

CHALICE CHILDREN
A Tapestry of Faith Program for Children



BY KATIE COVEY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SESSION 1: WELCOME	21
SESSION 2: A TOUR OF THE INSIDE OF OUR CONGREGATION	29
SESSION 3: A TOUR OF THE OUTSIDE OF OUR CONGREGATION	37
SESSION 4: MAKING CHALICES	44
SESSION 5: ALL AROUND US	51
SESSION 6: CHALICE NECKLACES	58
SESSION 7: THE BEAUTY OF NATURE.....	67
SESSION 8: FRUIT CHALICES	77
SESSION 9: CHALICE FLANNEL BOARD.....	85
SESSION 10: HELPING OTHERS.....	96
SESSION 11: A SPECIAL JIGSAW PUZZLE.....	103
SESSION 12: FAMILY SNACK PARTY	111
SESSION 13: FEELING SAD.....	121
SESSION 14: WEDDINGS AND OTHER SERVICES OF LOVE AND UNION.....	129
SESSION 15: BABIES	138
SESSION 16: SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES	146
SESSION 17: WONDERING ABOUT STARS	160
SESSION 18: WONDERING ABOUT THE MOON.....	172
SESSION 19: THE WONDER OF WEATHER	179
SESSION 20: RAINBOWS.....	188
SESSION 21: DREAMS.....	196
SESSION 22: IMAGINATION.....	206
SESSION 23: MY SHADOW	213
SESSION 24: BLOCK SUNDAY	222

SESSION 25: TEDDY BEAR MONTH — FRIENDSHIP	230
SESSION 26: TEDDY BEAR MONTH — SICK!	239
SESSION 27: TEDDY BEAR MONTH — LOST!	246
SESSION 28: TEDDY BEAR PARTY	254
SESSION 29: CLOSING SUNDAY	262
SESSION 30: HALLOWEEN	273
SESSION 31: THANKSGIVING.....	282
SESSION 32: HOW MANY DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS?	292
SESSION 33: WINTER LIGHTS	300
SESSION 34: VALENTINE'S DAY	309
SESSION 35: EASTER	317
SESSION 36: EARTH DAY	325
SESSION 37: MOTHER'S/FATHER'S DAY	333

Note: If you add or delete text in this program, you may change the accuracy of the Table of Contents. The Table of Contents is an auto-generated list; if you change content and want an accurate representation of the page numbers listed in the TOC, click the table and click "Update field." Then, click "Update page numbers only." Click OK.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE

The first edition of *Chalice Children*, published in 1998, was my first UUA curriculum. It was an attempt to make the Sunday morning time for preschoolers relate to Unitarian Universalist identity. Today I am delighted to help put a second edition of *Chalice Children* online as part of the *Tapestry of Faith* program. The intervening years have broadened my understanding of faith formation and my desire to introduce the basic tenets of our faith to young children and their families. Those tenets are love, our covenantal community, our celebration of diversity, a personal sense of wonder and awe, and our hope and work for a better world.

In the preschool years, at about four or five years old, young children start to realize that they and their loved ones will come to an end. As they become aware of realities such as death, suffering, violence, and evil, young ones also need the reassurance of love, joy, beauty, good, hope, and community. Helping children find that balance is a goal of the new *Chalice Children*.

This edition aims to enrich preschoolers' religious education outside as well as inside their religious education (RE) time. Young families come to us seeking support for their spiritual life. They experience their young children's questions and existential moments and wish to have resources. The new *Chalice Children* delivers those resources in the form of an extensive Taking It Home section for leaders to give the children at the end of each session.

The revised *Chalice Children* also offers:

- Updated suggestions for story books. You'll find some of the "classics," but there's more reliance on books published since 2005.
- Familiar sessions, modified: "Memory Cards" becomes "All Around Us"—with the addition of digital pictures, making the game is easier! "Chalice Cookie" becomes "Fruit Chalice" to make it healthier and more adaptable. "Snow" becomes "Weather," and "Planting Fall Bulbs" becomes "The Beauty of Nature," to accommodate the geographical diversity of our congregations. "Teddy Bear Month: Fixed!" becomes "Teddy Bear Month: Sick!" to avoid implying that the session discusses neutering.
- New sessions:
 - "A Tour of the Outside of Our Congregation," as well as the inside.
 - "Special Worship Services" offers adaptable resources for leaders to create a session that reflects special services offered in (or unique to) your congregation, using a Flower Ceremony, Water Service, or special Sharing of Breads Service as examples.
 - "Earth Day" was added to celebrate the holiday and connect to our seventh Principle.

Other additions include rhymes to transition the children to Circle Time and Circle Games (a predictable format provides continuity each time a child attends) and new suggestions for multimedia resources. Finally, as part of bringing *Chalice Children* online as a *Tapestry of Faith* program, each session now provides a unique Spiritual Preparation exercise for leaders and a Find Out More section at the end of each session to help leaders extend their own learning.

THE PROGRAM

*There are no extra pieces in the universe.
Everyone is here because he or she has a place
to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big
jigsaw puzzle. — Deepak Chopra*

Young families come to Unitarian Universalist congregations to enrich their spiritual lives, to gain resources for the unfolding of their family life, and to be a part of a liberal religious community. Chalice Children builds a foundation for their spiritual lives in Unitarian Universalism.

This program delves deep into our Unitarian Universalist faith. It strives not just to teach about our faith, but also to provide experiences around the strength of community, the wonder and awe that transcend everyday understanding, and life issues we all share. Early childhood (the years between ages 2 and 5) is filled with curiosity and wonder. In a group setting, with loving adult guides, young children can engage in spiritual seeking, develop their openness to sharing, and experience the benefit of a supportive community. Their time in Chalice Children can set a pattern for the rest of their lives and bring lasting benefits.

The curriculum is based on the belief that preschool children gain a sense of belonging to their religious community and the Unitarian Universalist faith when they have concrete experiences with its people and places. In Chalice Children, young children learn about their congregation's people and explore the physical building and surroundings that the congregation calls "home." This program uses both the word "church" and the word "congregation" to name the people or the place. It is recommended that you consider the preferences of the community you serve and make intentional choices regarding the use of "church" or "congregation." Keep in mind, also, that by using the same terms consistently, you will strengthen the program's impact on children.

This program consists of 37 one-hour sessions. Suggested times are provided for the activities in each session; these times are approximate. It is important to allow young children time to enjoy and absorb the experiences that interest them. Be flexible; base the flow of each session on the attention and interest level of the children. Each session stands alone: Stories, activities, and projects do not continue from one meeting time to the next. Continuity is provided by the ritual of the format, the teaching team, and the theme and symbol of the chalice in a community of people and in a sacred, special place.

The rituals are simple rhymes, finger plays, and games that start the morning with a "call to worship" and a way

of getting to know one another. Through repetition, children learn about their religious community, practice listening and sharing with others, and develop a sense of belonging. Leaders should be intentional about using the term "Unitarian Universalist" as much as possible to help familiarize the children with our name. While the children may (frequently) hear "UU," you can explain that those are just the initials of our name; just as we wouldn't call the children by their initials (demonstrate this), we like to call our faith by its real name. The Unitarian Universalist chalice is introduced through activities and games (e.g., Chalice Flannel Board, A Special Jigsaw Puzzle, the Memory Match Game) that are used throughout the program. These materials and games are homemade and will become part of a Chalice Children legacy for your religious education program.

GOALS

This program will:

- Nurture children's sense of wonder and respect for the world around us
- Grow children's sense of belonging to the congregation
- Celebrate the diversity of families, of individuals, and of ways of being in the world
- Build children's identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation
- Teach to the importance of sharing and expressing love
- Support parents and caregivers in their search for a meaningful family life
- Nurture hope for a just and fair world.

Chalice Children is based on the philosophy that a child's spiritual development is related to the child's own direct experiences. A playroom at home or school is the laboratory for living. Children's toys are their schoolbooks. Their paints and modeling clay are their pens and pencils. Young children discuss problems by reliving them in dramatic play. They question and wonder most vividly when in contact with real phenomena through touch, sight, or sound. Children learn the worth of other people when they encounter other children, experience conflicts in play, and discover that others have feelings, too.

Sophia L. Fahs and Elizabeth Manwell wrote about religious development in *Consider the Children—How They Grow*:

... religion is the dynamic and personal philosophy of life by which one lives. It is found in the meanings one gives to daily living. It involves one's attitudes and deeds

in relation to other human beings, and also one's understanding and attitudes toward the physical universe and other forms of life apart from the mere human realm. It involves one's understanding of self, and an estimate of one's own value. It involves one's attitude toward sex, birth, and death. It involves the balance one maintains between fears and hostilities on the one hand, and the warmth of friendly relations on the other. It involves one's attitudes toward what one cannot know as well as toward what one can know.

Chalice Children is designed to provide the 12 main types of experiences that Sophia Fahs connects with natural religious development in young children:

- Experiences with the great forces of nature, such as rain, wind, snow, the sun, and the moon
- Experiences with animate and inanimate things, sensing their differences and wondering at the mystery of life and at the power within a thing to grow, to feel, and perhaps to think
- The discovery that living things have a beginning—that they are born—and the discovery of one's own birth
- The discovery of death
- Experiences with sickness, suggesting constructive attitudes that may be developed in times of crisis
- Play with one's own shadow
- Experiences with dreaming—the realization that the world of reality sensed during wakefulness is different from the reality sensed in sleep, leading to a feeling for what is invisible in the personality
- Experiences in cooperation, first within the home circle and later in the larger community, from which feelings of security and love arise
- Negative experiences in social relationships, challenging one to observe and consider social cause and effect
- Experiences in making choices, weighing present good against future good
- Experiences in overcoming difficulties alone, bringing a sense of inner strength
- Experiencing personal achievement; creating something new and valuable or doing something original.

To provide these experiences and opportunities to preschoolers, Chalice Children clusters its goals for young children around the “three A’s” of affection, acceptance, and achievement:

- To nurture affection and affirmation for their individuality and their sense of belonging to a Unitarian Universalist community
- To foster acceptance, trust, and appreciation of themselves and others in their world as well as a sense of connection to nature and the universe
- To develop self-expression, cooperative skills, and creative achievements as they learn and grow.

Preschool growth and learning set the stage for a child's future experience within the Unitarian Universalist community. The experiences and messages of Chalice Children are intended to affirm young children in their spiritual growth, creativity, and connection to their Unitarian Universalist congregation. Leaders are invited to adapt sessions by using their own creative imaginations and engaging the special talents of their congregation.

Unit 1: Our Congregation Is a Special Place

Session 1 Welcome

Session 2 A Tour of the Inside of Our Congregation

Session 3 A Tour of the Outside of Our Congregation

Session 4 Making Chalice

Session 5 All Around Us

Session 6 Chalice Necklaces

Session 7 The Beauty of Nature

Session 8 Fruit Chalice

Unit 2: Our Congregation Is People

Session 9 Chalice Flannel Board

Session 10 Helping Others

Session 11 A Special Jigsaw Puzzle

Session 12 Family Snack Party

Session 13 Feeling Sad

Session 14 Weddings and Other Services of Love and Union

Session 15 Babies

Session 16 Special Worship Services

Unit 3: We Wonder

Session 17 Wondering About Stars

Session 18 Wondering About the Moon

Session 19 The Wonder of Weather

Session 20 Rainbows

Session 21 Dreams

Session 22 Imagination

Unit 4: We Make Friends

Session 23 My Shadow

Session 24 Block Sunday

Session 25 Teddy Bear Month: Friendship

Session 26 Teddy Bear Month: Sick!

Session 27 Teddy Bear Month: Lost!

Session 28 Teddy Bear Party

Session 29 Closing Sunday

Unit 5: We Celebrate Holidays

Session 30 Halloween

Session 31 Thanksgiving

Session 32 How Many Days until Christmas?

Session 33 Winter Lights

Session 34 Valentine's Day

Session 35 Easter

Session 36 Earth Day

Session 37 Mother's/Father's Day

LEADERS

The most important qualities for leaders of this program are curiosity, joy, a sense of wonder, and a willingness to reflect on our faith at a level appropriate for young children.

The ideal teaching team of two adult co-leaders for each session (or as prescribed by your congregation's safety policy) will have some diversity, which might be in gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic class, theological beliefs, and/or learning styles.

PARTICIPANTS

Chalice Children is designed for children in preschool, ages 3 to 5. You may find it useful to think about the range of developmental norms for this age group. In [*Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*](#) (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D., discusses developmental characteristics of the preschool child, including the following. The preschool child:

- Learns through sensory and hands-on experiences
- Learns by doing
- Uses self as their own primary reference point

- Focuses on the present
- Attends more to auditory than to visual information
- Learns object permanence
- Categorizes and classifies, often as dichotomies (like me/you and good/bad)
- Enters fantasy seamlessly
- Equates appearance with reality
- Learns language as a process of learning culture
- Makes some social connections that are not completely mediated by caregivers
- Learns about the concept of friendship
- Identifies self in relationship with others
- Lacks a concept of gender or race constancy
- Learns about what is and is not "right" or "good"
- Has begun to develop ethics of care and justice
- Learns about being part of a religious community through experience
- Is receptive to spirituality as experienced through everyday life
- Enters Fowler's intuitive-projective stage of faith development (see [more about Fowler](#) in the Tapestry of Faith program for youth, A Place of Wholeness).

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

- Provide outlets for physical activity and tactile and sensory exploration.
- Provide routines that help the child predict and feel appropriately in control of the environment.
- Allow plentiful time for play.
- Recognize that the young child learns through doing.
- Include as few activities that involve sitting and listening as possible
- Offer opportunities to create and problem-solve.
- Allow the sharing of ideas, reasoning, and stories.
- Enjoy the fluid movement between reality and fantasy.

- Build on developing skills and a sense of identity by providing new ideas.
- Recognize that each child comes with a unique background influenced by family patterns, language, and cultures, and welcome all children.
- Model expression of ideas and feelings with words.
- Encourage social problem solving.
- Support children's emerging ideas about gender by providing broad representations of gender that complicate stereotypes.
- Support children's positive racial identity development and awareness by questioning and augmenting children's natural observations about race and ensuring positive experiences with people of many races (even if secondhand, such as in books).
- Gently confront racism through questioning and leading children toward a more inclusive, realistic, Unitarian Universalist perspective.
- Provide guidance for moral development by overtly and specifically identifying children's positive moral behaviors.
- Encourage religious identity development through participation in simple, appropriate religious routines and rituals.
- Welcome the child's natural spirituality as expressed by everyday wonder and asking of "big questions."
- Welcome the whole child; respect each child as an individual and as a member of the family.

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

A group can include children with a range of physical and cognitive abilities and learning styles, food allergies, and other sensitivities or limitations. Adapt activities or use alternate activities to ensure that every session is inclusive of all participants. In *Chalice Children*, some activities suggest specific adaptations under the heading "Including All Participants." Feel free to devise your own adaptations to meet any special needs you perceive. As the leader, you will know best how to provide a fully inclusive learning experience for the group.

As you plan a session, be aware of activities that might pose difficulties for children who are differently able. All spaces, indoor and outdoor, should be accessible to everyone in the group. Check the width of doorways and aisles, the height of tables, and the terrain of outdoor landscapes. Find out about participants' medical conditions and allergies, particularly to food, and make

appropriate adaptations. Let your understanding of the different learning styles in the group guide your selection of activities for each session.

A helpful resource book for inclusion in a religious education setting is *Welcoming Children with Special Needs: A Guidebook for Faith Communities* by Sally Patton (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004; out of print, available [online](#)). Patton explains how working to integrate all participants helps us practice our own faith:

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

Patton continues:

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

Patton's book provides inspiration and strategies for congregations to institutionalize an inclusive faith community and internalize a spirit of justice. Consider reading this book and sharing it with the congregational leadership. Additional resources can be found on the [EqUUal Access website](#).

FAMILIES

The loving family unit is the primary source of spiritual nurture and religious education in a child's life. To engage parents and caregivers with their children's experience in *Chalice Children*, it is vital to share with them the themes of the program. Each session includes a Taking It Home section for leaders to download, customize, and share with families as a handout, e-mail, or both. Taking It Home summarizes the session's content and provides questions and suggestions to stimulate family conversations and activities at home. In this way, parents and children may learn together. Most of the Faith in Action activities have been designed to include families with their children; the involvement of the whole family enriches the learning experience for all.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Each session is built around a predictable structure:

- **Free play**, a time invaluable for meeting friends, making individual choices, exploring the environment, sharing time together, and building a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.
- **Transition to Circle Time**, using rhymes. The program guides you to use the same rhymes in each session. When you provide consistency, young children begin to learn the centering and mindfulness that come with worship.
- **Circle Time**, which includes the chalice lighting, a sharing of feelings, a short teachable moment that summarizes the session theme for young children, and a story that expands on the theme of the session.
- An **activity** that invites children to explore the theme using multiple senses, for example, making a Fruit Chalice.
- **Active group songs and games**. These are the same for each session, helping the children get to know one another's names and to engage in play together. In addition, the program offers theme-related songs and games, such as "Hookey, Spooky" for Halloween, to add to the regular songs.
- **Closing**, during which the chalice is extinguished. This represents the conclusion of "sacred" time, in parallel with typical adult worship structure. Children are invited to take their learnings and doings back into the world.

