compare and contrast a variety of Neo-Pagan belief systems, including Wicca
- Present connections between Pagan beliefs and practices and Unitarian Universalist beliefs and practices.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand how Neo-Paganism relates to ancient Pagan religions
- Explore aspects of Wicca and Neo-Paganism
- Discover the organization [Covenant of UU Pagans](http://www.cuups.org/) (at www.cuups.org/) and consider how Unitarian Universalism can be a welcoming place for pagans.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	15
Activity 1: Find the Pagan	15
Activity 2: Wicca	10
Activity 3: Neo-Pagans	10
Activity 4: Story — The Goddess and the God	25
Activity 5: Fact Sheet	10
Activity 6: Time Line	3
Faith in Action: Community Clean-up	
Closing	2
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement	90
Alternate Activity 2: Tree of Life	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Spend time communing with nature to prepare for today's workshop. Is there a place outdoors that helps you feel renewed and strong? Go to that place. Focus on the journey before you and seek the strength you need to lead the workshop.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1, [On the Altar](#) (included in this document)
- Drawing paper and pencils, pens, and/or color markers

Preparation for Activity

- Make and post a newsprint sign with this question: "What makes a good altar?"
- Place a few copies of Leader Resource 1, On the Altar, on work tables.

Description of Activity

Youth consider what belongs on a personal altar and what does not.

As participants enter, invite them to take a sheet of drawing paper and design an altar they feel is sacred. They can choose anything they like to place on their altar; indicate Leader Resource 1, On the Altar, which suggests possible items. After their art work is complete, encourage youth to discuss among themselves what they placed on their altars and each item's significance. Ask the group to circle items on Leader Resource 1 they believe a Pagan might put on their altar.

OPENING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, [Paganism Background](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 2, Paganism Background so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Post a blank sheet of newsprint.

Description of Activity

Answer any questions that remain from the last workshop.

Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire

of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Invite participants to check in by saying their names and briefly sharing their favorite outdoor activity. Ask everyone to stand as they are able. Point to a wall and say it is the agreement wall. Point to the opposite wall. Say it is the disagreement wall. In between, is the "I don't know" space. Tell the group you will state that a specific group is Pagan and you want them to either go to the agree wall, the disagree wall, or the "I don't know" space.

Here are the statements:

- People who practice earth-centered religions are Pagans.
- Jews are Pagans.
- The ancient Egyptians were pagan.
- Devil worshipers are pagan.
- Buddhists are pagans.
- Practitioners of Native American religions are pagan.
- Witches, or believers in Wicca, are pagan.
- Unitarian Universalists are pagans.

Thank the group and ask them to sit down.

Read or share with youth, in your own words, the information in Leader Resource 2, Paganism Background. Use the newsprint to list important terms from the resource, including the definition from ReligiousTolerance.org, which you will refer to in the next activity.

Invite participants to briefly share something they know or have heard about Pagans. Also, ask what questions they have about Paganism. Write the questions on newsprint. Tell the group their questions might be answered by activities in this workshop and you will answer any questions you can. Tell them you will seek answers—or invite volunteers to seek answers—to remaining questions before the next meeting.

Including All Participants

If any participant cannot easily move from one side of the room to the other, have the youth indicate agree, disagree, and don't know while remaining seated. You might say, "Raise your right hand for 'agree,' raise your left hand for 'disagree,' and shrug your shoulders to indicate 'I don't know.'"

ACTIVITY 1: FIND THE PAGAN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Pagan Beliefs?](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils and red pens
- Newsprint with questions about Paganism generated in Opening)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the handout for all participants.
- Set red pens and black pens on work tables for youth to share.

Description of Activity

Participants discover commonly shared pagan beliefs.

Say:

We have a definition for the Pagans we will talk about today: "Wiccans and other Neo-pagans whose religion is based on the deities, symbols, practices, seasonal days of celebration, and other surviving components of ancient religions, which had long been suppressed... Some modern pagan sects are earth-centered. They focus on living in harmony with the earth and observing its cycles. Others... are deity centered."

As a working definition, this is pretty cumbersome. So, we will start today by distinguishing commonly held beliefs among different pagan sects.

Distribute Handout 1, Pagan Beliefs? and set out pencils and pens. Ask youth to pair up and complete the handout. Instruct them to circle with a red pen beliefs they think most Pagans share. Circle in pencil beliefs some Pagan groups (such as Wiccans, which practice witchcraft) hold, but not most or all. Say that guessing is fine: No one is expected to know all the answers, and everyone's level of knowledge will depend on prior experiences with Paganism, which will vary from person to person.

Give the pairs seven minutes and then ask for volunteers to tell you how they answered and why.

Discuss with these questions:

- All of these statements are held by some Pagan group. Does that surprise you? If so, which statements do you find surprising?
- Which beliefs are most earth-centered? Which are more polytheistic?
- Which beliefs are shared with other religions we have explored?

- Which beliefs are shared within Unitarian Universalism? Is it easy to see why many Pagans have found a home within Unitarian Universalism?

Say:

Even though many Pagans have found a home in our faith, they are not always welcomed. Even UUs are sometimes uncomfortable, with Paganism and its association with the worship of evil, animal sacrifice, or the casting of spells. Some UUs see it as just too irrational. Paganism today is not well understood. Different regions of the country and different populations in the country define and view Paganism differently. What negative stereotypes have you heard about Pagans? Because of negative attitudes, not all UU Pagans are "out"—that is, public about their Pagan faith. Some only practice privately. But others feel comfortable and welcomed in their congregations and enrich our communities with rituals, song, and dance and lively, interactive worship services.

Ask if anyone has participated in a Pagan worship service or ritual. Invite them to share their experiences. Facilitators can share, too. Ask if anyone has been part of a service where the four directions are invoked or the four elements called upon. These are Pagan elements that are becoming more common in UU worship services.

Tell the group that you will now focus on two sects: Wiccans and Neo-Pagans who draw from Celtic influences, as these are the two largest groups found in UU congregations.

ACTIVITY 2: WICCA (10 MINUTES)

Description of Activity

Share background about the Wiccan religion, in these words or your own:

Gerald Gardner, an Englishman, is often credited as the father of the modern Wiccan religion. Throughout its history, England has had laws against witchcraft, the last of which was repealed in 1951. In 1959, Gardner published *The Meaning of Witchcraft*, giving Wicca a public face. Gardner used the term "Wica" as a name for his religion; it is now commonly spelled

"Wicca." Wicca is recognized as a religion in the U.S.

Remnants of ancient religions have always survived. Secret societies have explored witchcraft and the occult.

Some Wiccans use the term "witch;" others do not. By "witch" Wiccans do not mean the cartoonish version we often see. Magic as practiced by modern day Wiccans involves the use of rituals to achieve balance and harmony in the universe. Wiccans do not worship Satan; most do not even believe in a devil.

What do they believe?

That there is a divine power that is the universe. That power has energy, a force that can be drawn on and re-directed.

Some Wiccans cast spells to draw psychic energy from the earth or other elements toward a specific end, usually in situations where things are seen to be off balance. They may seek help from spirits or "elementals," representations of the elements.

Wiccans believe any energy you send out, positive or negative, comes back to you threefold, so they are wary of sending out negative energy.

Wiccans believed in protecting the environment long before greenhouse effects were discovered.

They believe the sexes are equal. They are also very accepting of different paths of spirituality and do not believe in or practice religious oppression.

Many other beliefs vary. Some Wiccans worship deities. Some do not.

- What are some Wiccan beliefs that are counter-cultural, that is, not the beliefs of mainstream America?
- Would you characterize those beliefs as "bad?"
- What characteristics do Wiccans share with any of the other religions we have discussed?
- Why do you think people are uncomfortable with or afraid of Wiccans?
- How would you react to finding out someone in your congregation identifies as a UU Wiccan? What about a friend or family member?

ACTIVITY 3: NEO-PAGANS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Apples for all participants
- Knives

Preparation for Activity

- Gather a few knives for youth to share. Knives only need to be sharp enough to cut the apples. If you are concerned, provide only one knife and plan to monitor its use.

Description of Activity

Youth learn about Neo-Paganism.

By definition, Neo-Pagans base their religion primarily on the beliefs, traditions, and rituals of ancient, earth-centered religions. The most popular Neo-Pagan religions in the U.S. are the Druids, based on Celtic tradition, and the followers of Asatru, based on a Nordic tradition.

The Celts lived in several different places of the modern-day British Isles and were not a uniform culture. Hence, over 300 different gods and goddesses have been identified as worshipped by the Celts, though many are presumed to have been local gods. About 33 appear to be supreme. Some of the most popular ones are Arawn, Brigid, Cernunnos, Cerridwen, Danu, Herne, Lugh, Morgan and Rhiannon.

The number 3 is important in Druidism. It represents the sacred (that is, earth, water, and sky); the being (that is, spirit, mind, and body); and time (that is, past, future, and present). The Druids tend to look at the world in threes.

Neo-Pagans and Wiccans are frequently discussed together because they share many beliefs. These might include:

- Emphasis on nature
- Creating balance is important. Bad things result from imbalance.
- Balance includes equality amongst the sexes.
- Accept people with diverse identities and different walks of life.
- Do not proselytize.

Yet, there are ways Neo-Pagans and Wiccans differ. These might include:

- Not all Wiccans worship deity.
- Not all Neo-Pagans believe in magic and the casting of spells.
- Neo-Paganism places a higher priority on rediscovering and reconnecting to the ancient ways.

Toss each participant an apple. Instruct participants to cut their apples along the equator, creating a top half and bottom half. You might demonstrate this first. When you open the two halves, you will see a pentagram in the center of each open half. Demonstrate. Then, invite youth to cut their own apples and enjoy their apple during the story, which mentions the pentagram in the apple.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY – THE GODDESS AND THE GOD (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Goddess and the God](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 3, [Wheel of the Year](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Lyrics – Chant for the Seasons](#) (included in this document)
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook
- A copy of *Singing the Journey*, supplement to *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Paper and writing materials
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.
- Print Leader Resource 3. Enlarge it to make a poster, or draw the wheel on a sheet of newsprint.
- Copy Handout 2 for all participants.
- Optional: Consider inviting a guest musician to teach Hymn 73 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "Chant for the Seasons." This would be a simple way to involve congregational adults with the group.

Description of Activity

Youth learn about the Wheel of the Year.

Part One (10 minutes)

Hold up the Wheel of the Year poster or newsprint you made from Leader Resource 3. Say:

This is the Pagan Wheel of the Year. The holy days on the wheel are celebrated by most Wiccans and Neo-Pagans. They are part of the Celtic tradition. Each point on the wheel corresponds to a holy day, which corresponds to changes in the earth. You will see there is a holy day about every six weeks. Did you know that the holy days also correspond to a grand

story, a story about a goddess and a god?

Tell or read the story. Ask participants for their initial reactions: What did they think of the story?

Lead a discussion with these questions:

- Where have you heard of the Wheel of the Year before this story?
- Let's name the eight holy days mentioned in the story. Do you celebrate any of the eight sacred days? Which ones, and how?
- Some religions, particularly Christianity, set their holidays on the same days as pre-existing Pagan holy days. Can you identify any of those from the story?
- What items or traditions in the story are in our culture today?

Part Two (10 minutes)

Distribute paper and writing implements. Ask participants to pick a day that appeals to them, out of the eight, write it across the top of their paper, and then list ways this holiday is or could be celebrated. Encourage them to be creative. What would they do at home? Publicly? With friends or family? Privately? What would they eat or drink that symbolizes the holiday? What music would be appropriate? Would they dress differently? Let participants work for five minutes. Invite them to share their ideas with the group.

Part Three (10 minutes)

Show the group our hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition* and the hymnbook supplement, *Singing the Journey*. Say there are several songs in our hymnbooks that celebrate earth-centered traditions, some based on Native American chants and prayers, for example, in *Singing the Journey*, Hymn 1069, "Ancient Mother" and Hymn 1070, "Mother I Feel You." Note that when we borrow from another culture, we need to be respectful. This means crediting the source and acknowledging that what a song means to you is not necessarily the same as what it may mean to someone from the original culture. You need to be careful to not pretend to be Native American, for example. Hymn 73 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "Chant for the Seasons," uses a Czech melody, but the words and arrangement are Unitarian Universalist. Teach the song or, if you have a guest musician, invite them to teach the song.

ACTIVITY 5: FACT SHEET (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 3, [Neo-Paganism and Wicca Fact Sheet](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 3 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Youth receive a fact sheet on Pagans to take home.

Distribute Handout 3, Neo-Paganism and Wicca Fact Sheet. Review it with the group. Then, ask:

- What questions do you still have about Pagans?
- What beliefs do UUs and Pagans share?
- How does knowing about Paganism influence your Unitarian Universalist faith?

If there are outstanding questions about Pagans, assign volunteers to research and bring answers to the next workshop or divide these duties among facilitators.

If you will be engaging with a Pagan community, give participants any information they need.

ACTIVITY 6: TIME LINE (3 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Religions Time Line (Workshop 1)
- Sticky notes and fine-point markers
- World map or globe

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Religions Time Line.
- Create a sticky note saying "Paganism, Indigenous," one saying "Wicca, 1959," and another saying "Neo-Paganism, 1967."

Description of Activity

The time line is updated to add Paganism.

Ask participants to help you place the sticky notes. "Paganism" should be on the far left, with other indigenous, ancient religions. Remind participants that Wicca and Neo-Paganism, as practiced today, are very recent religions. Place them on the time line.

CLOSING (2 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint and post it where it will be visible to all participants.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. If needed, relight the chalice.

Distribute Taking It Home. Invite participants to sit in a circle and join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

FAITH IN ACTION: COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook or copies of Handout 2, [Lyrics — Chant for the Seasons](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Research possible clean-up opportunities to present to the group.
- Optional: Make this activity multigenerational. Consider inviting entire families of participants to join.

Description of Activity

What better way to honor our connection to Mother Earth than by keeping her healthy? Plan, as a group, to participate in a local clean-up effort. Many communities have annual clean-ups of lakes, rivers, or parklands. Some communities sponsor school clean-ups, which include the school grounds. If you are not aware of any of these, consult congregants, especially people involved in the Social Justice Committee or "green" organizations. Sierra Club members may have ideas. If someone in your congregation belongs to a group or business that sponsors a portion of a nearby highway, ask if the youth can participate in their next clean-up effort.

To bring a greater spiritual focus to this activity, ask a Pagan member of your congregation (or another Pagan group, if you cannot find a congregational volunteer) to start the clean-up off by blessing the group's efforts. During the clean-up, sing Hymn 73 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "Chant for the Seasons," if the group has learned it.

After the clean-up, gather together and discuss the experience:

- Have you ever participated in a clean-up before? Did the blessing and the intention

behind this clean-up change the experience for you? How so?

- What other ways can you practice greater respect and caring for the earth?
- What can you do to deepen your feeling of connection to the earth?

Including All Participants

Make sure the clean-up site you choose is accessible to all the youth as well as other congregational members who may accompany the group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Review today's workshop with your co-leader. Did the participants engage the subject with respect? Did they accept Paganism as a true religion? If you invited a visitor, did the group treat the guest respectfully?

The next workshop is the closing workshop. If you wish to give gifts to youth, make sure the gifts will be ready in time. If you wish to include refreshments, check for allergies and arrange who will purchase, set up, and clean up the treats.

TAKING IT HOME

When one defines oneself as Pagan, it means she or he follows an earth or nature religion, one that sees the divine manifest in all creation.

The cycles of nature are our holy days, the earth is our temple, its plants and creatures our partners and teachers.

We worship a deity that is both male and female, a mother Goddess and father God, who together created all that is, was, or will be. We respect life, cherish the free will of sentient beings, and accept the sacredness of all creation. — Edain McCoy, Wiccan author
IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we discussed the amorphous definitions for "Pagan." We narrowed our exploration to contemporary Wiccans and Neo-Pagans and talked about many of their beliefs. Some of their beliefs are shared with Unitarian Universalism. We learned about the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS), which has 70 or more chapters across the United States.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How might a view of the earth as divine affect the ecology and green movements?