Additional resources are provided to help leaders center themselves on the theme. The Spiritual Preparation section invites you to encounter the theme in a way that is pertinent to your own life so that you will be ready to bring your reflections into your work with the children. The Find Out More section invites leaders to explore the theme through adult material, such as sermons.

Quote

A quote introduces each session. Some quotes may bring a tune to your mind; many come from our two hymnbooks, *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey*. The quotes are intended primarily for leaders; they are not at a child's level of understanding or experience. Co-leaders may like to discuss the quote as part of their preparation for a session. Exploring a quote together can help you each feel grounded in the ideas and activities you will present and can help a team of leaders get "on the same page." Quotes are also

included in the Taking It Home section for families to consider.

Introduction

The Introduction gives an overview of the session concepts and explains how you can use the activities to teach the concepts. It also describes the session's thematic connection with the other sessions in the unit and/or the program.

Goals

The Goals section provides general participant outcomes for the session. Reviewing the goals will help you connect the session's content and methodologies with the four strands of the Tapestry of Faith religious education programs: ethical, spiritual, Unitarian Universalist identity, and faith development. As you plan a session, apply your knowledge of the group of children, the time and space you have available, and your own strengths and interests as a leader to determine the most important and achievable goals for the session and the activities that will serve them best.

Learning Objectives

The Learning Objectives section describes the specific participant outcomes that the session activities are designed to facilitate: what a participant will learn, become, or be able to do as a result of the learning activities. It may be helpful to think of learning objectives as the building blocks with which larger, "big picture" goals are achieved. If particular learning objectives appeal to you as especially important, make sure you select activities for that session that address these outcomes.

Session-at-a-Glance

The Session-at-a-Glance table lists the session activities in a suggested order, and provides an estimated time for completing each activity to conduct a 60-minute session. The table includes all the core activities, from the session Introduction through the Closing.

Keep in mind that many variables inform the actual completion time for an activity. Remember to consider the time you will need to relocate participants to another area of your meeting room or to include helping with clean-up in an art activity.

Note that the first session in each unit includes a Faith in Action activity and ideas for other service projects. These are done outside the group's regular meeting time.

Spiritual Preparation

Each session provides a spiritual exercise that leaders may use to prepare themselves for leading the session. Taking time to center yourself within the session's purpose and content will support and free you to be

present with the children and focus on providing the best possible learning experience. The exercise will guide you to call forth your own life experiences, beliefs, and spirituality and relate these to the session you are about to lead. Take advantage of these exercises as a way to grow spiritually as a leader.

Session Plan

The session plan presents every element of the session in detail in the sequence established in the Session-at-a-Glance table, plus three additional sections:

- Taking It Home, which provides extension activities for families
- Resources, which includes all the handouts and other resources you'll need to lead the session activities
- Find Out More, which suggests additional sources to help you, the leader, further explore the session topics.

If you are reading Chalice Children online, you can move as you wish among a session's elements—Introduction, Closing, Activity 4, Resources, etc. Each element occupies its own webpage. You can click on "Print This Page" at any time. If you click on "Download Entire Program" or "Download Workshop," you'll 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 to use, format and print only the materials you need.

Activities

Up to six activities form the core content of each session. A variety of activities are presented within each session to address different learning styles you may find among participants. In each session, one activity focuses the group's attention on a story that illuminates the session theme.

Presenting activities in the sequence suggested will help you provide a coherent learning experience. In general, sessions are structured to first activate children's interest in and prior knowledge of the main topic; next, to offer hands-on engagement with the topic; and finally, to provide opportunities to process and apply new observations and knowledge. The suggested sequence alternates between listening and talking, sitting still and moving about, and individual exploration and team or whole-group exploration, to provide variation that will help keep the children engaged and on track.

Materials for Activity

These checklists, provided for each activity, name the supplies you will need.

Preparation for Activity

Review the bulleted preparation "to do" list for each activity at least one week ahead of a session. All the advance work you need to do for the activity is listed here, from requesting information about family situations to snipping evergreen boughs before participants arrive.

Description of Activity

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

Read the activity descriptions carefully during your planning process so that you understand each activity and its purpose. Later, when you are leading the group, use the description as a step-by-step how-to manual.

Including All Participants

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

Closing

The Closing signals the end of the group's time together. Each session includes a closing ritual, which includes extinguishing the chalice and decorating the Taking It Home handout. As you plan each session, allow plenty of time for your Closing. Avoid rushing through it.

As with the Introduction, repeating the same basic Closing at the end of each session will be both enjoyable and educational for children. Each session also offers suggestions for tailoring the Closing to the session's topic. Shape a closing ritual that fits both the group and your faith home's culture and practices.

Leader Reflection and Planning

This section provides guidance, often in the form of questions, to help co-leaders process the session after it is concluded and use their reflections to shape future sessions. Be sure to share pertinent information with the director of religious education; the UUA Faith Development Office also appreciates feedback on Tapestry of Faith programs.

Taking It Home

Taking It Home resources for each session are designed to help families extend their children's religious education experiences. These resources may include games, conversation topics, ideas for incorporating Unitarian Universalist rituals into the home environment, and/or online sources for the session's themes. Download the Taking It Home section and adapt it to reflect the actual activities you have included in the

session. You can print and photocopy the Taking It Home section for children to bring home, send it to all parents/caregivers as a group email, or post it on your congregation's website (or perhaps do all three!).

Alternate Activities

A few sessions include alternate activities that you can substitute for or add to the core activities. Sometimes the alternate activities are simpler, which is useful if the group as a whole seems unready for the core activities or if the group includes children with vast developmental differences. Materials checklists, preparation, and descriptions for alternate activities appear in the same format as they do in Introductions, Closings, core activities, and Faith in Action activities.

Resources

Here you will find artwork, handouts, and all the other resources you'll need to lead the session:

- Under "Handouts," you will find any material that needs to be printed and photocopied for participants to use in the session.
- Under "Leader Resources," you will find the components you need to lead the session activities, such as a recipe, a puzzle for you to print and cut into pieces, or an illustration you will show the group, which you can print as a hard copy or display on a computer as a PowerPoint slide.
- Under "Find Out More," you will find book and video titles, website URLs, and other resources to further explore the session topics.

Faith in Action

Faith in Action activities are provided for each of the five units, at the end of the first session of each unit (Sessions 1, 9, 17, 23, and 30). Faith in Action activities are an important component of the program and give children practice at being Unitarian Universalists in the world. When you lead a Faith in Action project, you create an opportunity for the children to experience the active expression of faith values. By design, Faith in Action activities engage leaders, participants, their families, other congregants, and sometimes members of the wider community, outside the group's regular meeting time and place.

Faith in Action projects usually require special arrangements to be made in advance. If possible, recruit a team of parents to help plan and implement the Faith in Action activities and/or collaborate with other groups in the congregation, such as the Social Action Committee or the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

Faith in Action activities can also be used independently from this program with a wide age span of children or

with a multigenerational group. For example, if your congregation participates in the UUA Green Sanctuary program, you may want to include the Green Sanctuary Committee in helping to plan and carry out an all-ages Faith in Action activity for Earth Day. For more ideas, see Faith in Action Resources.

LEADER GUIDELINES

As you adapt sessions to fit your resources and the needs of the group, take care to preserve the intent of a session and its purpose in the overall program.

Read each session at least several days before leading it. Get a feel for it, do a little extra research if your curiosity strikes, and follow your interests.

Preparing with co-leaders is very important. Set up the meeting room, ensure that the materials and equipment are available, and go over the session plan. Experience the Spiritual Preparation exercise together, or take a moment before children arrive to share briefly about your expectations for the session.

Share with co-leaders what you know about particular children's family situations and personal sensitivities as they are relevant to the day's topics. For example, if a child's family is facing homelessness and the story for the day centers on a UU community's actions to combat homelessness, the child may become distressed or extremely quiet, which may be noticed by children in the group. Communicating with the other leaders on your team can help all of you anticipate and prepare for awkward or painful situations such as this.

IMPLEMENTATION

Every congregation has its own approach to structuring religious education. You can implement this program with any model your congregation uses. As leader, you know best how to shape the program to fit your congregation's religious education model, the culture of your congregation, the children in the group, and the time and space allocated for each session.

Some activities call for a letter or email in advance. Well before the first session, make sure that families' contact information has been collected, so you can send this information and be in touch as needed.

Within the sessions, you will find suggestions for adaptation. Feel free to add your own. Choose what you believe is best for your space, time, and group. Remember, you are the best guide for these young learners.

The regular sessions may be used at any time of the year. The order for the sessions and activities is designed to help participants with diverse backgrounds and learning styles deepen their learning in community.

The sessions in Unit 5, We Celebrate Holidays should be inserted when appropriate in your yearly calendar.

Be aware of time and the flow of the session and the program, so you can respond to a "teachable moment" or change your plan to suit where the group is. For example, if children seem reluctant to share in a discussion together, you might expand the games or the artistic or musical expression activities at first, and gradually increase time for sharing insights as the sessions proceed. Choose activities to meet children's need for challenge, physical activity, and enjoyable moments to build a sense of community and draw children in.

Many congregations like to take and share photos throughout the program. These can be used to create a photo display, either hard copy or online, and can be shared with the wider congregation and/or with families

in the Chalice Children program. You can also create a physical or virtual "scrapbook" as a memento at the end of the program. Put it together yourself or use a photo book-making site such as [Shutterfly](http://Shutterfly.com). Consider recruiting volunteer photographers during the activity time or the Faith in Action sessions.

BEFORE YOU START

Internet access and the availability of a laptop can enrich many of the sessions, which include links to videos, music, and websites. Online resources are supplemental; they are not required for leading any session.

The chart below provides a snapshot for long-range planning; you can find detailed instructions elsewhere in this Introduction and in the corresponding sessions.

Session/Activity	Advance Preparation
Set-up before Session 1: Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase <i>Feelings Flashcards</i> by Todd Parr or create a Feelings Chart. • Create posters for Clean Up, Circle Rhymes, Circle Time, and Circle Songs. • Arrange the free play environment. • Choose a preschool chalice • Create a family e-mail group for ease of sending invitations and letters, as well as for sending pictures and the Taking It Home section • Create a Faith in Action team of parents who schedule projects in advance and implement them • Consider making a photo book or album of sights around your congregation to use as a picture book.
Session 2: A Tour of the Inside of Our Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect memorabilia, suitable for preschoolers, from places inside the facility • Take a pre-tour walk • Consider making a photo album or book of sights around your congregation.
Session 3: A Tour of the Outside of Our Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect items, suitable for preschoolers, from around the outside of the facility • Take a pre-tour walk • Create a photo album or book of sights around your congregation.
Session 4: Making Chalices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order <i>A Cup of Light</i> by Pamela Baxter from inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop.
Session 5: All Around Us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a Memory Match Game.
Session 6: Chalice Necklaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use <i>A Cup of Light</i> (from Session 4)
Session 7: The Beauty of Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase bulbs and find a place to plant them on your grounds.
Session 8: Fruit Chalices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use <i>A Cup of Light</i> (from Session 4)
Session 9: Chalice Flannel Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make or purchase a flannel board.

Session 11: A Special Jigsaw Puzzle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a jigsaw puzzle.
Session 12: Family Snack Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the Family Snack Party invitation in advance by email or postal mail.
Session 13: Feeling Sad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite families to have their children bring in a picture or memento of a loved one who has died.
Session 14: Weddings and Other Services of Love and Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite families to contribute wedding or service-of-union items, such as an album, a dress, or a dried bouquet. • Contact the families and discuss their feelings and desires about the language used to describe their family situation.
Session 15: Babies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for a visit from a family with an infant.
Session 16: Special Worship Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect sensory elements for the special service you are celebrating.
Session 22: Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make homemade modeling clay.
Session 23: My Shadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and invite a congregant who can make shadow figures.
Session 24: Block Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation: If you don't have blocks, you could collect cardboard boxes for building a neighborhood.
Sessions 25-28: Teddy Bear Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send invitations prior to each session in Teddy Bear Month asking families to send a favorite teddy or stuffed animal with their children.
Session 30: Halloween	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Alternate Activity 1, borrow a popcorn popper.
Session 35: Easter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order <i>Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher</i> by Lyn Tuttle Gunney and Jane Conteh-Morgan (2010) from inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop.
Session 36: Earth Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview the route of the Earth Day walk.
Session 37: Mother's/Father's Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a letter requesting information about any sensitive family situations.

Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

RESOURCES

Posters, Songs, and Rhymes for Chalice Children

Songs, chalice-lighting words, and rhymes are introduced in Session 1 for use throughout the program. Before the first session, write these words on newsprint or make posters to display on the walls as a helpful prompt for leaders (and children who can read). Include some clip art, if desired.

Clean-Up Time

Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat":

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
The room is getting clean.

Clap, Clap
Clap, clap,

Circle Time

Sing to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

I Wiggle

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Feelings Chart / Feelings Flashcards

In every session, the children have an opportunity in Circle Time to identify how they are feeling. You will need a chart that shows faces in various states of emotion (angry, happy, frustrated); if your congregation does not already have one, the Center for Emotional and Social Foundations for Early Learning offers a [free downloadable feelings chart \(PDF, 4 pages\)](#). You can adapt this feelings chart, make your own chart, or purchase a set of Feelings Flashcards created by Todd Parr (available from an online source such as [Amazon](#)). If you create your own feelings chart, make it large enough to help everyone recognize the emotions it shows from a distance across the circle. You might mount it on cardboard and/or laminate it, for durability.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Sing to the tune of “Little Rabbit Foo-Foo”:

Welcome, Chalice Children.
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Welcome, Chalice Children.
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders’ and children’s names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!

We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

We are Chalice Children!
Let’s all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Find a Friend at Church

Sing to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell”:

I’ll find a friend at church.
I’ll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I’ll find a friend at church.

We’ll skip around the room.
We’ll skip around the room.

Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We’ll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of “skip,” ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You’re Happy and You Know It

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you’re happy and you know it, shout “Hurray!” [hoo-ray!]
If you’re happy and you know it, shout “Hurray!” [hoo-ray!]
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it, shout “Hurray!” [hoo-ray!]

If you’re happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp- stomp stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you’re happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp- stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp- stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It” (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982):

Good morning, [child’s first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child’s first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child’s first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn’t Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”:

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Variation: Sing "ha ha" repeatedly in the first two lines and substitute laughter for the smile or giggle:

Ha, ha, ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha. [laugh]
Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to laugh. [laugh]

Welcome Poster

This may help ease the separation blues.

Sign In.
Say "Hi."
Find Some Play.
Kiss "Bye, Bye!"

Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice for
The warmth of love,
The light of truth,
And the energy of action.

Chalice Extinguishing (closing words)

I gather the warmth of love,
The light of truth,
And the energy of action
Into my heart as we blow out the chalice.
Back into the world of do and say,
Carry it forward into the dawning day.
Go now in peace. Amen

How to Read a Story Book

Here are some suggestions for reading picture books to a group of children.

- Gather the children in a circle. This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

*Here's how I am going to read the book.
Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?*

- After the children have found a place to sit, remind them that this is a time to listen to the story. Focus on reading the story with engagement and continuity, for the enjoyment of those who are listening. The co-leader or a helper can work "behind the scenes" to quietly handle interruptions and problems.
- At the end of the story, try not to paraphrase a moral or add your thoughts immediately. Make room for some silence—you might try counting to five, slowly. See if any of the children will share their thoughts spontaneously. Ask questions such as, "What did you think?" or "Any thoughts?" to elicit their comments and reflections.
- Spend a few moments, if possible, connecting the story to the larger picture of our Unitarian Universalist faith, using the background information for leaders that is provided. Keep it short and simple, and then transition into whatever activities are planned for the morning.

Suggestions for Preschool Chalice

Here are some ideas for creating a safe "flaming" chalice:

- Use flower pots—they are breakable but sturdy and easily replaceable. Place the pot upside down for the base of the chalice. Place the saucer right side up on top of the base. Glue with strong glue if you wish to permanently adhere the two pots together.
- Find unbreakable wooden chalice shapes at thrift stores.
- Use heavy glass, such as a cake stand or goblet, which won't be too fragile.
- Make a flannel board chalice shape and flannel "flame" pieces, one for each child. Write the children's names on their flame pieces, and invite them to place the flames on the chalice.
- Use battery-operated tea lights for the flame. Lights that flicker are especially nice.
- Make a tissue paper flame: Twist strips of red, orange, and yellow tissue paper, stick them on a metal jar lid with double-sided tape, and place them on the chalice.
- Use a whiteboard with cut-out foam shapes of a chalice and flames.

The Preschool Environment

Preschool in the UU congregation should reflect the caring and attention needed for families and their preschoolers to feel safe and comfortable. It should reflect basic UU values, including respect for differences, helping one another, curiosity, and cooperation.

The preschool environment should beckon the children and help the families feel safe and comfortable about leaving their children in it.

Offer play centers. Noisy and busy activities should be in one place, and quieter options, such as reading and puzzles, should be in a more protected place.

In a UU preschool environment, provide experiences that engage children with the natural world, such as a table of pine cones or milkweed pods. Encounters with nature are often among the first spiritual experiences in a child's life.