EXPLORE THE TOPICS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- The [website for CUUPS](http://www.cuups.org) (at www.cuups.org) lists local chapters. The home page has

photographs of events. Would you recognize these as Pagan events or do they look like just another UU event to you?

- [Spiral Scouts](http://www.spiralscouts.org/) (at www.spiralscouts.org/) began as an alternative to Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Groups. Though it was started by a Pagan, earth-centered group, it embraces diversity of all sorts, including religion. Connection to the earth is an important part of Spiral Scouts, but each chapter establishes its own guidelines and activities.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT (90 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- If your congregation has a CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans) chapter, contact that group. Tell them about the Building Bridges program and ask if one or more members would be interested in talking to the group and leading them in a Pagan worship service. If you do not have a CUUPS chapter, seek out Pagans in your congregation. As a last resort, inquire of a local group of Pagans.
- Ask for a presentation on their Pagan beliefs and a sampling of Pagan worship. Express a desire for a question and answer period. Make sure visitors know their presentation/worship must be age-appropriate. With young youth, the use of magic would not be appropriate, though a visitor might wish to discuss how they use magic in their life.

Description of Activity

Participants engage with a Pagan community.

Most of the engagement activities in Building Bridges direct the group to attend a worship service of another faith community. In this activity, the Pagan community comes to the group. See general suggestions on Engagement in the program Introduction, under Implementation.

Introduce the visitor(s). Invite them to give a presentation and conduct a short worship. After worship, open a question and answer session. You might seek a youth volunteer to facilitate this portion. If participants do not, ask the visitor(s) to describe the diversity among people who identify as Pagan and the relationship between Pagan and Neo-Paganism.

Thank the visitor(s).

Talk about the experience afterward, using these questions as starting points:

- Was there an altar? What was on it?

- Was any special clothing worn?
- Was there music and singing?
- Did you see, smell, taste, or hear anything different from other religious services attended during this program?
- Was there a sermon or homily? If so, could it have been given in a UU worship service?
- Was the service interactive? How did you feel about that?
- Would you say the worship as closer to Wiccan or Neo-Pagan in nature?

Thank the youth for their respectful participation.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: TREE OF LIFE (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 4, [Celtic Tree Art](#) (included in this document)
- Art paper and other materials, such as pencils and color pencils, markers, and pastels
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare work tables for participants to use the art materials you have provided.
- Post a sheet of blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Participants explore the meanings and images of trees in religions.

Draw a simple outline of a tree on newsprint. Ask the group to name what you drew. When they answer "a tree," ask if anyone would like to guess why you drew a tree. If they do not guess, tell them it is to start a discussion about the prominence of trees in religion.

See if the group can name any trees from religions. They might mention the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, a common image in Judaism and Christianity; the sacred groves of Shintoism; Jesus' crucifixion on a cross made of wood (and he was the son of a carpenter or woodworker); Buddha's enlightenment which occurred under the Bodhi tree. Note that Christianity received the tradition of the Christmas tree from the Pagan Celtic religion.

Say that the Pagan Celtic religion also has an image called "the Tree of Life." Show Leader Resource 4, Celtic Tree Art. Explain:

The roots represent the Otherworld, which is where the dead and unborn dwell. The trunk is our mortal world, while the branches are the heavens or a universe of mighty gods. In the Celtic tree, the branches and roots are

connected. The tree symbolizes strength, longevity and wisdom. It depicted the connections between earth, the spirit world, and the universe. The tree of life also symbolized the endurance of time.

Point out that "the tree of life" is a term used outside the religious world, too. Science uses the term to talk about evolution. Can the youth think of other things trees symbolize?

Invite participants to use the art materials to create a tree that is special to them. It can be symbolic or representational. Maybe it is the tree that housed their first tree house?

When ten minutes are left, ask youth to finish their drawings and help clean-up. Invite volunteers to share their trees.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21: STORY: THE GODDESS AND THE GOD

The [Catanna](#) website published by Catresea Ann Canivan was a source for this story and offers deep information about Paganism.

Come with me on a journey—a journey that is as old as time itself. Repeated so often, the earth knows the rhythm and follows it, like a cosmic dance.

First steps of the dance take us to October 31, Samhain ("SAH-wan"), or Hallowe'en. Why does the dance start here? Because here are both of the greatest events in any individual's life. Here lies Death—the great God dies. But here also lies the potential for new life: the Goddess sleeps, pregnant with the unborn new god. Death is not a bad thing: if the god did not die, he could not be reborn. The great God's spirit is not the only one that is turned loose tonight. The lines between the living and the dead are thin and spirits may walk the earth. See how people carve scary faces on pumpkins to frighten the spirits away.

One small turn of the wheel, one twirl of the dance, brings us to Yule, the winter solstice (on or near December 21) the shortest day of the year. On the longest, darkest night of the year, the Goddess becomes the Great Mother and gives birth to the young Sun God. "Celebrate fertility and the perseverance of life with evergreens, holly, mistletoe and pine trees," instructs the Goddess. "Light yule logs and bonfires and sit with me throughout the night as you witness my labor to bring the sun back to the earth."

Imbolc ("IM-bulk"), February 2, comes next, a slow slide toward the light. "Imbolc" means "in the milk;" this is the time in Europe when sheep and cows begin to lactate to feed their young. Now the Goddess is Mother, nursing the young Sun God. The Mother is honored when we cherish springs, wells, all underground sources of water that thaw as the days grow warmer. This is a day of purification: out with the old to make room for the new!

Add a spring to your step as you dance towards Ostara, or the Spring Equinox, on or near March 21. Here we find the young God comes to power. The Goddess has rested and returned as the Maiden, and brings her minions, the rabbits. Rabbits become "mad as March hares" as part of their mating season. Celebrate new life, spring forth like young spring lambs, by coloring eggs for Eoatra, the Goddess of Spring. Lovely Beltane, May 1, promenades onto the scene. Young girls, dancing around the May pole, wear

garlands in their hair. So, too, the young Goddess. She is in full bloom, just as the earth. No wonder the God discovers his love for her.

Turn the wheel to Litha—that is, Midsummer/Summer Solstice—on or near June 21, when the God ascends to his highest power in sky and the Goddess prepares to bring forth bounty on earth. Celebrate the longest day of the year with bonfires. Sit around the bonfire, telling stories, and see if you can stay awake all night. Why? Because the veil between the worlds is thin again and you might see a fairy, like Puck, Titania, or Oberon from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. But be careful! These fey are the trickster kind. Any plants gathered today are especially potent.

Now the wheel brings us three harvest festivals. The first is Lammas or Lughnasadh ("loo-nah-SAHD), on August 1. In our story, the God, having peaked at the height of Midsummer, knows it is time to rest and is voluntarily sacrificed to make the earth—and the Goddess—fertile again. The Goddess as Crone oversees the ceremony. Bake John Barleycorn men and bread, and make cornhusks dolls.

A Pagan time of thanksgiving comes next in the form of Mabon or Harvest Home, on or near September 21. This is no surprise: it is the Autumn Equinox and civilizations have been celebrating the harvest around this time since farming first began. Decorate your home with signs of the harvest. Slice harvested apples crosswise to reveal the pentagram inside. Plant bulbs for spring as you consider what changes you hope the next year will bring.

But where are our God and Goddess?

The wheel returns to Samhain. The Goddess carries the sleeping God. Her fertility and the God's death have brought forth the good harvest. The God that will be reborn rests within the earth until it is time for him to be born and for the eternal wheel to turn again.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21: HANDOUT 1: PAGAN BELIEFS?

Circle in red the beliefs that are commonly held among most Pagan sects. Circle in pencil beliefs held by some sects, though not universally.

It is important to keep our lives balanced.

Female qualities and male qualities should be balanced. Neither is more important than the other. They are both necessary.

We should worship Mother Earth and Father Sun.

Magical spells can help us keep in balance.

Plants and animals have different qualities to which we can connect using rituals.

We are connected to and dependent on the natural world.