Community-building experiences, such as joint play in a pretend kitchen or play with blocks, are also important. These activities help children develop a sense of how to interact in a friendly manner, through collaboration and cooperation, which are essential UU values.

Finally, create a special place for Circle Time, where the chalice is lit and the story is read. This could be a circular rug, a circle of carpet squares, or a circle of child-size chairs, large enough for the children and leaders to sit in a circle together. A low table, just 6–10 inches off the floor, is ideal for holding the chalice as the children sit on the floor around it.

A clean, bright, large meeting room is needed to accommodate the children in the group for the variety of activities in this program. Other areas needed for various activities include:

- table space for activities, with child-size chairs
- a library and a display table
- wall space for posting pictures and artwork
- open floor space for games and movement activities
- access to a sink
- access to a safe outdoor space for playing and walking
- cupboards or shelves to store Chalice Children projects, games, and resources.

If possible, collect and keep in your room:

- toys for free play
- basic craft supplies
- a music player, and preschool-appropriate musical recordings.

Most important, make sure that the room looks welcoming and friendly to young children—a place to work and play and grow.

Separating from Parents and Caregivers

One big issue for some preschool children is the stress of separating from their parent(s) or caregiver(s). A routine ritual based on the steps described below can lessen the stress of saying goodbye. Consider providing these suggestions to parents and caregivers:

- **Sign In.** Hang up your child's coat, and then sign in with your name, the child's name, and your cell phone number (if appropriate). Put your cell phone on vibrate so the preschool staff can call you if they have any concerns or questions or if your child needs you.
- **Say "Hi!"** Greet the leader(s), and greet your friends, your child's friends, and other families. But keep it brief. This is not a time to catch up on news. We suggest that you wait until you have left the room to have a conversation with another parent. Extending the time for separation can extend a child's anxiety.
- **Find Some Play.** Help your child find an engaging toy or activity, or take your child to see what the leader is doing. If your child is unsure about your leaving, make sure that you are near the leader at this point and can physically hand your child to the leader.
- **Kiss "Bye, Bye!"** Exchange a hug and a kiss with your child. Say "Bye-bye, I love you. See you after our worship service!", and smoothly move out of the room. The leader can usually find an activity and calm your child within just a few minutes. If not, the leader will give you a call.

Offer these four steps on a poster on the door or clearly visible inside the room to help parents understand the importance of a routine to help soothe the anxiety of separation.

Faith in Action Resources

[Creating Justice Together: Service Projects for Families and Multigenerational Groups](#) edited and introduced by Susan Dana Lawrence (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2014) is available from [inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop](#):

Parents and caregivers are the primary religious educators of their children. This collection of multigenerational service projects from the Tapestry of Faith curriculum series, suitable for families and other multigenerational groups, helps adults engage with children in practicing and exploring a living faith that is active, expresses caring intention, and changes the

world. Each project guides adults and children to connect experiences with values and to share or journal reflections so that growth in faith can be rich, personal, and long lasting.

[Doing Good Together](#) is a national nonprofit whose “only aim is to make family volunteering accessible, easy, and enjoyable.” [Big-Hearted Families](#), a program of Doing Good Together, provides a searchable database of service project ideas.

These blogs might be helpful:

- From the *Teaching to Give* blog:
 - [“Can Preschoolers Do Service Projects?”](#) August 18, 2011
 - [“Service Projects for Preschoolers”](#) August 21, 2012
- From the *Hybrid Rasta Mama* blog, November 13, 2012: [“50 Family-Friendly Community Service Projects”](#)
- From the *Millions of Miles* blog, December 11, 2012: [“33 Service Projects to Do with Your Kids”](#)
- From the *Points of Light* blog, March 26, 2013: [“10 Kid-Friendly Service Projects”](#)

Background Reading for All Tapestry of Faith Programs

- [Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook](#) by Tracey L. Hurd (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), available from the UUA Bookstore
- [The Gift of Faith: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children](#), Second Edition, by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2003), available from the UUA Bookstore
- [Welcoming Children with Special Needs: A Guidebook for Faith Communities](#) by Sally Patton (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004), out of print, available [online](#) in PDF.
- [Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder](#) by Richard Louv (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2005)
- [The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book](#) by Bob Greyson (Torrance, CA: Frank Schaffer Publications, Inc., 2001) offers group projects, games, and activities geared for multiple intelligences and a variety of learning styles. All games are easy to play, require little or no preparation, and include step-by-step instructions.

Recommended Resources

Books recommended for use with this program include *A Cup of Light* by Pamela Baxter, *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr (as well as many of his other books), and *Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher* by Lyn Tuttle Gunney and Jane Conteh-Morgan. See more recommendations in individual sessions.

Recommended websites and blogs include [Call and Response](#), the blog site of the UUA Faith Development Office; [UU Parenting](#) with Michelle Richards; and [Teach Preschool](#) with Deborah J. Stewart.

Two supplemental resources from Tapestry of Faith are provided at no charge online to enrich teaching and learning with children:

- [Spirituality and the Arts in Children’s Programming](#) by Dr. Nita Penfold provides guidance for using the arts in creative, spiritual ways.
- [Making Music Live](#) by Nick Page demonstrates how to incorporate music into religious education, including how to teach songs even if you are not a musician.

Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven [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.

Unitarian Universalism draws from many [Sources](#):

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that 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.

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:

Resource 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 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?

SESSION 1: WELCOME

INTRODUCTION

Love makes a bridge from heart to heart, and hand to hand. — "Love Makes a Bridge," Hymn 325 in Singing the Living Tradition

This first meeting sets the tone and rhythm for the whole program: Chalice Children make friends, feel love, and learn about the congregation. Preschool children usually will not be able to identify their congregation or Unitarian Universalism by name. Encourage them to say "Unitarian Universalism," "Chalice Children," and the name of your congregation and you will start their learning process. The repetition of these names will reinforce their sense of belonging.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate that the meeting space is a safe and welcoming place
- Demonstrate that the group is friendly and caring
- Build awareness that the congregation is a Unitarian Universalist community/place and that the chalice is a symbol of Unitarian Universalism.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn that love is the most important quality of their congregation
- Build a sense of Unitarian Universalist identity by singing songs and playing games which will they will continue to use throughout the program
- Reinforce their growing sense of belonging by learning one another's names, the name of the congregation, and the names of the program leaders.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5

Activity 5: Love Hearts 10

Activity 6: Circle Games 15

Faith in Action: Congregational Clean-Up 30

Closing 5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

This first meeting together with the group will set the tone for the year. Make sure you have done all the advance preparation and reviewed the session plan. Have supplies set out so you will be relaxed and can smoothly move from one activity to the next. Practice the songs and games so you can confidently lead them.

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Imagine your own nervousness when joining a group for the first time. Do you hang back? Talk too much? Feel impatient, or feel immobilized by concern? What makes you feel comfortable and safe? Reflect on the ways you feel. Then imagine the ways the preschoolers may feel. What needs do they have that you might meet?

Finally, reflect on love as the theme of the first session. How is pure love a part of your spiritual make-up? Love can be relatively easy to say aloud but difficult to keep in the center of our being. Most young children have experienced pure love and are familiar with it within their families. Can you make love a centerpiece for your reflection?

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and cleanup will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Create and display Circle Rhymes posters (see Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction). If you need to take down the posters after this session, find a place to store

them safely, as you will use them in every session of this program.

Description of Activity

Introduce the songs and chants you will use throughout the program. Tell the children that they will do these songs and rhymes each time the group meets. This will help them, today and in the future, transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Write the chalice-lighting words ("We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action") on newsprint, and post them on the wall near the Circle Time area. If you need to take down the poster after this session, find a place to store it safely, as you will use these words in every session of this program.
- Choose a preschool chalice (see Suggestions for Preschool Chalice, under Resources in the Introduction).
- Create a Feelings Chart or purchase Feelings Flashcards by Todd Parr. The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at Vanderbilt University offers a free [Feelings Chart](#), which you can either download or use as a guide for creating your own.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where the words are posted on the wall. Say:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregation] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Sunday school. Does anybody know the name of our church [congregation]? [Say the name of your congregation.] Can you say it with me?

Point to the chalice and ask, in these words or your own:

What is this? A chalice. This is the special symbol of our church [congregation]. We call our group the "Chalice Children." We are here to make friends, feel love, and learn about our church [congregation]. Love is the spirit of this church. Let's read a story together about love.

Including All Participants

If a child in the group has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Keep Love in Your Heart, Little One* by Giles Andreae, illustrated by Clara Vulliamy (2007). "It's the only sure way to be happy, The only sure way to be free. Believe in yourself and believe in your dreams, And you'll be what you dream you can be." A joyful tale of parental love and a child's boundless enthusiasm for life.
 - *Love Is a Handful of Honey* by Giles Andreae, illustrated by Vanessa Caban (2007). "Love is that warm cozy feeling you get when you cuddle your Mum, and love is that feeling of laughing out loud when somebody tickles your tum!"
 - *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids* by Carol McCloud and David Messing ([Bucket Fillers 101](#), 2006,). "Through simple prose and vivid illustrations, this heartwarming book encourages positive behavior as children see how rewarding it is to express daily kindness, appreciation, and love."
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: LOVE HEARTS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- 8.5 x 11-inch white card stock pre-cut in a heart shape, one or more for each child
- Red tissue paper torn in 1 x 1-inch pieces, a handful of pieces for each child
- Basket or flat plate, one for every two or three children
- Glue stick for each child
- Black marker
- Paper towels
- Trash can with liner
- Recycling bin
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Cut heart shapes out of the white cardstock, one for each child, and print "Love is the spirit of this church [congregation]" on each heart. Leave space for writing children's individual comments during the activity.
- Cut or tear red tissue paper into 1 x 1-inch pieces. Each child will need several pieces.
- Place a basket or flat plate full of red tissue paper pieces near every two or three children.
- Moisten the paper towels.
- Move the trash can and recycling bin close by.
- Optional: Prepare and test equipment for downloading and printing photos from a smartphone or digital camera. Ensure that you have obtained permission from parents or caregivers to share photos, if you plan to

photograph children or artwork that includes identifying information about children. Ask the religious educator. Note: The UUA provides a [media release](#) you can download and provide to parents/caregivers.

Description of Activity

Children create a heart and decorate it with torn tissue paper.

Invite the children to be seated at the activity table. Give them each a white heart and a glue stick, and invite them to glue red tissue paper pieces on their heart, without covering the words. Share the words printed on the heart: "Love is the spirit of this church [congregation]." As the children create their tissue paper art, ask them to describe to you what they love. Ask them if they would like you to write what they say on their heart. If the child assents, write the child's words in quotes, so it's clear which words are theirs. If you have a camera, photograph children's finished artwork.

Invite the children to clean up. Show them where to set aside extra tissue paper that can be useful another time and where to stack extra hearts and store glue sticks. Invite them to wipe up any sticky glue at their place on the table with moistened paper towels and then wash their hands.

Including All Participants

If children have a very short attention span or finish a heart quickly, invite them to make additional hearts as gifts for people they love.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,

We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in
turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Variation: Sing "ha ha" repeatedly in the first two lines and substitute laughter for the smile or giggle:

Ha, ha, ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha. [laugh]

Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to laugh. [laugh]

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, waving, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope
- Optional: Hole punch
- Optional: Yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope and string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, then tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [name of your congregation] we are Chalice Children, and love is our spirit!

Distribute Taking It Home handouts. While waiting for family members to pick up their children, children may

decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon or yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

FAITH IN ACTION: CONGREGATIONAL CLEAN-UP (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Trash bags
- Recycling bins
- Optional: Disposable plastic or latex gloves
- Optional: Rakes or other seasonal yard tools
- Optional: Camera

Preparation for Activity

- In consultation with the appropriate congregational leaders, determine an appropriate space in the building or on the grounds that the children can clean up.
- Determine when the clean-up will take place, and communicate your plan to the parents and the congregation.
- Optional: If you plan to take and share photographs of the children, make sure that parents and caregivers sign a release form.

Description of Activity

INTRODUCTION TO UNIT 1, Our Congregation Is a Special Place

The theme of the first unit of Chalice Children is "Our congregation is a special place." Engaging children and families (perhaps the entire congregation) in caring for the building and grounds develops their sense of belonging and teaches stewardship of resources. This can be a one-time clean-up as described in this Faith in Action, perhaps in conjunction with Session 2, A Tour of the Inside of Our Congregation, or Session 3, A Tour of the Outside of Our Congregation, or it can be expanded to a longer activity after Session 7, The Beauty of Nature (planting bulbs in the fall). If your congregation has a garden, consider organizing a "work party" on a seasonal basis, allowing children to connect with the life cycle of a garden. What other special places could the children care for? A memorial garden, an outdoor worship space (such as a labyrinth), the playground, a supply closet, or the sanctuary?

On the day chosen for the activity, bring the children to the designated area and explain that cleaning up and taking care of our space, both indoors and outdoors, is one way we show our love for our congregation. Provide background on the space selected, and invite the children to help clean up litter, remove weeds, rake, or

otherwise tend the grounds outside, or sort supplies into containers in the supply closet, or clean up the sanctuary by removing coffee cups, trash, discarded orders of service, etc.

Optional: Take pictures during the activity and post them on Facebook, a blog, or other social media used by your congregation, or create a Chalice Children Faith in Action scrapbook to add to over the course of the program year.

An important but often neglected aspect of a service project is the opportunity to reflect together on the experience. When you are finished, gather in a circle. Go around the circle and invite reflections on what the children have accomplished today, individually and as a group. What was their favorite part of the activity? How did they help care for the congregation? What would they like to do again?

Learn more about the four-part process for [leading children in a service activity](#) (identifying, planning, executing, and reflecting) in the Tapestry of Faith program *Sing to the Power*.

While *Sing to the Power* is geared toward older children, the approach to planning Faith in Action activities can be adapted for younger children.

Including All Participants

Be certain that the area you select is accessible to all.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Love makes a bridge from heart to heart, and hand to hand. — "Love Makes a Bridge," Hymn 325 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . we celebrated love as something inside us, as Chalice Children. We began learning the Chalice Children songs and games.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Share whom and what you love together. Read one of the suggested books for this session:

- *Keep Love in Your Heart, Little One* by Giles Andreae, illustrated by Clara Vulliamy (2007). "It's the only sure way to be happy, The only

sure way to be free. Believe in yourself and believe in your dreams, And you'll be what you dream you can be." A joyful tale of parental love and a child's boundless enthusiasm for life.

- *Love Is a Handful of Honey* by Giles Andreae, illustrated by Vanessa Caban (2007). "Love is that warm cozy feeling you get when you cuddle your Mum, and love is that feeling of laughing out loud when somebody tickles your tum!"
- *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids* by Carol McCloud and David Messing ([Bucket Fillers 101](#), 2006.). "Through simple prose and vivid illustrations, this heartwarming book encourages positive behavior as children see how rewarding it is to express daily kindness, appreciation, and love."

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . contacting a distant family member or friend and sharing the topic of the day—love—with them.

A Family Adventure. Draw hearts on a sidewalk in your neighborhood.

A Family Discovery. Explore "Love is the spirit of this church," Reading 473 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, and visit the blog, "[Love Is the Spirit of this Church](#)," in the *Quest for Meaning* blog site of the UU Collective. "Love is the spirit of this church" means that we are going to disagree and that we stay at the table even when the going gets tough.

A Family Game. Play the Chalice Children Games together.

A Family Ritual. Light a chalice before dinner together. Say chalice-lighting words, such as "We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action." Talk about the idea of "Love is the spirit of this family."

FIND OUT MORE

- Check out the blog site of the [UU Collective](#).
- Read "[Bound in Covenant](#)," an article from the Summer 2013 *UU World* magazine.
- Read Session 3, Love Is the Spirit of This Church, in the Tapestry of Faith program [Love Connects Us](#).
- Read a [sermon](#) by Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson of First Parish in Bridgewater (CT), January 20, 2013.

SESSION 2: A TOUR OF THE INSIDE OF OUR CONGREGATION

INTRODUCTION

*Peace shall walk softly through these rooms . . .
— "May Nothing Evil Cross This Door," Hymn 1
in Singing the Living Tradition*

The children will become familiar with the inside of the larger building of which their Chalice Children meeting room is a part and begin to develop a sense of belonging. This may be the first visit for some preschoolers, so it is helpful to repeat the welcome from the first session to set the tone and rhythm for the rest of the year: Chalice Children make friends, feel love, and learn about the congregation. Preschool children usually will not be able to identify the name of the congregation or the name of our faith, Unitarian Universalism. By encouraging them to say "Unitarian Universalism," "Chalice Children," and the name of your congregation, you will start their learning process. The repetition of name and identity will reinforce their sense of belonging.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Explore the inside of the congregation's building and discover its special places
- Experience the Chalice Children meeting room as a safe and welcoming place
- Experience the group as friendly and caring
- Become aware of the congregation as Unitarian Universalist.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience the congregation as a safe and welcoming place and begin to develop a sense of belonging
- Become familiar with aspects of the building beyond the Chalice Children meeting room, and see that they are part of the larger congregation
- See that other children, youth, and adults are engaged in other activities throughout the congregation.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity

Minutes

Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Tour	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Imagine the inside of your facility, or find a quiet time when you can explore it by yourself. In your mind's eye or in real time, walk quietly through the halls, stopping by interesting things. Pause in the sanctuary, if you are able, and absorb the feel of the place. In other religions, there are ways to define sacred space, such as a mezuzah on the door in Jewish tradition, or holy water at the entrance to the worship space in a Catholic church. What defines our sacred space? Bring your sense of sacred space into the tour for the preschoolers by acting reverently and quietly and encouraging them to do so as well.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to parent(s)/caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint

- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings chart or *Feelings Flashcards* from Session 1

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice lighting words are displayed. Say the chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregation] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Our room is a place where all are welcome and belong, and so is our whole congregation! We think of [name of congregation] as our "church [congregational] home" and the people here are our "church [congregation] family." Today we are going to take a tour around our building and explore our church [congregation] home. But before we do that, let's read a story.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

- Optional: Leader Resource 1, [A House Blessing](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions and adapt the text as needed for the congregational setting:
 - *Maisy Goes to Preschool* by Lucy Cousins (2011). Preschool for Maisy means a day filled with friends and things to do, from the time she hangs her coat on a special peg to the time she says goodbye.
 - *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen (1989). A classic take on the first day of school.
 - Optional: Instead of a story book, take pictures of the places you plan to visit and create your own picture book for the congregation, or create a blessing for the building using Leader Resource 1, A House Blessing.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: TOUR (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Scrapbooks, photographs, artifacts from congregational archives, and recent brochures and pictures for a display
- Optional: Tour rope (a rope with a loop for each child to hold on to)
- Optional: Camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Take a walk around your building (indoors) and find good places to visit, such as the minister's study, RE office, attic, meeting rooms for other grades, worship room, snack shelves, library, teen rooms, kitchen, front office, furnace room, social hall, choir loft, bathrooms, and sound system controls. Ask other leaders or staff members if the group may visit their rooms, offices, or meeting spaces.
- Optional: Create a display of items from around the congregation, suitable for preschool children to view and touch.
- Optional: Make or locate a tour rope to help the children stay together.
- Optional: Recruit a few adult volunteers to help.

Description of Activity

Many preschoolers may be new to the congregation or unfamiliar with many rooms in the building. The first step to feeling welcomed and having a sense of belonging is to learn your way around. Invite the children to find a buddy, hold hands, or use a tour rope, so that no one gets lost.

Take a tour of the congregation. Be mindful of adult worship services and other activities, as appropriate.

When you are done, return to the Chalice Children meeting room and gather in a circle. Talk about what you saw on the tour. Ask:

What did you like best about your church [congregation] home? What did you like least? What will you tell your family about?

Tell the children that the next time you meet, you'll tour the outside of the building.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, restrict the tour to places that are accessible to all.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 How are you this special day?
 We are glad you came to play.
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 So smile when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
 It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
 So laugh when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Variation: Sing "ha ha" repeatedly in the first two lines and substitute laughter for the smile or giggle:

Ha, ha, ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha. [laugh]
 Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha. [laugh]
 So laugh when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to laugh. [laugh]

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, consider substituting other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope
- Optional: Hole punch
- Optional: Yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope and string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, then tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]

Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: [name of congregation] is a special place—it is our "church [congregational] home."

Distribute Taking It Home handouts. While waiting for family members to pick up their children, children may decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon or yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Peace shall walk softly through these rooms . . .
— "May Nothing Evil Cross This Door," Hymn 1
in *Singing the Living Tradition*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was that [name of congregation] is a special place, and it is our "church [congregational] home." We took a tour of the inside of the congregation.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Invite your child to show you the tour we took around the inside of the building.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . comparing the congregation's building to your own home. How is it different, and how is it the same?

A Family Adventure. Take a tour together of a local place of worship.

A Family Discovery. Check out a picture book of sacred places, such as *Sacred Places of a Lifetime: 500 of the World's Most Peaceful and Powerful Destinations* by National Geographic (2008) or *Sacred Earth* by Martin Gray (2011). Visit the [Sacred Sites](#) website and pore over the beautiful pictures together. Listen to "May Nothing Evil Cross This Door" accompanied by images of UUs, on [YouTube](#).

A Family Game. Play one of the Chalice Children games together.

A Family Ritual. Bless your home by walking through it with a chalice, using the words from "May Nothing Evil Cross This Door," Hymn 1 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or the text from *A House Blessing* by Welleran Potarnees (Leader Resource 1).

LEADER RESOURCE 1: A HOUSE BLESSING

By Welleran Poltarnees. Used with permission from [Laughing Elephant Publishing](#).

Use this text from the book A House Blessing by Welleran Poltarnees as inspiration and create a simple blessing of the building, appropriate for preschoolers.

I bless this house and all those who dwell within it, and wish for them a full potion of life's beauty.

May the strength of its walls make you safe, keeping peace within and troubles without; but through its open windows and doors let nature come.

All who live and visit here shall be friends. Kindliness and harmony shall be the watchwords.

Let the mealtimes be far more than the fulfillment of a necessity. In this home food shall be prepared with grace, and eaten with gratitude.

May this be a place where the laughter of babies is heard and the gravity of children is answered with loving respect.

May this house warm in the winter, and by the fires of an open hearth let comradeship and imagination flower.

When the sun is ablaze, here shall coolness and shade hold away.

Let this be a place of peace, offering refuge from the chaos and doubt, and manifesting in its orderliness, a model for the larger world.

I wish for all of you the blessings of the night, which blanket us with calm, and through its burning stars and liquid moonlight allow our hearts to flower.

May beauty reign here, and lovely objects renew us by their silence and perfection.

I wish for you, in this sheltered place, the freedom, calm and leisure to play and explore.

May all celebrations be, in this house, feasts of creativity and companionship.

Bless this house. May angels guard its corners, and may gifts fall upon it as snow and rain falls upon a field. Let those within it share numberless passages of sun and moon, and happiness fill them to overflowing.

A home does and always will make a difference in people's lives.

FIND OUT MORE

- Find images of UU congregations on the [UU stock photo collection](#).
- Online, read the December 6, 2009 sermon by Rev. Barbara Fast of Westminster, R.I., "[A Prayer for This House.](#)"

Activity 6: Circle Games 10

Closing 5

SESSION 3: A TOUR OF THE OUTSIDE OF OUR CONGREGATION

INTRODUCTION

And the Earth is my blue boat home. — "Blue Boat Home" by Peter Mayer, Hymn 1064 in Singing the Journey

Celebrate the outdoors and the web of life by exploring the outside of your facility. Engage children in caring for the grounds to develop their sense of belonging and teach them about stewardship of resources. Taking care of our space, both indoors and outdoors, is one way we show our love for our congregation.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Explore the outside of the congregation's building and discover its special places
- Experience the Chalice Children meeting room as a safe and welcoming place
- Experience the group as friendly and caring
- Become aware of the congregation as Unitarian Universalist.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience a growing sense of belonging to the congregation by becoming familiar with the grounds and the outside of their "church [congregational] home"
- Find places around the congregation's building they may not have noticed
- Foster their sense of stewardship and care for our natural resources.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Tour	15
Activity 5: Story	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Imagine the outside of your facility, or find a quiet time when you can explore it by yourself. In your mind's eye or in real time, walk quietly around the grounds, stopping at sites that interest you. Absorb the feel of the place. Is the outdoor area incorporated into the sense of a place of worship? Is there a unique tree, bush, or landscape feature that draws your eye? What places are ignored? Become mindful of the outdoor space surrounding your place of worship.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a marker and a few extra blank name tags.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space. As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

Once the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregation] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to take a walk around the outside of our church [congregational] building and see some of the things that make our “church [congregational] home” a special place. After we discover what the outside of our building looks like, we’ll read a story.

Note: You may choose to read the story outdoors.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, restrict the tour to places that are accessible to all.

ACTIVITY 4: TOUR (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Tour rope (a rope with a loop for each child to hold on to)
- Optional: Piece of bread, some birdseed, or other food for a bird or animal
- Optional: Camera or smartphone
- Optional: Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Explore the outside of your building and find good places to visit, for example, notable trees, shrubs, and landscaping; flowers; gardens; wilder places; a fountain; a memorial garden; hidden places; the dumpster; a grounds shed; and compost bins.
- Optional: Choose a suitable location to have story time outside. Preview the book so you can tailor your comments during the walk (see suggested story books in Activity 5, Story, Preparation for Activity).
- Optional: Locate a good place to leave food for a wild bird or animal on your grounds, such as at the base of a tree or under a bush. Obtain food to bring with the group.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to find a buddy and hold hands (or, use a tour rope so that no one gets lost). Lead the children on a tour of the grounds. Provide information about interesting things you see, such as recycling or compost bins (ways we take care of the earth) or a memorial garden (a way to remember special people). Be mindful of the adult worship services, if appropriate.

Optional: If you have brought birdseed or a piece of bread to leave for an animal, demonstrate placing the food.

Optional: Take photos during the tour. Make a photo book afterward, using an online service such as Shutterfly.

Including All Participants

Find places to visit that are accessible to all the children (and adults) who may be in the group.

ACTIVITY 5: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from these suggestions:

- *All the Places to Love* by Patricia MacLachlan (1994). Told in the voice of a child who lives on a farm with his parents and grandparents, the child introduces readers to the spots that each person in his family loves best.
- *Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney and Annette Cable (1998). In this playful introduction to maps and geography, step by simple step, a young girl shows readers herself on a map of her room, her room on the map of her house, her house on the map of her street—all the way to her country on a map of the world.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Gather the children in a circle and help them get settled. Talk about what you saw on the tour. Ask:

What did you like best? What did you like least?
What will you tell your family about? What places would you like to visit again?

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Alternate verses:
We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Variation: Sing "ha ha" repeatedly in the first two lines and substitute laughter for the smile or giggle:

Ha, ha, ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha. [laugh]
Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to laugh. [laugh]

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, consider substituting other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope
- Optional: Hole punch
- Optional: Yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy it for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]

Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]

Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]

Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]

May we remember: There are special places all around [name of congregation], our "church [congregational] home."

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

And the Earth is my blue boat home. — "Blue Boat Home" by Peter Mayer, Hymn 1064 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . We took a walk around the outside of the congregation to explore the special places of our "church [congregational] home."

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Invite your child to show you the walk we took around the outside of the congregation's building. Read one of the suggested books for this session:

- *All the Places to Love* by Patricia MacLachlan (1994). Told in the voice of a child who lives on a farm with his parents and grandparents, the child introduces readers to the spots that each person in his family loves best.
- *Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney and Annette Cable (1998). In this playful introduction to maps and geography, step-by-simple-step, a young girl shows readers herself on a map of her room, her room on the map of her house, her house on the map of her street—all the way to her country on a map of the world.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . comparing the congregational grounds to the grounds around your home. How is it different, and how is it the same?

A Family Adventure. Take a tour together of a local place of nature.

A Family Discovery. Listen to "[Blue Boat Home](#)" by UU Peter Mayer on YouTube or order his music on iTunes. Visit the [UU Ministry for the Earth](#) website.

A Family Game. Play one of the Chalice Children Games together.

A Family Ritual. Bless your property or a nearby outdoor area by walking through it with a chalice, using the words from "Blue Boat Home," Hymn 1064 in *Singing the Journey*.

FIND OUT MORE

- Read about UUs and nature on the [UU Ministry for the Earth](#) website. Select "Sermons" to read a variety of sermons on the web of life.
- Listen to "[Blue Boat Home](#)" (Hymn 1064 in *Singing the Journey*) on YouTube.

SESSION 4: MAKING CHALICES

INTRODUCTION

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. —
from "This Little Light of Mine," Hymn 118 in
Singing the Living Tradition*

There are many beautiful ways to express religion. One of our ways is the symbol of the flaming chalice. In this session, preschoolers will make a play-dough chalice to take home.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand the shape of the chalice
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging in the group
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become familiar with the chalice as a symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith
- Begin to develop a sense of identity as a Unitarian Universalist
- Begin to understand that there are many ways to express religion.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Play-Dough Chalices	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. There are many ways that people around the

world practice and express their religion. Do you have any spiritual images or items around you, or can you imagine some of these items? Gaze at them either as real objects or in your mind's eye, and imagine all the different peoples of the world reverently creating a special place for their art. In what ways does our chalice symbol inspire you?

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few blank name tags and markers for newcomers' parents or caregivers to use.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or a book.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and cleanup will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play must include options for all the children. Should there be children with physical or other limitations, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Make and display Circle Rhymes posters (see Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction).

Description of Activity

Introduce the songs and chants you will use throughout the program. Tell the children that they will do them each time the group meets. This will help them, today and in the future, transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using. Help them, as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader so they will learn the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time," to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

Once the children are seated and focused, lead the chant "I Wiggle," and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of cleanup. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option (see Suggestions for Preschool Chalices section, under Resources in the Introduction)
- Feelings chart (see Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction) or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words (e.g., “We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action”) on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme, in these words or your own:

Our favorite symbol for our church [congregation] and our Unitarian Universalist religion is the chalice. Did you know that Unitarian Universalists all over the world share this same symbol with us? It’s one of the ways we show that we are Unitarian Universalists.

Talk about how the chalice is used in your congregation. Then say, in these words or your own:

That’s why we are called Chalice Children. Chalice Children come to make friends and learn about the congregation [or, church]. Lighting the chalice is one way we practice our religion. Today you are going to make your own chalice. We can play show-and-tell with our chalices, and then you can take your chalice home with you! But before we make chalices, let’s read a story together about our special Unitarian Universalist chalice.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain this book:
 - *A Cup of Light* by Pamela Baxter (2010). Include this book as many times as is appropriate to help young children understand the symbol of the chalice. Children of this age like repetition as reinforcement and reassurance. This is also a good book to suggest to parents as an addition to their home library.
- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here’s how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don’t interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: PLAY-DOUGH CHALICES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Modeling clay in a variety of colors, enough for at least an adult hand-sized ball for each child
- Materials for decorating chalices, such as feathers, sequins, and chenille stems (pipe cleaners)
- Small white paper plates, one for each child
- Black marker
- Paper towels, moistened
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Locate some chalices (or pictures of chalices) to display.

Description of Activity

Children create a chalice out of play dough, then decorate it with a variety of add-ons.

Invite the children to the activity table. Describe the shape of a chalice. Note that it has a stem, a bowl, and (when lit) a flame. Show them a chalice. Remind them that the chalice is a common sign or symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith (note: use our full name as often as possible, not our initials.)

Pass out a handful of play dough to each child. Invite the children to experiment with the modeling clay, twisting and rolling it. Ask if they'd like another color. Have them trade and share colors. Once the children have manipulated the modeling clay for a few minutes, invite them to create a chalice. Remind them of the key pieces: a stem, a bowl, and a flame, if they wish their chalice to be "lit." Allow them time to experiment with different shapes of chalices.

Once the children have worked on their shapes, invite them to decorate their chalice by sticking on some of the materials you've provided.

As children complete their chalices, place each finished chalice on a paper plate, and label it with the name of the artist.

Invite the children to clean up. First, invite them to collect the unused modeling clay and return it to its container(s). Next, have them wipe up the clay spots from the table with moistened paper towels and then wash their hands.

Including All Participants

Playing with modeling clay is often a soothing activity for children with attention challenges. It may be beneficial

for some preschoolers to simply play, rather than create a finished product.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and

skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first player returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second player walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982. As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Variation: Sing "ha ha" repeatedly in the first two lines and substitute laughter for the smile or giggle:

Ha, ha, ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha. [laugh]
Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to laugh. [laugh]

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, consider substituting other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope
- Optional: Hole punch
- Optional: Yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the Taking It Home handout for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.

- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at church [or name of church] we share the special sign of our chalice with Unitarian Universalists everywhere!

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Remind children to bring their play-dough chalices home with them!

Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Including All Participants

Invite children for whom drawing is difficult to make a chalice shape using foam or paper pieces and glue.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leaders:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. —
 from "This Little Light of Mine," Hymn 118 in
 Singing the Living Tradition*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was, "The chalice is our special symbol of our Unitarian Universalist faith, which we share with Unitarian Universalists everywhere." We made chalices with modeling clay!

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Invite your child to describe their chalice to you. How might you use their chalice—in their bedroom, on the dining table?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . finding at the library the excellent book we read today about the chalice, *A Cup of Light* by Pamela Baxter (2009), or [purchase the book](#) for your home.

A Family Adventure. Find out if your family can light the chalice for the service together. Ahead of time, visit the worship area together and see where the chalice is displayed.

A Family Discovery. Explore [chalice lightings](#) on the UUA website that you could use at home. Find more [Chalice Lightings for Young Children](#) on the website of the First Unitarian Society of Madison (WI). If you download the [Illuminations app](#) for your smartphone, you can "light" a variety of chalice images by tapping on the screen. You can even "blow" them out—the microphone picks up your breath and removes the flame image.