We should observe the seasons and cycles of the earth: They correspond to human seasons and cycles.

Everyone must find their own, true spiritual path.

Proselytizing is not important.

Life and death are two sides of the same coin and not be feared.

We can commune with the dead.

Spirits are all around us, all the time.

Important life transitions such as birth, death, marriage, adulthood, and aging should be acknowledged and blessed through rituals.

We should return to the goddess-centered religions that existed before recorded time.

Homosexual, bisexual, and transgender people are welcome. Their unique perspectives are a divine gift.

Circles are powerful.

What you do is at least as important, if not more important, than what you say you believe.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21: HANDOUT 2: LYRICS — CHANT FOR THE SEASONS

Hymn 78 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; words by Mark Belletini; musical arrangement by Grace Lewis McLauren.

Summertime has turned the starwheel, autumn is upon us.

Sweet the angling sun, sweet upon the air the smell of blue mist rising.

Summertime has turned the starwheel, autumn is upon us.

Glorious the trees, glorious the sight of rust leaves falling, falling.

Summertime has turned the starwheel, autumn is upon us.

Autumn cold has turned the starwheel, winter is upon us.

Grey the windy storms, cold upon our cheeks the wet rain glistens, glistens.

Autumn cold has turned the starwheel, winter is upon us.

Leaping is the fire, golden in the glass the cider glows like amber.

Autumn cold has turned the starwheel, winter is upon us.

Winter rains have turned the starwheel, spring is upon us.

Sharp the smell of loam, bursting in our eyes the turrets of the tulip.

Winter rains have turned the starwheel, spring is upon us.

Greening is the grass, soft upon our brows the sunlight warm caresses.

Winter rains have turned the starwheel, spring is upon us.

Vernal clouds have turned the starwheel, summer is upon us.

Gliding are the hawks, hovering above the hot and yellow hillside.

Vernal clouds have turned the starwheel, summer is upon us.

Crickets in the night, chirping in our ears the sound of moonlit music.

Vernal clouds have turned the starwheel, summer is upon us.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21: HANDOUT 3: NEO-PAGANISM AND WICCA FACT SHEET

Emerged: Neo Paganism is based on what is assumed to be ancient, indigenous religions, but modern day Wicca is dated as beginning in 1959 and the current Neo-Paganism movement can be dated to the founding of the Church of All Worlds and Feraferia in 1967.

Adherents: estimated 1 million

Ranking: 19

Texts: Various, depending upon the branch.

Prophets: None

Clergy: Varies. Some are non-hierarchical; others have priests/priestesses or other leaders.

Symbols: Many, depending upon branch. Pentacle, Triple Goddess, Kabbalistic or Celtic Tree of Life; Wheel of the Year; Eye of Horus, Celtic Cross, the Green Man, the Ankh, and others.

Terms and Fundamental Precepts:

Magic or magick — the art/science of psychically control the energy of the universe toward a specific goal

Druidism — modern Neo-Pagan religion based upon the beliefs of the ancient Celts

Triple Goddess — the Goddess exists as Maiden, Mother, and Crone

Polytheistic — worshipping more than one and/or goddess

Shared with Unitarian Universalism:

- Sixth Source
- Seventh Principle, and a determination to stay connected to and protect nature
- A belief that there are many paths to the divine
- A belief in gender equality
- In *Singing the Living Tradition*, Readings 446, 451, 517, 524, 663, and 703 and Hymns 57, 72, 73, 91, 155, 226, 235, 327, 337, and 387 are about the seasons, solstices, equinoxes, and other Pagan traditions.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21: LEADER RESOURCE 1: ON THE ALTAR

Chalice

Candles

Altar cloth

Water

Cell phone

Hymnbook

Bowl of soil

Incense

Photographs of family and friends

Feather

Money

Photographs of the sick or others in need of prayer or attention

Bowl of snacks

Bread for a Bread Communion

Beautiful stones

Writing paper and pens

Mementos from deceased family and friends

Clock

Tibetan chimes or singing bowl

Stapler

Leaves

Rabbit's foot

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21: LEADER RESOURCE 2: PAGANISM BACKGROUND

"Pagan" comes from the Latin word "paganus." Its original meaning is not clear. One way to translate it is to mean "outsider." It appears to have been used in military accounts to denote civilians (those "outside" the military) and by some writers in ancient Rome to describe people dwelling in the countryside ("outside civilization"). However, by the 5th century CE, the term "paganus" was being used to label all non-Christians. It was applied to heretics and frequently was connected to Satanism (devil worship). The word "witch," used by some Pagans today, was also considered an evil term. Many people today still connect Paganism with devil worship or evil. One definition that still exists in dictionaries is "anyone not Jewish, Christian, or Muslim." Under this definition, Buddhists and Unitarian Universalists are pagan.

"Pagan" can also be used to define ancient, polytheistic religions, like the ones that existed in Egypt, or indigenous religions, like the ones we discussed in

Workshop 3. Therefore, when we talk about pagans, we need to be clear about how we are using the term.

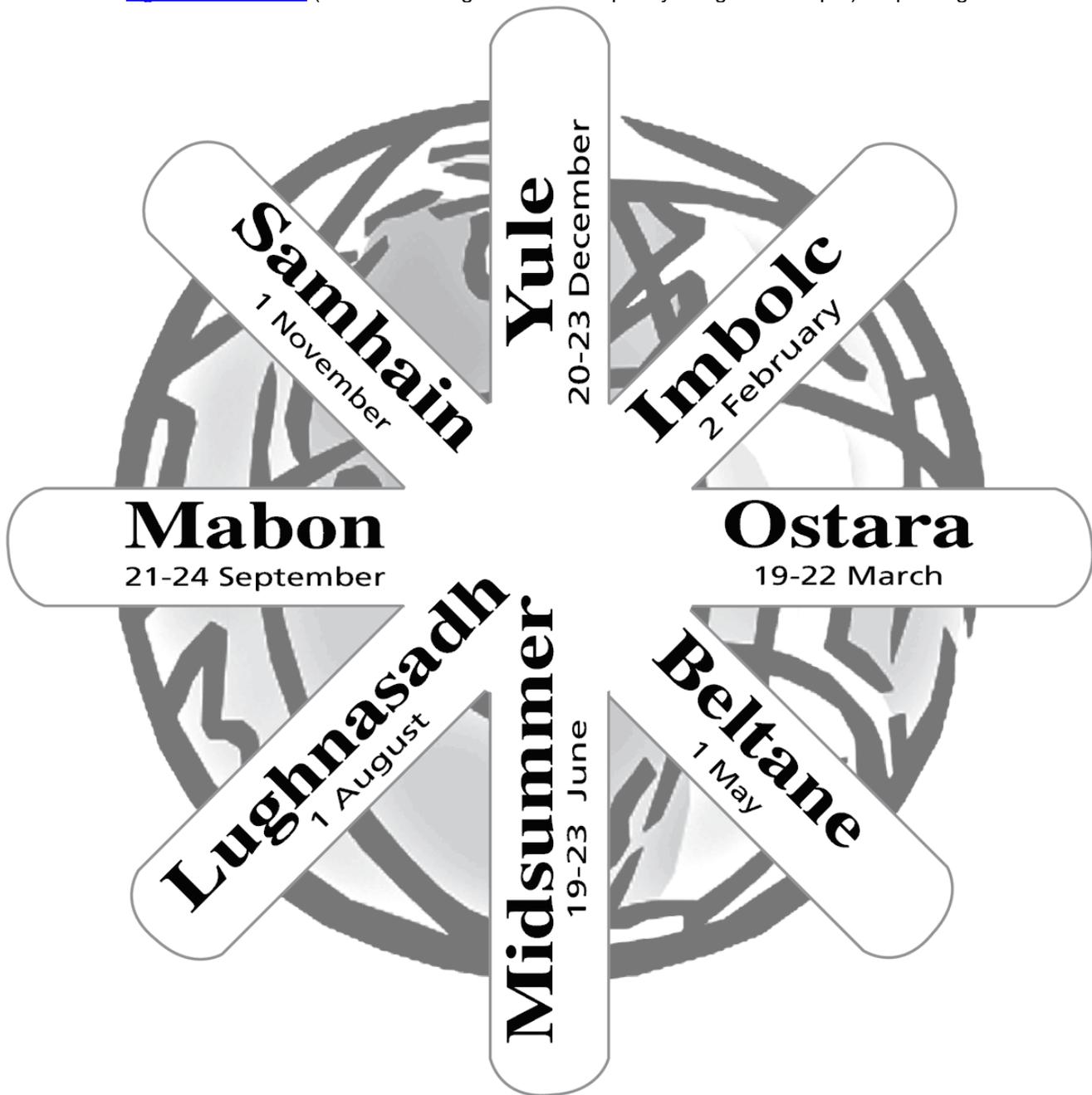
There are many different religions that may define themselves—or be defined by others—as Pagan. One definition for "Pagan" from the Religious Tolerance website is "Wiccans and other Neo-pagans whose religion is based on the deities, symbols, practices, seasonal days of celebration, and other surviving components of ancient religions, which had long been suppressed... Some modern pagan sects are earth-centered. They focus on living in harmony with the earth and observing its cycles. Others... are deity centered." We will use this definition because, in the United States—and in our UU congregations—the Pagans we encounter will mostly be Wiccans and Neo-Pagans.

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) is a group of UUs who theologically identify as pagans. UU congregations can have CUPPS chapters or individuals can belong to the national CUUPS organization.

Why do you think many Pagans are drawn to Unitarian Universalism?

**BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21:
LEADER RESOURCE 3: WHEEL OF THE YEAR**

Download a [high-resolution PDF](http://www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/wheel.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/wheel.pdf) for printing.



BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 21: LEADER RESOURCE 4: CELTIC TREE ART

The first image is Celtic Tree of Life by Jen Delyth (C) 1990, www.celticartstudio.com. Used by permission.

The second image of the Celtic Tree of Life was designed by Brittany Connolly. Used by permission.
Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) (at www.uua.org/documents/tapestry/bridges/celtictrees.pdf) for printing.





FIND OUT MORE

[The Witches' Voice](http://www.witchvox.com/) (at www.witchvox.com/) is a Pagan news and networking site, a resource for finding local Pagan groups.

A nice site for basic information is [A Rainbow of Spirituality](http://a-rainbow-of-spirituality.org/index.html) (at a-rainbow-of-spirituality.org/index.html).

Llewellyn Publications is probably the most famous publisher of books about magic and Paganism. One popular one is *Paganism: An Introduction to Earth-Centered Religions* by Joyce and River Higginbotham (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2002). [CUUPS](http://www.cuups.org) (at www.cuups.org) is the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans.

WORKSHOP 22: WIDER AND STRONGER

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen. Together, our vision widens and strength is renewed.
— Mark Morrison-Reed, UU minister and author

In this concluding workshop, participants review the human needs that religions may address and recall what they have learned about the varied histories, beliefs, and practices of many faiths, including our own. Activities emphasize the religiously pluralistic nature of our world and guide youth to commit to grow as bridge-builders.

The Closing suggests giving participants a small token as a reminder of this program; plan ahead of time to make or buy items. If you will serve refreshments, be mindful of participants' food restrictions.

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Refresh knowledge of the religions explored in the program
- Review the basic human needs religions seek to address
- Demonstrate that our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to build bridges; affirm that understanding other religions helps us build those bridges
- Help participants reflect on Unitarian Universalist faith and religious identity, in the context of local, national, and world religious pluralism
- Celebrate everyone's hard work.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Review histories, beliefs, and practices of religions explored in the program, and know how to continue exploring faiths
- Revisit the concept that all religions seek to address basic human needs
- See themselves as bridge builders and identify tools and actions they will use to build bridges personally, locally, and beyond
- Give and receive thanks and appreciation

- Optional: Plan a worship service for the congregation and (optional) interfaith guests
- Optional: Plan to host a guest speaker on interfaith work
- Optional: Assess potential partners in the congregation and the local community for an interfaith social justice project.

WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Welcoming and Entering	0
Opening	5
Activity 1: Review	15
Activity 2: What Is Religion For?	20
Activity 3: Story — A Repair Job	10
Activity 4: Bridges Built	25
Faith in Action: Connecting the Congregation with Our Multi-Religious World	
Closing	15
Alternate Activity 1: Engagement -- A UU Worship Service	0

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Consider the journey you have taken into the history, beliefs, and practices of multiple religions. Allow a particular faith to spring to mind. Then ask yourself: What about this faith interests me? Its history? Beliefs? Practices? Does something resonate for me personally, in the way this faith meets its followers' deepest needs?

Unitarian Universalism invites us to embrace wisdom we find in other religions. During this program, has that happened for you? How has your Unitarian Universalist faith called you, guided you, and supported you in this journey?

Has your expanded knowledge of other religions deepened your Unitarian Universalist faith or identity? Were you an interfaith bridge-builder when you agreed to lead this program? Are you called to be one now?

Reflect on how you will continue building bridges once

this program concludes.

WORKSHOP PLAN

WELCOMING AND ENTERING

Materials for Activity

- Note cards and envelopes
- Color pens or markers
- Individuals' names and postal addresses from the faith communities the group engaged

Preparation for Activity

- Alternate Activity 1, Engagement is a youth-led worship service; if you plan to do this, have the date and details ready for the youth to provide in their notes.
- If the group will not plan a worship service, talk with your minister, religious educator, and/or Social Justice Committee and identify specific worship services, social justice projects, or other congregational events to which inviting another faith group makes sense. Gather dates and details.
- Write contact information for yourself, your religious educator, or another adult who can receive other faith communities' "RSVPs" and (optional) text for the note cards. Set these on a welcoming table with the card-writing materials.

Description of Activity

Participants invite members of "engagement" faith communities to visit and to stay connected. As youth enter, ask them to write invitations to the faith communities they engaged with during Building Bridges. Allow a volunteer to write the text of each card; have everyone sign it. If the youth will conduct a worship service (Alternate Activity 1, Engagement), have them invite the faith communities. If not, have them invite the groups to another worship service or another congregational event suggested by your minister or religious educator. Otherwise, the youth can extend an invitation to visit your congregation for any service. If you do this, ask the guests to let you know in advance when they will come. That way, you will be able to arrange for some youth to sit with peers from another faith community during the service and to host the youth group for refreshments afterward.

Give youth the information they need to write the cards, or show them the sample you have prepared. If everyone will sign their name to a single card, make sure the writers leave room for signatures. Ask several youth to address the envelopes.

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter, or an LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Description of Activity

Answer questions remaining from the last workshop. Invite youth to sit in a circle. Light the chalice with these words:

We light this chalice in celebration of Unitarian Universalism and the sustaining faiths of all people of the world. May the flame represent the fire of our commitment to understand all faithful people and build bridges that connect us as one human family.

Acknowledge that this is the last workshop of the program. Invite youth to check in with a sentence or two about their experiences in Building Bridges.

ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Fine-tip markers in many different colors
- Fact Sheets for all religions explored in the program

Preparation for Activity

- Title a sheet of newsprint with each religion the group has explored. Include Unitarian Universalism. If several religions were discussed in a workshop together (for example, Workshops 7, 15, and 19 present multiple faiths), group these on one piece of newsprint. Post the newsprint on the walls where youth will be able to write on it.
- Decide how you will form teams of two or three. If attendance has been irregular, make sure each team has at least one member who has attended steadily and disperse newcomers.
- Print the religion Fact Sheets the youth received in previous workshops. Make a few copies of each for youth to share during this workshop. You might make a binder of all the Fact Sheets, and plan to leave it someplace the youth can access it after the program ends.

Description of Activity

Participants review knowledge gained in past workshops.

Form teams of two or three. Give each team a different color marker. Point to the posted newsprint and say, in your own words:

Here are all the religions we explored in our time together. But why are the sheets blank? They need you to fill them in. When I say "go," each team should approach a sheet of newsprint and write one fact they remember about the religion named. The fact can be about a belief, a practice, or the religion's history. After writing, move on to another sheet. You must write something on every sheet. After you have written one fact on each sheet, then and only then may you return to a sheet to write a second fact. Use of Fact Sheets is not allowed. You may not write a fact that another team has already written. When I call "stop," the team with the most facts wins.