A Family Game. Play "Chalice, Chalice, Flame" just like "Duck, Duck, Goose." Sing "This Little Light of Mine," Hymn 118 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

A Family Ritual. Before dinner together, pretend to "light" the chalice your child made in today's session. Say chalice-lighting words such as, "We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action." Or pretend to light the chalice as part of a bedtime ritual, then "blow it out" together when it is time for bed.

FIND OUT MORE

Read the [history of the Flaming Chalice](#) on the UUA website.

The Tapestry of Faith curricula have a few different "flaming chalice" stories. Do a [keyword search](#) in the Tapestry of Faith programs; select "children" as the age group to search.

Read two UU sermons about our chalice, online:

["The Chalice and the Blade"](#) by Rev. Galen Guengerich, September 8, 2013, All Souls Unitarian Church, New York City

["The Flaming Chalice"](#) by Rev. Bill Gupton, June 8, 2003, Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, OH

SESSION 5: ALL AROUND US

INTRODUCTION

This is the church, this is the steeple, open the doors, and see all the people! — Traditional finger play

Today you will introduce the concept that people are an important part of what it means to be a church or congregation, especially the people who work for the church and take care of it. The Memory Match Game you will make for this session (Leader Resource 1) shows some important people, places, and other aspects of your congregation and can be used for play and learning beyond this session and program.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Begin to recognize and know the people, especially the staff, in your congregation
- Experience the Chalice Children meeting room and group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Grow a sense of belonging by playing games that reinforce the people, places, and objects in the congregation, especially people who work for the congregation
- Understand that the congregation is more than just the buildings and grounds—it also includes all kinds of people
- Continue to develop their identity as, and their understanding of being, a Unitarian Universalist.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Memory Match Game	15
Activity 5: Circle Games	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Offer the finger play "This Is the Church" as a hand motion of deeper meaning, such as [a Buddhist mudra](#). Move your hands quietly, saying the words in your mind or to yourself. What images come to mind? How does your body feel when you move your hands?

Bring to mind the faces of people in your congregation, and wish them well. Picture those who lead, and give thanks for their gifts while acknowledging their imperfections with forgiveness and grace. Where do you fit into the picture? What gifts and imperfections do you bring to your congregation?

End with a final clasping of your hands, feeling the love, compassion, and good wishes that come from being part of a spiritual community.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with room for others.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, “Clean-Up Time,” to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, “Clap, Clap.” Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing “Circle Time” to the tune of “London Bridge”:

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it’s time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the “I Wiggle” chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I’ll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You can change words of the “Clap, Clap” chant from “Turn around and jump!” to “Turn around and clap!” and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint

- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Learn the [“This Is the Church” finger play](#) so you can teach it. Be prepared to explain what a steeple is.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say the chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregation] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme, in these words or your own:

Chalice Children come to make friends, feel love, and learn about the church [congregation]. [Name of congregation] is not just the inside of the building or the things and places outside; it’s the all of the people who come here to our congregation who make up our church [congregational] family. And there are special people who work here to take care of our congregation in many different ways.

Demonstrate the “This Is the Church” traditional finger play, and encourage the children to do it with you:

This is the church. [show the children your hands, with fingers interlaced and tucked inside your palms]

This is the steeple. [place your index fingers side by side outside of your “church,” pointing up]

Open the doors [open your thumbs]

And see all the people! [wiggle your fingers, with your index fingers re-tucked]

If some children need more time to learn the finger play, tell them you will practice with them after Circle Time. Finish by saying:

We’re going to play a special game to see some of the places, things, and people who make this our church [congregation] home. Let’s see how many of the people you may already know!

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: MEMORY MATCH GAME (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Memory Match Game – Homemade Cards](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Make the Memory Match Game cards, either one set for the whole group, or sets of 12–16 cards for each group of four (the sets don’t have to match). See Leader Resource 1, Memory Match Game – Homemade Cards.
- Optional: If your RE program already has Memory Match Game cards, locate them for this session.

Description of Activity

Children play the Memory Match Game, a homemade version of the game “Concentration.”

Start the Memory Match Game by showing some of the cards to the children. Show the cards of the minister, the religious educator, the music leader, and other staff, and ask, “Who is this?” Show cards of familiar locations around the building and ask, “Where is this?” Show cards of the chalice and other objects and ask “What is this?”

Lay out the cards in pairs, face up, so the children can identify the pairs. As you lay out each card, talk about what it means, for example:

The minister gives the sermon, helps people get married, and helps us all say goodbye when someone dies.

We open the front doors on Sunday.

We light the chalice in worship.

Once all the cards are laid out, ask the children, in turn, to locate a particular pair, for example:

Karina, can you find the class picture pair?

Duncan, can you find the chalice pair?

Then, have the children play the Memory Match Game. You could try playing cooperatively, with the whole group working together to match all the pairs together. If your group is large, you can separate the pairs into several groups so that the children can play in groups of four.

If some children would prefer to continue practicing the finger play “This Is the Church,” offer that option as well. You can either have both games going at the same time, or have the group do one and then the other together.

Including All Participants

Ensure that all children can see and reach the game cards. Partner a child who cannot see with one who can; you may wish to have all the children work with a partner.

ACTIVITY 5: CIRCLE GAMES (15 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing “Welcome, Chalice Children” to the tune of “Little Rabbit Foo-Foo”:

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders’ and children’s names, in turn].

Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let’s all welcome [name of a child in the group]!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Find a Friend at Church

To play “Find a Friend at Church,” sing the song below to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.” Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend:

I’ll find a friend at church.
I’ll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I’ll find a friend at church.
We’ll skip around the room.
We’ll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, We’ll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of “skip,” ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You’re Happy and You Know It

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this song (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982 to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It"). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Variation: Sing "ha ha" repeatedly in the first two lines and substitute laughter for the smile or giggle:

Ha, ha, ha ha ha ha, ha ha ha ha. [laugh]
Ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha, ha ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to laugh. [laugh]

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, waving, or wiggling. Or, have the whole group sing and perform the actions from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, a single-hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope and string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, then tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [or, name of your congregation] we are Chalice Children, and love is our spirit!

Distribute Taking It Home handouts. While waiting for family members to pick up their children, children may decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon or yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

This is the church, this is the steeple, open the doors, and see all the people! — Traditional finger play

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the theme was "All Around Us." We learned that our congregation is more than the buildings or grounds—it's the people! We learned about the special people who work and care for our congregation.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Request that your child tell you about the Memory Match Game they played with; it is customized with images related to our congregation. We also did the traditional finger play "This Is the Church." Ask your child to show you how to play it or watch [this video](#) on YouTube with your child.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Make your own Memory Match Game using Leader Resource 1 in Session 5 of Chalice Children. Photocopy printed materials and photos from events at your congregation to make pairs of images.

A Family Adventure. Take your own digital pictures of your congregation and the people in it, and watch them as a slideshow with your child.

A Family Discovery. Hold a conversation with a founder, an elder, or the archivist about the history of the congregation, or find materials about the history of the congregation to read or watch.

A Family Ritual. Recite the finger play "This Is the Church" in front of the congregation's doors before you enter.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: MEMORY MATCH GAME — HOMEMADE CARDS

The Memory Match Game reinforces the common sights of your congregation. What a surprise for the children to see their congregation, their minister, and their leaders as part of a game! Prepare cards in advance for the Memory Match Game, choosing scenes and people from around your congregation; see ideas below. Make enough cards so that every four children can play with 12—16 cards (six to eight pairs). The cards should be durable enough so that the preschoolers can play with them during the rest of the year, and even in future years! You might want to recruit a preschool family to work on this over the summer.

Find information and images from the history of your congregation by talking with founders, elders, or archivists. Request and read any books or brochures about the history of the congregation. Has the congregation celebrated a 20th, 100th, or other anniversary? Seek out any anniversary materials that might be available. Look for images you can cut out or scan and photocopy to make cards.

There are several options for making the cards:

- Purchase the Milton Bradley Memory Game (R) and glue pictures of things and people from your congregation onto the existing cards.
- Print digital pictures of things and people around your congregation and glue them to index cards.
- Print digital images directly onto card stock.

Consider laminating the cards so they will last longer.

Find a sturdy, attractive container in which to store the game cards.

Ideas for images:

Religious educator(s), RE leaders and volunteers

Other staff and volunteers

Chalices (find chalice clip art on the [UUA website](#))

Your building

Distinctive trees/flowers on the congregation grounds

Items in the preschool room

Offices and equipment

Halls, stairways, accessibility ramps

Minister(s)

Children in the group

Candles

Chairs

Special doors

Window displays

Bathrooms

Other special places or objects

SESSION 6: CHALICE NECKLACES

INTRODUCTION

*I've got peace like a river, joy like a fountain,
love like an ocean . . . — Hymn 100 in Singing
the Living Tradition*

In this session, we connect the chalice to the wider world by telling a simple version of how the chalice came to be a symbol or sign for our Unitarian Universalist faith sign and by celebrating peace, love, and joy in the wider world. Making chalice necklaces helps children learn that UU chalices can have a variety of shapes.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate that the chalice is a sign that is part of the larger world—the world of love, peace, and joy
- Help preschoolers experience the Chalice Children meeting room and group as safe and caring
- Grow children's sense of belonging to and sense of identity with their Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reinforce their understanding of the chalice as a symbol of their Unitarian Universalist faith
- Connect wonder, peace, love, and joy with the chalice
- Learn the song "I've Got Peace Like a River."

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Chalice Necklaces	10
Activity 6: Circle Games and Dancing	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How are peace, love, and joy a part of your life? Do you call this "God"? Some of us do, some of us don't—that really isn't the big question for our faith community. Instead, we recognize and celebrate a variety of ways of understanding peace, love, and joy in the world. Do peace, love, and joy remind you of things larger than yourself? How is our faith community similar to many other denominations in terms of our hope for peace, love, and joy? Feel your connections to many people as you reflect on these thoughts. Those in difficult places wish fervently for peace, love, and joy. Extend a wish or a prayer for the men, women, and children for whom these qualities are only a dream. And give thanks, if true, for the time and the situation you have which make it possible for you to celebrate peace, love, and joy with these children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, story books, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with room for others.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, “Clean-Up Time,” to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.
Repeat until cleanup is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, “Clap, Clap.” Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing “Circle Time” to the tune of “London Bridge”:

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it’s time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the “I Wiggle” chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I’ll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the “Clap, Clap” chant from “Turn around and jump!” to “Turn around and clap!” and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint

- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Identify places and times the chalice is used at your congregation. Many congregations display a large chalice outside, in their lobby, or in the front of the sanctuary. Most light a chalice to indicate the start of a worship service.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say the chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme by holding up, or pointing to, the chalice. Ask, in these words or your own:

Who remembers what this is? It’s a chalice—our favorite symbol for our church [congregation] and for our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Talk about how the chalice is used in your congregation.

Then, say, in these words or your own:

Our group is called Chalice Children, because the chalice is so important to us as Unitarian Universalists. Chalice Children come to make friends and learn about our church [congregation].

Point out the ways that Chalice Children learn by naming some of the activities you have already done as part of this program (for example, a tour of the inside or outside of the congregation).

Say, in these words or your own:

Today we are each going to make a chalice necklace. But first, let’s read a story together.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility limitations, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [The Flaming Chalice](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Using Leader Resource 1, practice telling the brief story of the flaming chalice in your own words.
- Optional: Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *A Cup of Light* by Pamela Baxter, 2010. Include this book as many times as is appropriate to help young children understand the symbol of the chalice. Children of this age like repetition as reinforcement and reassurance. This is also a good book to suggest to parents as an addition to their home library.
 - *The Peace Book* by Todd Parr. *The Peace Book* delivers positive and hopeful messages of peace in an accessible, child-friendly format, featuring Todd Parr’s trademark bold, bright colors and silly scenes.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold the chalice in your hands. Tell the story of the chalice symbol, in your own words.

If you are also reading a story book, hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here’s how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help the children get settled and move if they need to before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Make sure children with hearing or sight difficulties are near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: CHALICE NECKLACES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pictures of many different styles of chalices
- Chalice clip art
- Yarn, preferably rainbow yarn, at least 15" per child
- Adult scissors, a hole punch, tape, and glue sticks
- Two cardboard circle templates, one larger than the other; the smaller circle should be large enough to hold one clip art chalice
- Construction paper
- Paper towels, moistened
- Optional: Large beads, at least two to four per child
- Optional: Glitter glue or colored glue
- Optional: Markers and crayons
- Optional: Baskets for up to three children to share
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Find pictures of many different styles of chalices. Two good sources are the [UniUniques](#) catalog and any Unitarian Universalist calendar.
- Print (preferably in color) [chalice clip art](#) available from the UUA, at least one sheet for every three children.
- Cut lengths of yarn long enough for pulling over the head and making a knot (about 15 inches). Make one length for each child, plus some extras in case some children wish to make additional necklaces.
- Tape the ends of each piece of yarn to create a stiff "needle." This will make it easier to thread

the yarn through the chalice necklace hole and the optional beads.

- Use cereal box cardboard or other recycled cardboard to make cardboard circle templates for cutting circles out of construction paper and from the clip art pages. The construction paper template should be slightly larger than the clip art template.
- Cut out discs of construction paper in various colors. Optional: Outline discs in bold marker.
- Optional: Pre-cut the chalice clip art into individual circles. (You might instead let the children point out their favorite image of the chalice from the page, and wait while you cut it out.)
- Optional: Distribute the beads among several baskets, so that every three children can choose two to four beads from a basket.

Description of Activity

Children create a chalice necklace using construction paper, yarn, and cut-out discs of chalice clip art.

Invite the children to the activity table. Remind them that a chalice has a stem, a bowl, and (when lit) a flame. Show the pictures of chalices you have gathered. Point out that while all the chalices look different, each has a stem, a bowl, and a flame.

Distribute the materials. Have the children pick two chalice clip art pictures that they like. Glue a chalice onto each side of a disc of construction paper. Punch a hole through the top of the disc and put a piece of yarn through it. Optional: Invite the child to pick out some beads and place one or two on each side of their chalice. Tie it off. Hang the necklace around the child's neck.

If time allows, the children can use glitter and/or colored glue, crayons, or markers to decorate their necklaces. Optional: Take a picture of the group modeling their new necklaces!

Invite the children to clean up. Have them wipe up sticky spots from the table with moistened paper towels and straighten the area.

Including All Participants

If any child uses a wheelchair, make sure there is a table at their height with places for other children as well, so that several children may work together.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES AND DANCING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Blue dancing scarves, one for each child, or rolls of blue crepe paper to make streamers
- Optional: Equipment to play the song or show a video of it to the children
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the Circle Time games and songs and “Peace Like a River” (Hymn 100 in *Singing the Living Tradition*). You can hear it [online](#) sung in worship at the UU Congregation at Rock Tavern (NY) or watch a [YouTube video](#) where it is sung.
- Optional: Pre-cut crepe paper streamers about 3 feet long so there will be several for each child.

Description of Activity

Welcome, Chalice Children

Sing “Welcome, Chalice Children” to the tune of “Little Rabbit Foo-Foo”:

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders and children’s names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let’s all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

I’ve Got Peace Like a River

Give each child a scarf or three streamers. Invite the children to hold the scarves or streamers as if they are in the water and to dance to the music as they sing about peace, love, and joy. Sing or play the song, “I’ve Got Peace Like a River”:

I’ve got peace like a river,
I’ve got peace like a river,
I’ve got peace like a river in my soul.
I’ve got peace like a river,
I’ve got peace like a river,
I’ve got peace like a river in my soul.

Verses:

I’ve got love like an ocean . . .
I’ve got joy like a fountain . . .
I’ve got peace, love, and joy like a river . . .

Lead more Circle Time songs and games, as time allows.

Find a Friend at Church

“Find a Friend at Church” is based on “The Farmer in the Dell.” Have the children sit in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung, to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.” The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the second verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend:

I’ll find a friend at church.
I’ll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I’ll find a friend at church.
We’ll skip around the room.
We’ll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we’ll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of “skip,” ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You’re Happy and You Know It

Sing “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you’re happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child.

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982) to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find dancing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or singing the song from a seated position. Children with mobility limitations can accompany the dancing by shaking a rhythm instrument, such as a maraca, rain stick, or shaker, or keep rhythm with a clicker.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes for handouts, a hole punch, and ribbon or yarn

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the Taking It Home handout for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [or name of your congregation], we celebrate the beauty of nature and the changing seasons.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s)/caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

I've got peace like a river. — Hymn 100 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "The chalice is a special Unitarian Universalist sign that reminds us of love, peace, and joy." We made chalice necklaces and heard the story of how the flaming chalice came to be the symbol of Unitarian Universalism.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. . . . Earlier, we suggested that you add the book *A Cup of Light* by Pamela Baxter to your home library. This would be a good time to read it again. How many times does your preschooler watch their favorite movie? For this age group, repetition means reassurance and reinforcement.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . dancing together to the "I've Got Peace Like a River" [video](#) on YouTube.

A Family Adventure. Check out some of the following books from your library:

Where Does God Live? by August Gold, 2001. Little children have a natural curiosity about God. This book will go a long way toward answering their questions.

I Wonder by Annaka Harris and John Rowe, 2013. Eva takes a walk with her mother and encounters a range of mysteries, from gravity to life cycles to the vastness of the universe. She learns that it's okay to say "I don't know," and she discovers that there are some things even adults don't know—mysteries for everyone to wonder about together! What do you wonder about?