Give the youth five to ten minutes to write on the sheets; base the amount of time on the number of teams, the number of religions explored, and participants' interest level.

Call "stop." Invite youth to look at all their knowledge about world religions and encourage them to take pride in their learning. Count the facts and calculate the winning team.

Ask if anyone was surprised by how much they remembered. Remind them that they received Fact Sheets for all the religions. Distribute the copies you have made. If you have made a binder of Fact Sheets, show it to the group and explain where they will be able to find it after the program.

Announce the winning team. Say the winning team will be helpers during the last activity.

Including All Participants

As with all movement-based activities, find a way for participants with mobility limitations to be fully included. For example, post newsprint sheets where a youth who uses a wheelchair can reach them. You might have teams sit together to work, then send one "envoy" to the newsprint sheets, rather than have all the youth moving around the room. Or, create an orderly pattern of movement. For example, start with teams positioned at particular newsprint sheets and ask the teams to rotate clockwise.

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT IS RELIGION FOR? (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [Religious Affiliation in the U.S., 2007](#) (included in this document)
- Newsprint sheets from Activity 1
- Multiple pairs of scissors (including left-handed scissors) and multiple glue sticks or rolls of clear tape

Preparation for Activity

- Write each phrase as the heading on a sheet of newsprint. Set the sheets aside:
 - Connect with something bigger than ourselves
 - A sense of belonging
 - Finding meaning and purpose in life
 - Answering big questions
 - Knowing right from wrong
- Read the Description of Activity and plan how you will arrange the room and place the materials. The youth will move back and forth between the posted sheets from Activity 1 and the five new sheets. You might attach the new sheets to table tops, or to the floor (with plenty of space around each sheet). Teams will need a scissors when they are at the posted sheets from Activity 1. They will need markers and clear tape (or glue sticks) at the new sheets.

Description of Activity

Youth revisit the concept that the world's religions offer diverse ways to address common human needs. They sharpen their awareness of local, national, and global religious pluralism.

Distribute Handout 1, Religious Affiliation in the U.S., 2007. Explain that it shows the number of adherents of different faiths in the U.S. today based on more than 35,000 adults' self-descriptions. Spend five minutes on discussion:

- What faiths do you see here that we have learned about?
- What faiths are not here? Why? (For example, Sikhs are not listed. Too few in number in the U.S. to have been captured by this survey? Part of a larger faith group on the list?)
- Which of these are present in our local community? Do the national numbers match the relative size of these religions where we live?
- What surprises you about the numbers? Why?

Now set out the five sheets you have prepared, reading them aloud as you go. Remind youth these are at least

five basic human needs that religions try to address, which the group discussed in the first workshop. If needed, have volunteers explain what each phrase means.

Have the youth re-form teams from the previous activity. Invite them to look on the posted sheets about the religions and the Fact Sheets for beliefs or practices that, for adherents, help meet one of these basic needs. Prompt: "What practice gives a Muslim a sense of belonging? (For example, gathering in a mosque, praying five times a day at the same time as other Muslims around the world.) What belief helps a Christian know right from wrong? (For example, the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus to love one another and to take care of the poor.) What do Buddhists believe that help them find the meaning of life? (For example, that this life is an illusion, it may be one of many lives; that our purpose is to achieve enlightenment.)" Be sure to include Unitarian Universalism in this activity, giving participants the opportunity to articulate how their religion addresses human needs.

Tell participants they may write directly on a "human needs" sheet. Or, they may cut a fact from a Fact Sheet, or from one of the newsprint sheets for different religions that are posted around the room from the previous activity; then, they can glue or tape the cut-out fact to a "human needs" sheet. Challenge the group to make sure each of the five "human needs" sheets has several beliefs or practices on it.

Re-gather the group. Have volunteers read aloud the items they put on the "human needs" lists and identify the religions. If helpful, add examples. Conclude by saying, in these words or your own:

This activity gives us a flavor for how diverse religions have diverse ways of meeting people's basic needs for meaning, belonging, answers, and knowing right from wrong. No matter how different from your faith someone else's may seem, you can be sure it is meeting important needs for them, as yours does for you.

Including All Participants

As with all movement-based activities, find a way to fully include participants with mobility limitations. For example, post newsprint sheets where a youth who uses a wheelchair can reach them. You might have teams sit together to work, then send someone to the newsprint sheets, rather than have all the youth moving around the room. Or, create an orderly pattern of movement. For example, assign teams to begin at

particular newsprint sheets and have teams rotate clockwise.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — A REPAIR JOB (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[A Repair Job](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story so you will be comfortable presenting it.

Description of Activity

Youth discuss a story about bridge building.

Tell or read the story. Process with these questions:

- The carpenter in the story facilitates repairing the sisters' relationship. Can you think of people who have been or are bridge builders in the real world?
- One sister asked the carpenter to build a fence, but the carpenter built a bridge instead. Was it right for the carpenter to disobey the sister? If you found yourself in the position of the carpenter, what would you do?
- Have you ever seen someone "building a fence," by the way they are talking or acting toward someone else, and thought they needed a "bridge," instead? What did you do? Did it work?
- Are there times a fence is better than a bridge? Should religions ever stay separate, so they do not come into conflict? Is that possible in our community? Our nation? Our world?

Encourage youth to continue discovering more about other religions and belief systems. Say:

The right of all people to choose their spiritual path is one of our Unitarian Universalist values. Affirming that right is one way to be a bridge builder.

ACTIVITY 4: BRIDGES BUILT (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice
- Fact Sheets about religions
- Large sheets of construction paper, cut into strips and (optional) a circle
- Black markers
- Removable tape, such as painter's tape
- Optional: Materials to decorate construction paper, such as foil stars and glue sticks, stickers, and paints
- Optional: Writing paper, pens/pencils

- Optional: Music and a music player

Preparation for Activity

- Figure out how long to cut the strips of construction paper:
 - If your chalice sits on a small, pedestal-type table, decide where to place the table so youth can connect construction paper strips to it from the floor or from nearby tables and walls. Measure the distance(s) the strips need to span; add a little extra if you want "bridges" to arch.
 - Or, plan to set the chalice in the center of a large work table. Youth can make bridges to the chalice from the outer edges of the table.
- Cut strips of construction paper about 4 inches wide, at the length(s) you need. Make at least one strip for each participant.
- Set out construction paper strips, markers, tape, and any decorating materials.
- Optional: Cut out a construction paper circle on which to place the chalice, so youth can tape "bridges" to the paper instead of to the chalice.
- Optional: Choose music for five to seven minutes of reflective writing. Set up and test the music player.

Description of Activity

Youth identify ways other religions connect to their Unitarian Universalist faith.

Have volunteers help you set the chalice (on a construction paper circle, if you have made one). Explain that they will now make bridges to show ways other religions connect to ours.

Remind youth that our UU congregations are theologically diverse:

- Some Unitarian Universalists identify as UU Buddhists, UU Christians, UU Humanists, UU Jews, or UU Pagans.
- Our worship sometimes incorporates elements from other faiths. (Offer examples youth will recognize: Does your congregation mark Mexican Catholicism's Day of the Dead in October, Christmas or Solstice in December, Passover or Easter in the spring?)
- Our teachings embrace other faiths' wisdom. (Offer examples: Does your congregation sing songs from African American Christian tradition? What readings from other faiths' sacred texts, perhaps from Singing the Living Tradition, are familiar to the youth?)

- Connections can be personal. Remind youth that some Unitarian Universalists practice Buddhist meditation or find inner peace by connecting with the natural world, like Pagans and followers of Shinto and other indigenous religions.

Ask:

- How does this diversity in our own faith call us to be bridge builders? How can it help us build bridges?

Invite the youth to consider more ways the religions they have explored connect to Unitarian Universalism.

Say:

How about wisdom from other religions? How can it feed a Unitarian Universalist faith?

Offer examples:

- Hinduism teaches there are many different spiritual paths.
- Christianity teaches the power of love.
- Muslims and Jews believe there is only one God.
- Atheism/Humanism says human beings are responsible for the good or evil we do.

Now give instructions:

Think of one connection, one way our faith can be nourished by another religion, write it on a strip of construction paper. You can decorate your "bridge," if you wish. Then, tape one end of the strip to the chalice (or, the construction paper circle on which the chalice now sits). Tape the other end outside the chalice area.

Have every youth make at least one bridge to the chalice. Encourage youth to refer to the Fact Sheets for ideas. If you have time, challenge the group to make a bridge for every religion they studied.

If you have decorating materials, encourage youth to decorate bridges and (optional) the construction paper circle on which the chalice sits.

When all are finished, ask everyone to look at the newsprint posted around the room and the bridges to the chalice table. Ask:

- Why is this program named Building Bridges?

Affirm that as Unitarian Universalists, we celebrate the religious impulse in humankind. We honor each person's right to seek meaning, belonging, and moral and ethical guidance in their own way. On our own journeys, we may respectfully integrate some of the religious spirit of others into our beliefs and practices.

Variation

If you have time, invite everyone, facilitators included, to take five to seven minutes to reflect on ways their knowledge about other religions deepens their Unitarian Universalist faith. Invite them to consider how belonging to a theologically diverse congregation demonstrates what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Distribute writing paper and pens/pencils and invite everyone to write their reflections. Tell them they will have a chance to share, if they choose, in the Closing. If you choose, play music while the group reflects and writes.

CLOSING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, and lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Tea light candles for all participants, a small pillar starter candle, and a lighter
- Optional: Refreshments
- Optional: Gifts for participants

Preparation for Activity

- Download, adapt, and copy Taking It Home for all participants.
- Place the starter candle on a table large enough for each youth to place and light a tea light candle. This table should be next to the chalice.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Make or purchase a gift for each participant. A group photo printed and placed in a simple frame is a nice gift. If you or a friend are artistically inclined, you could create new name tags for participants with artwork made up of symbols from world religions. [Uniuniques](http://www.uniuniques.com/main.html) (at www.uniuniques.com/main.html) has a lapel pin with a chalice and symbols from six world religions.

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the chalice. Ask the members of the winning team from Activity 1 to help you distribute tea light candles.

Share this quotation from Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed:

The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen. Together, our vision widens and strength is renewed.

Say, in your own words:

We are a religious community.
Together, as we explore what it means

to live faithful lives, our vision widens to include the perspectives of others. Our strength is renewed as we acknowledge we are not alone as people of faith. As Unitarian Universalists, we also belong to a community of people from all religions who believe there is purpose to our lives and that we must work together to make this world all it can be.

Light the starter candle. Invite each participant and leader, in turn, to place their candle around the chalice and light it using the starter candle. If you gave the group time to write reflections in Activity 4, invite volunteers to read from their reflections. Or, invite everyone to share a feeling about the program in a word or phrase when it is their turn. Passing is also okay. Youth can simply light a candle in silence.

If you have gifts for participants, have the members of the Activity 1 winning team help you distribute them.

Distribute Taking It Home.

Thank the youth for everything they brought to the program. Invite the group to join hands and say together:

All our bridges meet in the middle, in a Unitarian Universalist circle of faith. We are connected with all that lives. We continue with all who seek. We belong with all who love. Go in peace until we meet again.

Extinguish the chalice together.

Enjoy refreshments. Save time for clean-up and ask participants to help you.

Including All Participants

Check food allergies to make sure all can enjoy refreshments. If any youth have severe allergies, invite their parents to help you select appropriate food.

FAITH IN ACTION: CONNECTING THE CONGREGATION WITH OUR MULTI-RELIGIOUS WORLD

Materials for Activity

- A list of potential partners for interfaith work in your area

Preparation for Activity

- Research local interfaith groups that could provide a presenter for your congregation. Your minister, a member of your Social Justice Committee, or a congregant who is also

involved with another faith community may know of existing interfaith efforts. If there are multiple options, make a list and copy it for all participants.

- Research potential partners in your area for an interfaith dialogue or a joint service project. These might include other faith communities that have active youth groups or a faith community you have engaged as part of this program. If there are many possibilities, make a list, and copy it for all participants.
- Prepare to support the youth if they express interest in interfaith work. If you or your co-facilitators cannot continue with the group, engage your religious educator to take a role or help identify other congregational adults who can. Building Bridges can segue nicely into the Tapestry of Faith program [A Chorus of Faiths](http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapes/tryfaith/achorus/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapes/tryfaith/achorus/index.shtml), developed with the Interfaith Youth Core to engage Unitarian Universalist youth (high school age) as interfaith leaders.

Description of Activity

Youth act as bridge-builders by planning an interfaith presentation or project. Invite the youth to share their religious understandings with others in the congregation. Suggest they can begin building bridges by creating an interfaith experience for their congregation. As appropriate, offer the options of (a) planning a presentation by an interfaith organization and/or (b) seeking an interfaith dialogue or service project to join or start in your community.

Distribute the list you have made of potential presenters and/or partners. See if any youth can add to the list.

Planning a Presentation

Invite participants to take roles in planning an event at your congregation where a representative from one or more groups will discuss their interfaith work. Youth can contact potential guest speakers, publicize the event, set up the space, introduce speakers, facilitate questions and answers, and, of course, thank the speakers.

Planning an Interfaith Project

Have youth and co-facilitators agree who will contact potential partners to explore opportunities for young people to get involved in interfaith work. Plan how you will communicate these opportunities to the youth who are interested; it may be wise to set a date and time for a follow-up meeting.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Take time to celebrate and reflect on the program with your co-facilitator. Consider filling in: "I have appreciated working with you because _____." Share your perceptions of what succeeded and why, and what could be changed for the better. Provide notes to your religious educator, to help future facilitators.

TAKING IT HOME

The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen. Together, our vision widens and strength is renewed.
— Mark Morrison-Reed, UU minister and author

IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP... we reviewed religions we have explored together, and reflected on how they meet their followers' needs. We connected our engagement with other religions to our UU faith, and planned actions to keep being bridge-builders.

REFLECTION QUESTION

- What would it be like to belong to a religion that taught all other religions were wrong, and only yours had the truth? If you believed that, how would your life be different?

EXPLORE THE TOPIC WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Continue exploring religions. Here are some ideas:

- Take a world religions course in school or online.
- Attend religious festivals that are open to the public.
- Ask someone from another religion to tell you about their religion. See if they are comfortable inviting you to a worship service, another event at their faith home, or a family religious celebration. Invite them to join you at yours, too!
- Join an interfaith group or start one at your school, congregation, or community center.
- Explore websites followers maintain for religions not covered in Building Bridges. Take care to identify who publishes online resources—it may be a denominational organization, an individual congregation, or one person. As you explore, keep in mind that most faiths can be followed and celebrated in a variety of ways.
- Keep talking about religion—with your friends, your family, and your friends' families, if you are comfortable doing so.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ENGAGEMENT — A UU WORSHIP SERVICE

Materials for Activity

- Resources for planning worship

Preparation for Activity

- At the start of the program, arrange with the religious educator, minister, and Worship Committee to reserve a slot in the worship calendar (see the Program Introduction and Workshop 1, Leader Reflection and Planning).
- Decide how much help you will give the youth in planning worship. You may choose to engage an experienced worship leader from the congregation to help plan the service. You might also involve members of the congregation who come from different religious traditions.
- Arrange for the youth to meet at least once with a minister or lay worship leader who will lead the service with them.
- Gather resources for planning a service, such as copies of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbooks *Singing the Living Tradition* and (supplement) *Singing the Journey*, sacred texts from a variety of world religions, and books of stories from indigenous faiths' oral traditions. Look at the UUA's [WorshipWeb online resource](http://www.uua.org/worship/) (at www.uua.org/worship/); be ready to provide this link to the youth.

Description of Activity

The group coordinates a worship service.

Help the youth prepare ideas for elements to include in the service, such as a story for all ages, a call to prayer or meditation, and songs, readings, and rituals from other religions. Include congregational members who will bring their worship skills, or their knowledge of another religion (such as Hinduism or Judaism).