What Does God Look Like? by Laurence Kushner, 2001. To young children, the world is full of things to see and touch. Using examples, this book gently invites children to become aware of God's presence all around us.

Only One You by Linda Kranz, 2006. There's only one you in this great big world, and you can make a difference—in your own life and in the lives of those around you. Adri's mama and papa share some of the wisdom they have gained through the years with their eager son.

Inside All (A Sharing Nature with Children Book) by Margaret H. Mason, 2008. This comforting bedtime book will reassure little ones that they—every one of them—are connected to the world, both physically and mystically. They belong, and they are part of something meaningful.

The Peace Book by Todd Parr delivers positive and hopeful messages of peace in an accessible, child-friendly format featuring Todd Parr's trademark bold, bright colors and silly scenes.

A Family Discovery. Find the [Chalice Compendium](#) Pinterest board by Katie Covey, the author of this program, to see various shapes and interpretations of the chalice symbol. Or check out the [Alice the Chalice](#) pages and activities, which include a video on making a chalice with a cardboard tube and pictures that show how to make a chalice out of a pumpkin!

A Family Game. Sing one of our Chalice Children songs, such as "I've Got Peace Like a River," which is Hymn 100 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook:

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

Verses:

I've got love like an ocean . . .
I've got joy like a fountain . . .
I've got peace, love, and joy like a river . . .

A Family Ritual. Light a chalice before dinnertime together. Say or sing the words to "I've Got Peace Like a River" as chalice-lighting words.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE FLAMING CHALICE

Adapted from [Circles of Light](#), a story in Session 2 of the Tapestry of Faith children's program, Creating Home.

After a big war, families didn't have enough food or clothing. Unitarians and Universalists needed a picture to put on their boxes of food and clothing and their trucks so people would know they were helpers. One man liked the picture of a beautiful cup with a flame and a circle around it. It reminded him of the gold cups that his Unitarian church used. He was an artist and drew a picture that everyone liked. They put it on the boxes so everybody knew they were boxes from Unitarians who wanted to help.

Our church [congregation] still likes to help people to create peace, love, and joy in the world. We use the flaming chalice as our special sign, our symbol. When we look at this symbol, we like to wonder about the big questions of life and to remember the beauty of all things.

FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about the history of the flaming chalice, check out this [UUA webpage](#).

Read two sermons about our chalice:

["The Chalice and the Blade"](#) by Rev. Galen Guengerich, September 8, 2013, All Souls Unitarian Church, New York City

["The Flaming Chalice"](#) by Rev. Bill Gupton, Sunday, June 8, 2003, Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Imagine being of preschool age and just discovering the wonder of the changing of seasons, of the growth into flowers from seeds, the mystery of bulbs, and the transitions of the leaves. How have we, as adults, forgotten this miracle? Can you restore the freshness in your heart and see the world through a child's eyes? Take time away from distractions, outdoors if possible. Kick through leaves, plant your face in a bouquet of flowers, feel the wind and sun. Contemplate a flower bulb, and imagine it as a universe of possibilities, ready to awaken and burst forth. As you ponder the life force within a seed, imagine the miracle that transforms a seed into a root, then a stem, and finally into leaves.

SESSION 7: THE BEAUTY OF NATURE

INTRODUCTION

Earth was given as a garden . . . — Hymn 207 in Singing the Living Tradition

Celebrate the wonder of the changing of seasons and the growth of flowers from seeds and bulbs. Sharing the miracle of growing things helps children experience joy and appreciation as part of living in the interdependent web.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Identify appreciating nature as a spiritual experience, which is a type of experience welcome in our congregation
- Explore seasonal changes in nature
- Feel a growing sense of belonging
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Feel a sense of joy and appreciation for the beauty of nature
- Observe signs of the changing of the seasons
- Experience the mystery of growing things.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Planting Bulbs	10
Activity 6: Seed in a Bag	5
Activity 7: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, story books, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Bean seeds spread on a tray, surrounded by paper, crayons, and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5.
- Set a work table nearby for children to explore bean seeds and draw what they see, or imagine.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Point out the tray displaying bean seeds, and the drawing materials. Help children say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with room for others.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, “Clean-Up Time,” to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” and gently encourage the children to put away items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, “Clap, Clap.” Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing “Circle Time” to the tune of “London Bridge”:

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it’s time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the “I Wiggle” chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I’ll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the “Clap, Clap” chant from “Turn around and jump!” to “Turn around and clap!” and turn the child in their wheelchair

yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- Flowers and other items (e.g., leaves, weeds, branches)
- Bulb (e.g., flower, onion, or garlic bulb)
- Knife sharp enough to cut the bulb

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Gather some flowers and other growing plants from outdoors.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say the chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregation] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme by saying, in these words or your own:

Have you seen flowers in the store or outside growing in the ground? What do they look like?

Have you ever gotten a gift of flowers or seen someone get flowers?

Engaging children in conversation about times when they participated in giving or receiving flowers will help them identify their feelings of joy and appreciation for the beauty of nature. Show the flowers and other items you’ve gathered, and ask, in these words or your own:

What is happening outside these days? Is it getting cooler? Are the trees changing? How are they changing? Are the leaves changing? What do they look like? Are there flowers growing? What do they look like?

If the children need prompting, use examples appropriate to your specific geography.

Show the children the bulb and say, in these words or your own:

Some plants and trees are getting ready to go to sleep over the winter. They are going to store their growing until it warms up. Do you think we can see what makes them go to sleep and then grow again next spring?

Cut open the bulb and invite the children to take a look. Say, in these words or your own:

Though we can’t see it, there is a special growing force inside this bulb. It is one of the amazing things about plants and trees. Today we are going to plant our own seeds [or bulbs]! But first, let’s read a story about what is happening outside.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *That’s Not a Daffodil!* by Elizabeth Honey, 2011. When Tom’s neighbor Mr. Yilmaz gives him a brown bulb, Tom can’t believe it will grow into a flower. “That’s not a daffodil!” says Tom. “Well,” says the old gardener, “let’s plant it and see.” Tom plays a game of imagination as the daffodil bulb given to him by his kindly neighbor grows first into a green beak, then turns into a rocket, and finally into a trumpet of gold.

- *Seasons* by Blexbolex, 2010. This book explores the cyclical nature of time by looking at the seasons, encouraging observation of the world around us, and leading the reader to form all sorts of logical and imaginative associations having to do with the seasons, the cycles of life, and time.
- *Clifford's First Autumn* by Norman Bridwell, 2012. Summer is over, and Clifford, the small red puppy, is curious about the changes that are happening all around him.
- *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle, 2001. In autumn, a strong wind blows flower seeds high in the air and carries them far across the land. One by one, many of the seeds are lost—burned by the sun, fallen into the ocean, eaten by a bird. But some survive the long winter and, come spring, sprout into plants, facing new dangers—trampled by playing children, picked as a gift for a friend. Soon only the tiniest seed remains, growing into a giant flower and, when autumn returns, sending its own seeds into the wind to start the process over again.
- *Awesome Autumn* by Bruce Goldstone, 2012. Autumn is awesome! Leaves change color. Animals fly south or get ready to hibernate. People harvest crops and dress up as scary creatures for Halloween. There are Thanksgiving foods to eat, leaf piles to jump in—so many amazing things happen as the air turns crisp and cool.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help the children get settled and move if they need to before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat any children who have hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: PLANTING BULBS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Bulbs, such as daffodils, at least one per child
- Trowels, at least one per child
- Water in a watering can or hose
- Optional: Gardening gloves, one pair for each person

Preparation for Activity

- Locate a place outdoors to plant bulbs. Check with your congregation's grounds people.

Description of Activity

Each child will be able to place a bulb in the soil and cover it up.

Take the children outdoors to the spot you've chosen for planting. Give each child a bulb and a trowel (and gloves, if you have them). Demonstrate how deep to dig the hole, how to drop in the bulb and cover it with soil, and how to "pack down" the soil on top.

Plant the bulbs, and then have each child water the soil where their bulb is planted. Tell the children, in these words or your own:

We will check back here in the spring and see when our bulbs start to grow and then start to flower.

Take a walk around the grounds, if appropriate.

Return inside, and have everyone wash their hands.

Including All Participants

If any children have mobility challenges, consider having all the children work in pairs to help one another plant a bulb.

ACTIVITY 6: SEED IN A BAG (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Photo of Bean Plant](#) (included in this document)
- Bean seeds, at least four per child
- Paper towels, at least one per child, or cotton balls, at least six per child, moistened
- Clean, clear plastic bags, one per child, and a permanent marker, such as a Sharpie (TM)
- Dry paper towels
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1, Photo of Bean Plant, to show the children.
- Write the name of each child, in permanent marker, on a plastic bag.
- Spread the beans seeds on a tray.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to the activity table. Allow them time to play with the beans, feel their texture, and inspect them. Say, in these words or your own:

We won't be able to see what is happening with the bulbs we just planted, because they are underground, but we can watch what happens with these bean seeds. Inside each little bean is the growing force that will turn it into a root, a sprout, and leaves!

Describe how to plant the seed. Give each child a moistened paper towel (or cotton balls), the plastic bag with their name on it, and four bean seeds. Help the children put the moist towel or cotton balls in the bag first, place the seeds between the plastic and the towel or cotton balls, then close the bag. Tell the children that when they get home, they should place the bag near a window so that the bean seeds get sunlight, which they need in order to grow. They may see a sprout in just a few days! Say, in these words or your own:

When a bean seed starts to grow, we say that it "germinates." In order for a seed to germinate, it needs water, material to grow in, and warmth from sunlight. When all these needs have been met, the seed soaks up the water through the seed coat. The tiny plant inside the seed starts to grow larger and larger. Once it is too big for the seed, the seed coat breaks open. First a root pops out, and after a while you'll see a shoot that contains the stem and leaves. When there are two or three leaves, the plant is ready to make its own food and can be planted in a pot with soil.

Invite the children to clean up. Have them wipe the activity table with paper towels and put away the supplies. Have everyone wash their hands when they're done.

Optional: Line up the plastic bags and take a picture.

Adapted from Green Education Foundation's "[How to Grow Beans in a Plastic Bag.](#)"

Including All Participants

A child with challenges focusing on an activity might be invited to make bags for the Chalice Children meeting room.

ACTIVITY 7: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Towels, large scarves, or small blankets, one for each child

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story, games, and songs.

Description of Activity

Welcome, Chalice Children

Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Now, invite the children to play a "Growing Like a Seed" game. Have everyone sit in a circle on the floor. Invite children to roll themselves into a ball. Describe the process of growing from a seed to a seedling—a very young plant—by telling the story of a seed:

Once there was a little seed, all small and hard.
Look at the little seeds all around me!
It was planted under the soil. [cover each child with a towel or blanket]

The seed felt a little water trickling around it one day. It tickled! [walk around and lightly tickle the children]

Then the seed felt the warmth of the sun. [pat each child]

The seed started to get bigger! [ask the children if they can grow a bit bigger but still stay a seed] And bigger . . . [ditto]

Until—POP! A little root broke open the seed and started to grow. [gently pull on a child's leg, and encourage the other children to "release" a leg]

The root grew and grew . . . [encourage the children to extend their leg]

Until—POP! A little sprout broke open the seed. [gently pull on a child's arm, and encourage the other children to "release" an arm]

The little seed was now a seedling. It grew and grew until the sprout grew right out of the soil. [uncover a child, and encourage the other children to throw off their "soil"]

And the root grew down, and the sprout grew up, and the sun made it all warm. [encourage the "seedlings" to stretch up and feel the sun]

Finally, two little leaves popped out of the sprout . . . [gently open a child's hands to form leaves, and encourage the other children to make "leaves"]

And there was a little seedling!

Repeat several times.

If time allows, do some of the other Chalice Children songs and games.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is a variation on "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children sit in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung, to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the second verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend:

I'll find a friend at church.

I'll find a friend at church.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.

We'll skip around the room.

We'll skip around the room.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

How are you this special day?

We are glad you came to play.

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or doing the "growing like a seed" activity from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes for handouts, a hole punch, and ribbon or yarn

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the Taking It Home handout for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]

And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [or name of your congregation], we celebrate the beauty of nature and the changing seasons.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to color the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s)/caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Earth was given as a garden . . . — Hymn 207 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was the beauty of nature. We celebrated the wonder of the changing of seasons, and the growth of flowers from seeds and bulbs. Sharing the miracle of growing things helps children identify their feelings of joy and appreciation as part of living in the interdependent web.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. . . . Grow the bean seed in the bag! Place the sealed plastic bag near a sunny window. For a seed to germinate, it needs water, material to grow in, and warmth from sunlight. When all these needs have been met, the seed soaks up the water through the seed coat. The tiny plant inside the seed starts to grow larger and larger. Once the plant is too big for the seed, the seed coat breaks open. First a root pops out, and after a while you'll see the shoot that contains the stem and leaves. When there are two or three leaves, the plant is ready to make its own food and to be planted in a pot with soil. (Adapted from Green Education Foundation, "[How to Grow Beans in a Plastic Bag.](#)")

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... making other bags of seeds, to grow different types of beans. Plant bulbs outdoors, or force a bulb indoors.

A Family Adventure. Take a walk and explore what is happening during the change of seasons.

A Family Discovery. [Online](#), to learn about a preschool class who grew their own bean seeds or watch an [animated video](#) about the germination of a seed.

A Family Game. Invite your child to play the Growing Like a Seed game. Invite them to roll themselves into a ball on the floor or on your lap. Describe the process of growing from a seed to a seedling by telling the story of a seed:

Once there was a little seed, all small and hard.
Look at the little seed!

It was planted under the soil. [cover your child with a towel or blanket]

The seed felt a little water trickling around it one day. It tickled! [lightly tickle your child]

Then the seed felt the warmth of the sun. [pat your child]

The seed started to get bigger! [ask your child if they can grow a bit bigger but still stay a seed]

And bigger . . . [ditto]

Until—POP! A little root broke open the seed and started to grow. [gently pull out one of your child's legs]

The root grew and grew . . . [encourage your child to extend their leg]

Until—POP! A little sprout broke open the seed. [gently pull out one of your child's arms]

The little seed was now a seedling. It grew and grew until the sprout grew right out of the soil.

[uncover your child]

And the root grew down, and the sprout grew up, and the sun made it all warm. [encourage your child to stretch up and feel the sun]

Finally, two little leaves popped out of the sprout . . . [gently open your child's hands to form leaves]

And there was a little seedling!

A Family Ritual. Create a fall bouquet of flowers, dried grasses, and leaves for your dinner table.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: PHOTO OF BEAN PLANT

Photo by Deborah J. Stewart, used with permission, from the website, [Teach Preschool with Deborah J. Stewart](#).

Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) for printing.



FIND OUT MORE

Watch a time-lapse video of radish seeds germinating, on [YouTube](#). Or, watch this short video (1:18) of a seed germinating, on the [Discovery Channel website](#).

Read the sermon, "[The Glories of Autumn](#)," by Claudia Hall, October 25, 2009, Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel, Ellisville, Missouri.

SESSION 8: FRUIT CHALICES

INTRODUCTION

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. — Christian scripture, Galatians 5:22-23

Preschool children love to experience life with all their senses. In this session, the main activity, making fruit chalices employs children's senses of smell, touch, sight, and taste—an "extra sensory" way for children to get to know the chalice symbol.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand the shape of the chalice
- Experience the Chalice Children meeting room and group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore the shape and parts of the chalice, using edible fruit
- Reinforce their understanding of the chalice as the symbol of Unitarian Universalism
- Feel connected to the chalice and to their Chalice Children group.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Fruit Chalices	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a quiet place for reflection where you can try making a fruit chalice. Imagine the world of the preschool child. They are likely full of wonder at the world around them and are ready to explore, using all their senses. This session gives them the opportunity to feel fruit in their hands; savor the smell of the banana, melons, and grapes; and ultimately taste the fruits, all the while hearing the word "chalice" and connecting it to this wonderful sensory experience. Take time now to play with the fruit and try shaping it in a mindful way, engaging your senses of sight, smell, and touch. Finally, eat the fruit, enjoying the burst of flavors in your mouth. Note your experiences, and be ready to help the preschoolers become mindful of their own experiences with the fruit and our chalice symbol.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, story books, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with room for others.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint

- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Be ready to talk about ways your congregation uses or displays a chalice.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say the chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we're going to make a very special chalice. Who remembers what the chalice is? The chalice is our favorite symbol of our church [congregations] and for our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Talk about how the chalice is used in your congregation.

Then, say, in these words or your own:

Our group is called Chalice Children, because the chalice is so important to us as Unitarian Universalists. Chalice Children come to make friends and learn about our church [congregation].

Point out the ways that Chalice Children learn by naming some of the activities you have already done as

part of this program (for example, a tour of the inside or outside of the congregation).

Say, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to make a chalice out of fruit! As we make the fruit into a chalice shape, we can smell the different fruits and see how they feel in our hands. We can play show-and-tell with our chalices—and then, once everyone has made a chalice, we can eat them! Yum! But before we make fruit chalices, let's read a story together.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *A Cup of Light* by Pamela Baxter (2010). Include this book as many times as is appropriate to help young children understand the symbol of the chalice. Children of this age like repetition as reinforcement and reassurance. This is also a good book to suggest to parents as an addition to their home library.
 - *Eat Lots of Colors* by Helen Martiller and Valerie Bouthyette (2010). This is a light-hearted first look at the nutritional benefits of eating colorful foods. Simply written and charmingly illustrated, it motivates young children to make healthy food choices. They learn that eating whole and "real" foods actually helps them feel good about themselves, their bodies, and their capabilities.
 - *The Watermelon Seed* by Greg Pizzoli (2013). This book won the Geisel Award at the 2014 Youth Media Awards. The star of the book, a green crocodile, tells us he *loves* watermelon, but then worries when he swallows a seed. His angst is very dramatic, and he swears off watermelon when the seed finally dislodges.
 - *Go, Go, Grapes! A Fruit Chant* by April Pulley Sayre (2012). Get ready to go bananas at the market, where the aisles are filled with eye-popping displays of delicious and nutritious fruits. Children will be

chanting along in no time—and trying to snatch fruity snacks right off the pages!

- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to each find a place so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Any children who have hearing or sight difficulties should be seated near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: FRUIT CHALICES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Fruit Chalices](#) (included in this document)
- Bananas, half a banana per child
- Grapes, four to six per child
- Melons, one slice per child
- Several serving bowls, a knife that can cut bananas and melons, and, if needed, a spoon to scoop melon seeds
- Paper plates or napkins, one per child
- Hand sanitizer, or access to a sink with soap and water
- Paper towels, moistened
- Trash can with liner or (optional) a compost container
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Check for any fruit allergies in the group. If using fruit is not feasible, consider using commercial cookie dough to make chalice cookies. The [Chalice Palace](#) website offers chalice-shaped cookie cutters. You will also find free chalice clip art and ideas for projects.

- Print Leader Resource 1, *Fruit Chalices*. Use this picture as a guide to prepare fruit in shapes to form a chalice, and plan to show it to the children.
- If melons are whole, cut them in half, scoop out seeds with a spoon, then slice the melon.
- Halve the bananas.
- Remove individual grapes from stems.
- Put the cut-up fruit in serving bowls.
- Clean the work table.
- Optional: Arrange for a family to take home the fruit waste to compost or to feed a pet.

Description of Activity

Children create a chalice using different pieces of fruit.

Have the children clean their hands, and then invite them to the activity table. Remind the children of the shape of the chalice: it has a stem, a bowl, and (if lit) a flame. Show them the picture of children making fruit chalices. Tell them that one way to make a fruit chalice is to use a banana for the stem, a melon slice for the bowl, and grapes for the flames—but they can use their imaginations and find their own ways to create the shape of their chalice.

Give each child a paper plate or napkin, and invite them to explore the fruit in front of them. Allow them time to experiment with different designs before making their final chalice.

Once everyone has made a chalice, do a show-and-tell, so everyone gets a chance to see all the chalices. If you have a camera, take pictures of the fruit chalices (and children, too, if you have parent/caregiver permission). Tell the children that if they'd like to, they may eat their chalice! Some children will want to save their fruit chalices to show their families.

Invite the children to clean up. Put the melon rind and banana peels in the compost bag or the trash. Invite them to wipe up sticky fruit juices from the table with moistened paper towels and then wash their hands.

Including All Participants

If any children are allergic to bananas, grapes, or melon, use other fruit (or another medium altogether) for this activity.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper chalices (red, blue, and yellow), one for each child

Preparation for Activity

- Cut chalice shapes from red, green, and yellow paper, enough for each child to have one.
- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to play the Chalice of Colors game. Sit in a circle on the floor. Give each child a paper chalice in one of the three colors, then sing the following song to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot," leading the children in the actions noted:

If you have a red one, stand up now,
If you have a green one, stand up now,
If you have a yellow one, stand up now,
Then jump up high and take a bow!

Do the song and actions three times, getting faster each time.

Invite the children to sit back down in their circle and play the next game: Chalice, Chalice, Flame. Tell the children that this game is just like Duck, Duck, Goose. Describe how to play the game. For example, you might say:

Sit in a circle. One person is "It." "It" walks around the circle, tapping each person on the head lightly, saying, "Chalice." Finally, "It" decides who will be a flame and taps that person on the head, saying, "Flame!" The "Flame" jumps up and chases "It." If "It" makes it to "Flame's" space in the circle, then "Flame" becomes "It" and the game repeats. If "It" is tagged before reaching the space, then "It" jumps into the middle, does a little dance, and rejoins the circle. The leader appoints another "It."

Play Chalice, Chalice, Flame, as often as time allows. Make sure everyone has been chosen to be "Flame" at least once before you end the game.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, consider substituting other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling. You can change the words so they include the possibility of staying seated, for example, "If you have a red one, hold it up now, If you have a green one, hold it up now, If you have a yellow one, hold it up now, Then bend from the waist to take a bow." Children with mobility limitations can be noisemakers while the chase for Chalice, Chalice, Flame is on. Give them a maraca, a shaker, or a clicker to provide noise while "It" and "Flame" are running around the circle.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Copy the Taking It Home handout for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [or name of your congregation], we use the chalice as our special sign, just like all of our Unitarian Universalists friends, near and far!

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?

- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. — Christian scripture, Galatians 5:22-23

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was, "At our church [congregation], we use the chalice as our special sign or symbol." We made and ate fruit chalices! Preschool children love to experience life with all their senses. Just like making pancakes in the shape of your initials, making an edible chalice is an "extra-sensory" way for children to get to know an important symbol—in this case, our chalice.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. . . . Engage with your child in awareness of the sights, smells, textures, and tastes of food. This session gave children an opportunity to feel the fruit in their hands; savor the smells of banana, melon, and grapes; and ultimately to taste the fruit, all the while hearing the word "chalice" and connecting it to this wonderful sensory experience. Shape some fruit in a mindful way, enjoying your senses of sight, smell, and touch; then, eat the fruit, enjoying the burst of flavors in your mouth.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . making your own fruit chalices for a snack. One idea is to use half a banana for a stem, a slice of melon for the bowl, and grapes for the flame. The [Chalice Palace](#) website offers chalice-shaped cookie cutters and more project ideas.

A Family Adventure. Find out if your family can light the chalice together in a worship service at your congregation. Or, take a walk and look for chalice shapes in nature. Can a tree have a chalice shape?

A Family Discovery. Explore the [Chalice Lightings](#) on the UUA website, or visit the [Chalice Lightings for Young Children](#) page of the First Unitarian Society of Madison, WI.

Download the "Illuminations" app for your smartphone, which lets you "light" a variety of chalice images by tapping on the screen. You can even "blow" them out—the microphone picks up your breath and removes the flame image. Read more about illuminations [online](#).

A Family Game. Play "Chalice, Chalice, Flame," which is just like "Duck, Duck, Goose."

A Family Ritual. Light a chalice before dinnertime together. Say chalice-lighting words, such as, "We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action."

LEADER RESOURCE 1: FRUIT CHALICES

Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) for printing.



FIND OUT MORE

Read about the [history of the flaming chalice](#) on the UUA website.

Read two UU sermons about our chalice, online:

["The Chalice and the Blade"](#) by Rev. Galen Guengerich, September 8, 2013, All Souls Unitarian Church, New York City.

["The Flaming Chalice"](#) by Rev. Bill Gupton, Sunday, June 8, 2003, Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

SESSION 9: CHALICE FLANNEL BOARD

INTRODUCTION

From you I receive, to you I give, together we share, and from this we live. — "From You I Receive," Hymn 402 in Singing the Living Tradition

This session introduces Unit 2 of Chalice Children; the unit theme is "Church Is People." By this time, the Chalice Children have begun to feel a sense of belonging to the congregation and an understanding of the people and relationships that make it special. This session guides children to celebrate the uniqueness and worth of each person, making new friends and keeping old friends. Through hearing a story and making flannel chalice pieces, they learn that the chalice contains a smile—for all the different kinds of people in our congregation.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Feel compassion for others and accept differences
- Understand the shape of the chalice
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand that all kinds of people can be friends
- Learn that accepting differences is an important part of being a Unitarian Universalist
- Experience a new way of looking at the chalice symbol.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5

Activity 5: Flannel Board Chalice 15

Activity 6: Circle Games 10

Faith in Action: A Piece of the Puzzle 60

Closing 5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Imagine the journey of caring and acceptance that you have walked. How has your own acceptance of others and understanding of differences changed during your life? What has caused you discomfort? What has brought you comfort? What insights have you gained over time? Imagine your own feelings of difference. How might it feel to be accepted for who you are and to be encouraged to be your authentic self?

Consider this excerpt from a sermon by Sally Patton, titled "God Makes No Mistakes: Creating Beloved Community for All Our Children," and complete the exercise she suggests:

[On an index card] write on one side the word "deficits" and list 2 to 3 things you do not like about yourself. On the other side write the word "gifts" and list 3 to 5 things you like about yourself.

Hold the deficit side facing out against your chest. Close your eyes and take a few minutes and imagine that everyone you meet only sees this side of you. They only talk to you from this perspective. What would the conversations be like, how would you feel. When you want to talk about something you feel good about, the person only responds to what they see on the front of your piece of paper. They only see the deficits and they probably will try to fix you. How do you think you would re-act and treat them? Now release these thoughts to the Universe. Now hold the gift side facing out next to your chest. Take a few minutes to imagine that the people you meet can only see this side of you. They only talk to you from this perspective. What would the conversations be like, how would you feel. They see all your strengths and gifts and think you can take care of yourself. They do not try to fix anything. How do you think you would re-act and treat them?

Part of a spiritual journey is to find the people and places that allow us to spread our wings and be ourselves. How can you make your congregation such a place? How can you encourage the preschoolers to be themselves during your time together?

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Optional: Props that acknowledge differences, such as multicultural dolls, child-size crutches that children can try walking with, or a recording of a children's song in a different language

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5).
- Optional: Set up an activity area with props that acknowledge differences.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters (Session 1).

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.
Repeat until cleanup is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair

yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Identify places and times that the chalice is used at your congregation. For example, many congregations display a large chalice outside, in their lobby, or at the front of the sanctuary, and most light a chalice to indicate the start of the worship service.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where the words are posted on the wall. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme, in these words or your own:

Our favorite symbol for our church [congregation] is the chalice. [Talk about how the chalice is used in your congregation.] Our group is called Chalice Children, because the chalice is important to us as Unitarian

Universalists. Chalice Children come to make new friends and see old friends. All kinds of people can be friends, even if they are different from one another. Today we are going to make a chalice out of flannel—and we will discover a smile in the chalice! But before we make the flannel chalice, let’s read a story together about all kinds of friends.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *It’s OK to Be Different* by Todd Parr, 2009. It’s also okay to need some help. *It’s Okay to Be Different* cleverly delivers the important messages of acceptance, understanding, and confidence in an accessible, child-friendly format featuring Todd Parr’s trademark bold, bright colors and silly scenes.
 - *Am I a Color, Too?* by Heidi Cole and Nancy Vogl, illustrated by Gerald Purnell, 1995. In verse, a boy considers his racial identity since his mother is Caucasian and his father is African American. He concludes that people are people, no matter what their labels or “colors.”
 - *Lemon the Duck* by Laura Backman and Laurence Cleyet-Merle, 2008. This gorgeous picture book is based on the inspirational true story of Lemon, the Pekin duck who was born in an elementary school classroom. Neurological issues make Lemon unable to walk, but with the support of a compassionate teacher and her students, Lemon is still able to become one happy duck.
 - *Roland Humphrey Is Wearing a WHAT?* by Eileen Kiernan-Johnson, illustrated by Katrina Revenaugh, 2013. The story of a little boy’s quest to be his authentic self, dressed in pink and festooned with sparkles, in a world that frowns on boys who like “girly” things.

- *Shapesville* by Andy Mills, 2003. Shapesville is a small town where five friends of various shapes, sizes, colors, and talents discuss their differences and celebrate what makes each of them unique.
- *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis, 2000. Told in rhyme, this story follows Susan through a series of familiar activities. Not until the end of the story is it revealed that Susan uses a wheelchair. Told with insight and without sentimentality, this is an inspiring look at a spunky little girl whose physical disability is never seen as a handicap.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also reminds them that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, others will be unable to see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Have a child with hearing or sight difficulties sit near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: FLANNEL BOARD CHALICE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Flannel Chalice Template](#) (included in this document)
- A flannel board or a whiteboard, 2 x 2-feet or larger
- Squares of flannel (for flannel board) or craft foam (for whiteboard) in gold/yellow, white, and red
- Large sheets of blue, black or purple construction paper, one for each child
- Individual chalice parts (base, stem, bowl, candle, and flame), one set pre-cut for each child, and glue sticks to share
- Paper towels, moistened
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain or make a flannel board. To make a flannel board, find a 2 x 2-foot piece of corrugated cardboard or the cardboard back from a pad of newsprint sheets (2 x 3-foot). Cover the cardboard on one side with flannel, ideally in blue, black, or purple; you will need 1–1 1/2 yards. An alternative is to use a whiteboard; foam craft pieces will stick to the whiteboard if you moisten them first.
- Cut the five chalice pieces (base, stem, bowl, candle, and flame) out of gold/yellow, white, and red flannel, using the templates provided in Leader Resource 1 or your own chalice design. Use gold or yellow flannel for the base, stem, and bowl; white for the candle; and red for the flame. Trace the chalice shapes on the flannel and then cut them out, or pin them down and cut around them.
- Now use the templates to cut gold/yellow, white, and red chalice pieces for the children, one set of five pieces for each child. Then use the pieces to trace a set of five chalice pieces for each child. You may use the templates from Leader Resource 1 or your own design. Make each set of pieces similar, but not identical.
- On an activity table, set the large sheets of construction paper, the paper cut-outs, and glue sticks.
- Familiarize yourself with placing the flannel chalice pieces on the flannel board as you tell the story (see Description of Activity).

Description of Activity

Gather the children so all can see the flannel board. Introduce the chalice by telling a story, using the five flannel pieces as props. As you add pieces, you create a flaming chalice, one piece of which looks like a smile. The children then make their own paper chalices.

Point to the flannel board and invite the children to listen to the story:

Once upon a time, there was a family going to their church [or congregation]. [point to the empty flannel board]

The sun was peeking in the window. It's time to get up!

Here is the sun. [place base sideways]

Look out the window as you drive or ride the bus—what do you see?

Here is the window. [place stem next to base]

Come into the room with a smile on your face! Smile at your new friends and smile at your old friends. Here is your smile. [place bowl right side up]

Sail away to look for adventure.

Here is the sail. [place candle on top of bowl]

See a fire in the distance. Here is the fire. [place flame on top of candle]

Put it all together. [turn base and stem under bowl]

It's a flaming chalice!

[point to the parts of the chalice as you name them]

The base is for all the different kinds of people there are.

The stem is for being kind and helpful.

The bowl is for smiles for everyone!

The candle that keeps us going is for truth, love, and the energy of action.

The flame that burns is the flame of hope and goodness.

If time allows and children wish, start over and tell the story again. Invite them to add new parts of the story that they can imagine. Prompt them by asking, "What could this piece be?"

Gather the children at the activity table. Invite them to make their own paper chalices, using the chalice cut-outs, and to glue them on construction paper to take home. You may wish to take pictures of the chalices the children create.

Invite the children to clean up. Show them where to stack the extra construction paper and cut-outs. Invite them to wipe up sticky glue spots from the table with moistened paper towels and straighten the area.

Including All Participants

You may wish to invite a child be your helper. Let them hold the flannel pieces and hand them to you as you tell the story.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Equipment to show a video or play a recording of "Make New Friends"

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any Circle Games posters you have made.
- Preview the Learning Station [YouTube video](#) of "Make New Friends." Obtain the equipment you will need if you wish to show it to the children.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle. Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Teach this new song to the children by singing it several times. Once they have learned, try singing it in rounds.

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is based on "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children sit in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung, to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the second verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend:

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],

How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child.

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, waving, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope
- Optional: Hole punch
- Optional: Yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.

- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of your congregation], all kinds of people can be friends, even if they are different from one another.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to color the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

FAITH IN ACTION: A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Assortment of jigsaw puzzles, from very easy to more advanced, including the family jigsaw puzzle from Session 11
- Snacks (ask families to bring a favorite healthy snack to share with others and to label the ingredients as needed)
- Optional: Blank puzzles and markers
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- In consultation with the religious educator, determine a time and location for a gathering of Chalice Children families or for the congregation at large.
- E-mail and/or mail invitations and publicize the event in your congregation's newsletter, on its Facebook page, etc.

- If your congregation has a group for seniors, consider extending a special invitation to them.

Description of Activity

The theme of Unit 2 of Chalice Children is "Church Is People." By this time, the Chalice Children have begun to feel a sense of belonging to the congregation and an understanding of the people and relationships that make it special. The Unit 2 Faith in Action activity can be a one-time event, such as the puzzles-and-snacks family gathering described below, perhaps held after Session 11, A Special Jigsaw Puzzle or Session 12, Family Snack Party.