Choose a topic for a short homily. You might have three or four participants talk about their experiences in *Building Bridges*. The youth might like to include pieces of everyone's reflections from Activity 4, *Bridges Built*. Perhaps a few congregants could share about ways the religion of their youth feeds their Unitarian Universalist faith.

Make sure every youth who wants a role has one. Youth who do not want a speaking role can introduce a hymn or lead a round; youth who prefer not to speak at all can select music or readings, greet attendees, light the chalice, or pass offertory baskets.

The Welcome and Entering activity suggests youth write note cards inviting faith communities they engaged in the program to attend the worship service. Make a plan for the youth to greet interfaith guests at the worship service and, afterward, to thank them for coming.

Immediately after the service and time with guests, gather the youth to evaluate the worship experience.

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 22: STORY: A REPAIR JOB

Once upon a time, two sisters lived side by side. They both owned farms: One grew the sweetest grapes for miles around, the other raised vegetables. A small creek ran between the two farms. For decades, the sisters were as close as could be. Folks in town said if you ever saw one sister, the other was always nearby. They shared life together: meals, tools, stories. Their children played together in the creek. Life was peaceful.

Then, one day, they had a disagreement. It wasn't about much, but they could not resolve it. Slowly, the disagreement became an argument and bitterness set into each sister's heart. There was no more exchanging of meals, tools, or stories. They stopped communicating entirely.

One day, a sister answered a knock at her door. There stood a carpenter.

"Hello, ma'am, I'm looking for work. Do you have anything that needs building?"

"Yes, I do," replied the sister. She pointed to her sister's farm next door. "That farm belongs to my sister. We were best friends, but she has suddenly become unreasonable and I can no longer stand the sight of

her. I would like you to build a tall fence between our properties so I don't have to look at her."

The carpenter replied, "Okay, I understand your need. I think I know exactly what to do." And so he set to work. The sister decided to do her weekly shopping while he was working so she would not be in his way. When she returned later that day, she was shocked to see that the carpenter had not built a fence, but had instead constructed a beautiful bridge across the creek. It was sturdy and wide, with gracefully carved handrails and posts. Before she could object, her sister came out of her house and also saw the bridge. Her sister approached her side of the bridge and said, "I have been so foolish! How could I have forgotten: you are the most loving person in the world. I'm so lucky you are my sister!" and she started across the bridge. The sister rushed across her side of the bridge to meet her in the middle. Both sisters apologized, hugged, kissed, and maybe cried a little.

They turned to the carpenter, who HAD known exactly what to do. They wanted to do something nice for him.

They said, "We have other jobs you can do around the farm."

"Thanks, but I think I'll be moving on," he said. "I've got other fences to build."

BUILDING BRIDGES: WORKSHOP 22: HANDOUT 1: RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN THE U.S., 2007

From the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's [U.S. Religious Landscape Survey report](#). The survey included 35,556 adults; interviews were done in English and Spanish from May 8 to Aug. 13, 2007. The numbers represented are percents.

Christian	78.4
Protestant	51.3
Evangelical churches	26.3
Mainline churches	18.1
Historically black churches	6.9
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah's Witness	.7
Orthodox	.6
Greek Orthodox	<.3
Russian Orthodox	<.3
Other	<.3
Other Christian	.3
Other Religions	4.7
Jewish	1.7
Reform	.7
Conservative	.5
Orthodox	<.3
Other	.3
Buddhist	.7
Zen Buddhist	<.3
Theravada Buddhist	<.3
Tibetan Buddhist	<.3
Other	.3
Muslim	.6
Sunni	.3
Shia	<.3

Other	<.3
Hindu	.4
Other world religions	<.3
Other faiths	1.2
Unitarians and other liberal faiths	.7
New Age	.4
Native American religions	<.3
Unaffiliated	16.1
Atheist	1.6
Agnostic	2.4
Nothing in particular	12.1
Secular unaffiliated	6.3
Religious unaffiliated	5.8
Don't Know/Refused	.8
	100.0

Religious Diversity Is Growing in Society, and in Families

- The survey documents how immigration is adding religious diversity to the American population. For example, Muslims, roughly two-thirds of whom are immigrants, now account for roughly 0.6 percent of the U.S. adult population. Hindus, more than eight-in-ten of whom are foreign born, now account for approximately 0.4 percent of the population. While the number of Catholics born and raised in the U.S. is shrinking, immigration from majority Catholic countries in Central and South America is stabilizing the overall number of Catholics.
- Among people who are married, nearly four-in-ten (37 percent) are married to a spouse with a different religious affiliation. (This figure includes Protestants who are married to a Protestant from a different denomination, such as a Baptist who is married to a Methodist.)

Changing Religion Is Becoming More Common

- Constant movement characterizes the American religious marketplace, as every major religious group is simultaneously gaining and losing adherents. Those that are growing as a result of religious change are simply gaining new members at a faster rate than they are losing members.
- More than one-quarter of American adults (28 percent) have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion—or no religion at all.
- Approximately one-third of the survey respondents who say they were raised Catholic no longer describe themselves as Catholic. This means that roughly 10 percent of all Americans are former Catholics.

Who Are the Religiously "Unaffiliated?"

- People not affiliated with any particular religion stand out for their relative youth compared with other religious traditions. Among the unaffiliated, 31 percent are under age 30. Among Americans ages 18-29, one-in-four say they are not currently affiliated with any particular religion.
- Although one-quarter of this group describe themselves as either atheist or agnostic (1.6 percent and 2.4 percent of the adult population overall, respectively), the majority of the unaffiliated population (12.1 percent of the adult population overall) is made up of people who simply describe their religion as "nothing in particular." This group, in turn, is fairly evenly divided between the "secular unaffiliated," that is, those who say that religion is not important in their lives (6.3 percent of the adult population), and the "religious unaffiliated," that is, those who say

that religion is either somewhat important or very important in their lives (5.8 percent of the overall adult population).

- The number of people who say they are unaffiliated with any particular faith today (16.1 percent) is more than double the number who say they were not affiliated with any particular religion as children.

FIND OUT MORE

After Building Bridges

In your congregation, Building Bridges may segue nicely into the Tapestry of Faith program [A Chorus of Faiths](http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/achorus/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/achorus/index.shtml), developed with the Interfaith Youth Core to engage Unitarian Universalist youth (high school age) as interfaith leaders.

Religious Diversity in Unitarian Universalism

Many Unitarian Universalists have a religiously mixed heritage, theology, and/or faith identity. The UUA offers [pamphlets](http://www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/) (at www.uua.org/publications/pamphlets/) on The Faith of a Theist, The Faith of a UU Buddhist, The Faith of a UU Christian, and The Faith of a UU Humanist. Online, read the UUA pamphlet [Discovering Unitarian Universalism from Catholic and Jewish Perspectives](http://www.uuabookstore.org/client/client_pages/8150.pdf) (at www.uuabookstore.org/client/client_pages/8150.pdf), by Patrick T. O'Neill and Linda R. Weltner.

Likewise, many of our congregations have religious diversity. Engaging Our Religious Diversity is a report from the commission on Appraisal of the UUA. [Read or download the report.](http://www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/coa/engagingourtheodiversity.pdf)

Groups such as the [Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship](http://www.uuchristian.org/) (at www.uuchristian.org/), [Unitarian Universalists for Jewish Awareness](http://uuja.org/) (at uuja.org/), and the [Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans](http://www.cuups.org/) (at www.cuups.org/) (CUUPS) support Unitarian Universalists with multiple religious connections.

Interfaith Activity in the U.S. Today

["American Congregations Reach Out to Other Faith Traditions: A Decade of Change 2000-2010"](http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/faithcommunitiestoday.org/files/American_Congregations_Reach_Out.pdf) (at faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/faithcommunitiestoday.org/files/American_Congregations_Reach_Out.pdf) is a 2011 report by David Roozen, published by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research as part of the Faith Communities Today series.

Visit the [Interfaith Youth Core](http://www.ifyc.org) (at www.ifyc.org) online for reflections, stories, and the opportunity to join an online youth interfaith leadership community.