Other suggestions for Faith in Action activities:

Extend the card-making activity in Session 10, Helping Others to include a visit to a retirement community, where the children can deliver the cards or pictures they've made.

The Chalice Children (and their families) could participate in one or more of the worship services described in Session 16, Special UU Services (e.g., Water Communion, Bread Communion, Flower Ceremony) by being greeters, handing out orders of service, collecting the offering, etc. If your congregation has a Bread Communion, preschoolers and their families could gather on the Saturday before the service to share bread recipes from their family heritage and bake bread together.

You can learn how to engage a service activity as a four-part process ([identifying](#), [planning](#), [executing](#), and [reflecting](#)) in the Tapestry of Faith program [Sing to the Power](#). While Sing to the Power is geared toward older children, you may find the structure helpful and adaptable for younger children.

Chalice Children families and invited guests gather to work on puzzles and share a snack.

An important but often neglected aspect of a Faith in Action project is the opportunity to reflect together on the experience. When the event is close to ending, ask everyone to help clean up and then gather briefly in a circle. Invite the children and families to share some thoughts about the gathering. Did they meet anyone new today? Did they see friends they have known for a long time? Note the importance of the relationships among the people in a congregation, using a puzzle as an analogy. Say, in these words or your own:

The individuals who come to our congregation are like separate puzzle pieces. When we come to know and help one another, we fit together like a finished puzzle that shows our congregation.

Optional: Close the gathering with one of the Chalice Children songs.

Including All Participants

Be certain that the area you select is accessible to all.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

From you I receive, to you I give, together we share, and from this we live. — "From You I Receive," Hymn 402 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "At our church [congregation], all kinds of people can be friends, even if they are different from one another." And we discovered that the chalice has a smile in it!

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Invite your children to ask questions about differences. Read some of the following books on differences:

- *It's OK to Be Different* by Todd Parr, 2009. It's also okay to need some help. *It's Okay to Be Different* cleverly delivers the important messages of acceptance, understanding, and confidence in an accessible, child-friendly format featuring Todd Parr's trademark bold, bright colors and silly scenes.
- *Am I a Color, Too?* by Heidi Cole and Nancy Vogl, illustrated by Gerald Purnell, 1995. In verse, a boy considers his racial identity since his mother is Caucasian and his father is African American. He concludes that people are people, no matter what their labels or "colors."
- *Lemon the Duck* by Laura Backman and Laurence Cleyet-Merle, 2008. This gorgeous picture book is based on the inspirational true

story of Lemon, the Pekin duck who was born in an elementary school classroom. Neurological issues make Lemon unable to walk, but with the support of a compassionate teacher and her students, Lemon is still able to become one happy duck.

- *Roland Humphrey Is Wearing a WHAT?* by Eileen Kiernan-Johnson, illustrated by Katrina Revenaugh, 2013. The story of a little boy's quest to be his authentic self, dressed in pink and festooned with sparkles, in a world that frowns on boys who like "girly" things.
- *Shapesville* by Andy Mills, 2003. Shapesville is a small town where five friends of various shapes, sizes, colors, and talents discuss their differences and celebrate what makes each of them unique.
- *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis, 2000. Told in rhyme, this story follows Susan through a series of familiar activities. Not until the end of the story is it revealed that Susan uses a wheelchair. Told with insight and without sentimentality, this is an inspiring look at a spunky little girl whose physical disability is never seen as a handicap.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . .

A Family Adventure. Invite a new friend from your congregation over for a playdate.

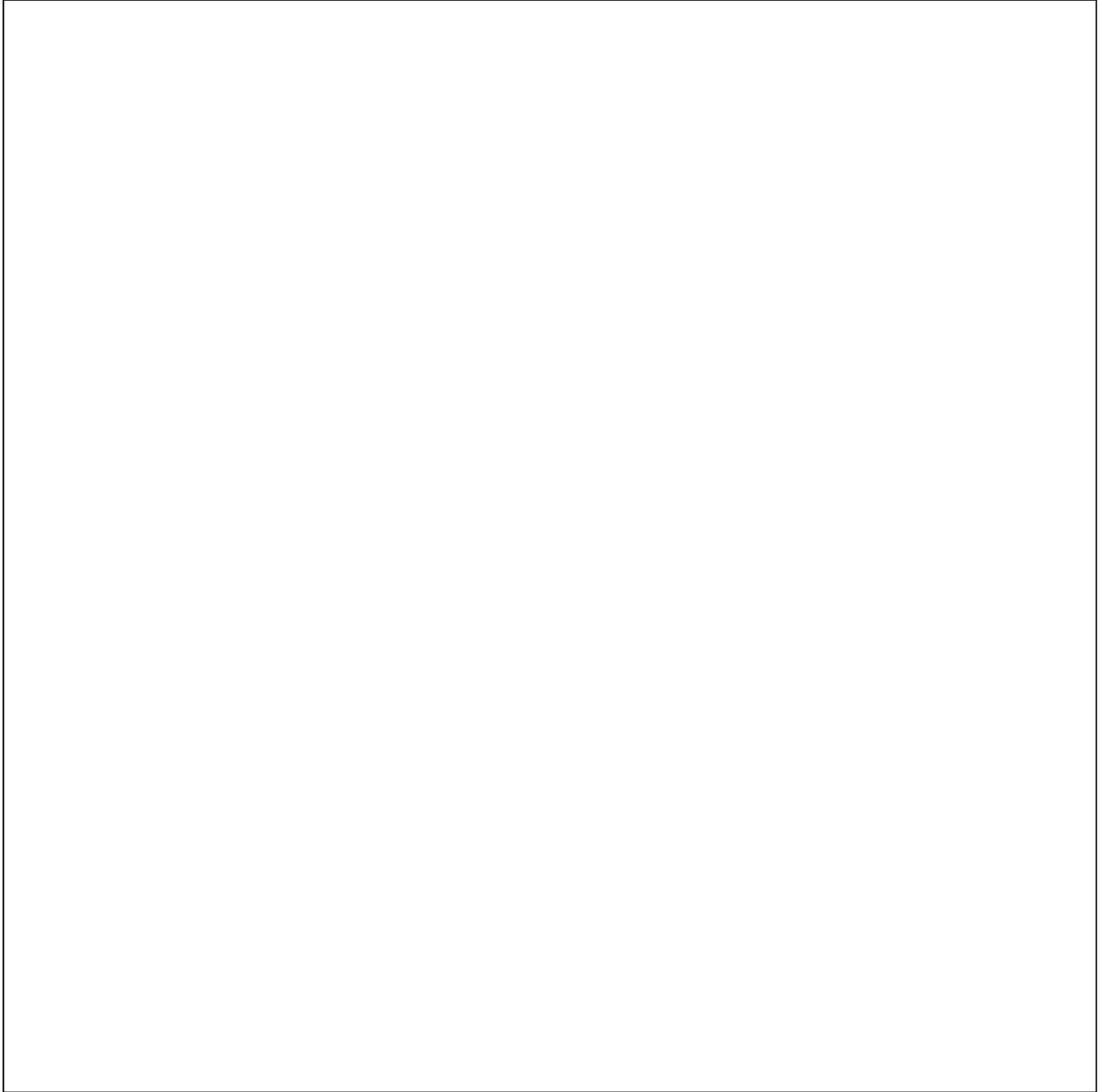
A Family Discovery. Adults can read "[God Makes No Mistakes: Creating Beloved Community for All Our Children](#)," a sermon by Sally Patton. Together with your child, listen to the song "[Make New Friends](#)" on YouTube.

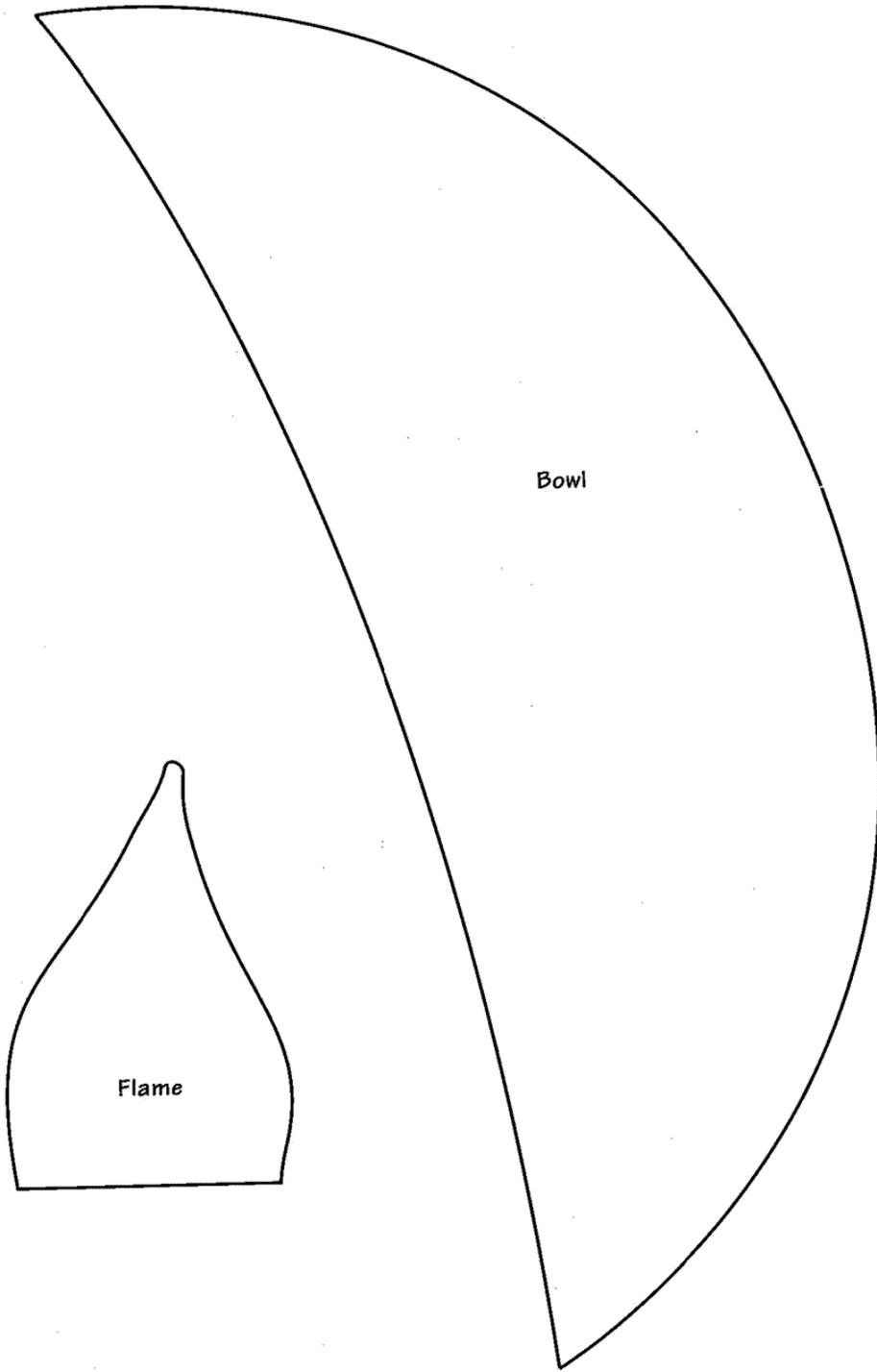
A Family Game. Sing "Make New Friends" together.

A Family Ritual. Light a chalice before dinnertime together. Say chalice-lighting words, such as, "We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action."

LEADER RESOURCE 1: FLANNEL CHALICE TEMPLATE

Download a [high-resolution PDF](#) for printing.





FIND OUT MORE

The UUA website offers [multicultural resources and workshops](#) to read, lead, or attend and, for teaching children, these [multicultural and anti-bias resources](#).

Read "[God Makes No Mistakes: Creating Beloved Community for All Our Children](#)," a sermon preached by Sally Patton and excerpted for this session's Spiritual Preparation exercise. Reading the entire sermon is recommended.

SESSION 10: HELPING OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

*What wondrous love is this that brings my heart
such bliss, and takes away the pain of my soul .
.. — "What Wondrous Love," Hymn 18 in
Singing the Living Tradition*

Affirming children for being helpful increases their feelings of self-worth and of being part of a family and community. Children have a finely tuned sense of empathy when someone is sick or needs help. In this session, we connect their caring feelings with the caring that a congregation can do.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Connect caring and helping with the congregation
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand that caring for others is an important part of being a Unitarian Universalist
- Express their own caring by creating cards for people who are lonely or sick
- Connect the story with their caring feelings.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Making Cards	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Listen to this [instrumental version](#) of "What Wondrous Love," which may especially affect you if the tune is new to you. The simple, Southern folk hymn has a plaintive melody that pulls at the heart strings. Our UU words, "To love and to all friends," instead of the traditional references to Christ, bring to mind [the message from Thich Nhat Hanh](#) that the next Buddha will be a Sangha—or, in other terms, the next Messiah will be a community.

Contemplate our UU community as a Messiah or Buddha, working at helping others and practicing loving kindness, understanding, and mindful living. What would it feel like to be a part of the community that comprises the Buddha/Messiah? It might feel like being bathed in wondrous love. Whether you visualize that love as a white light, a golden glow, or something else entirely, try to bring that imagery into your day.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, story books, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5 and the Chalice Flannel Board from Session 9.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with room for others.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters (Session 1).

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, “Clean-Up Time,” to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.
Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, “Clap, Clap.” Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing “Circle Time” to the tune of “London Bridge”:

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it’s time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the “I Wiggle” chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I’ll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the “Clap, Clap” chant from “Turn around and jump!” to “Turn around and clap!” and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint

- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Identify places and times the chalice is used at your congregation. Many congregations display a large chalice outside, in their lobby, or in the front of the sanctuary. Most light a chalice to indicate the start of a worship service.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say the chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme, in these words or your own:

At [name of congregation], we help each other. When someone is sick, we take care of them and show them that we are thinking of them. When there is something bad happening, we try to make it right. When someone has died, we comfort the family. Today we are going to make some cards to cheer up people who might be lonely or who are sick. But before we make the cards, let’s read a story together about helping others.

Including All Participants

Hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *How to Heal a Broken Wing* by Bob Graham, 2008. In a city full of hurried people, only young Will notices the bird lying hurt on the ground.
 - *The Lion and the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney, 2009. In award-winning artist Jerry Pinkney’s wordless adaptation of one of Aesop’s most beloved fables, an unlikely pair learn that no act of kindness is ever wasted.
 - *Hardworking Puppies* by Lynn Reiser, 2006. All puppies grow up to be dogs, but these 10 lucky puppies grow up to be dogs with jobs!
 - *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* by Philip C. Stead and Erin Stead, 2010. Friends come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. In Amos McGee’s case, they come in all sorts of species, too!
- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here’s how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don’t interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Have a child with hearing or sight difficulties sit near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: MAKING CARDS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper or card stock
- Markers and crayons
- Doilies, glitter, and other decorative add-ons
- Glue sticks
- Scissors (child-friendly), including left-handed scissors
- Envelopes big enough to hold 4 1/4 x 5 1/2-inch cards
- Paper towels, moistened
- Optional: Equipment to play "[What Wondrous Love](#)" (the instrumental version is recommended, as the traditional words are very different from our UU words) or other meditative music
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Contact the leaders in your congregation who will know of people who might appreciate a card at this time from the children (e.g., shut-ins, those who are sick or troubled), such as a Caring Committee, Pastoral Associates, or your minister. Compile a list of recipients, and find their addresses in your church [congregation] directory.
- Purchase postage stamps. Cut the paper in half, then fold it into halves to make a standard card size (4 1/4 x 5 1/2-inch).
- Set blank cards, markers and crayons, decorative supplies, glue sticks, and scissors at a work table.

Description of Activity

Children create cards to send to congregants who might appreciate a message of caring from children.

Invite the children to the activity table. Tell them about the people for whom you will make cards. Invite the children to make a variety of cards for these people. You could also have the children make generic cards (without specific recipients).

Play "What Wondrous Love" or other meditative music in the background to provide a lovely environment for this caring project.

Optional: While the children are making their cards, address the envelopes. Ask the children to help put the stamps on.

Variation: Walk the stamped envelopes to the mailbox together, if appropriate.

When it is time, invite the children to help clean up. Wipe up sticky glue from the table with moistened paper towels and put away the supplies. Throw away or recycle paper scraps.

Including All Participants

Provide stickers if the group includes children for whom drawing will be a challenge.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any Circle Games posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!

Clap, clap, clap!

Find a Friend at Church

“Find a Friend at Church” is sung to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.” Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of “skip,” ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing “If You're Happy and You Know It,” leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout “Hurray!” [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout “Hurray!” [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout “Hurray!” [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of “If You're Happy and You Know It” (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child.

Sing “It Isn't Any Trouble” to the tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”:

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of “s-m-i-l-e,” substitute “g-i-giggle-e”:

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute “ha-ha-ha-ha-ha”:

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, waving, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]

The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]

And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]

Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]

Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]

Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]

May we remember: Here at [name of your congregation], all kinds of people can be friends, even if they are different from one another.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to color the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?

- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

What wondrous love is this that brings my heart such bliss, and takes away the pain of my soul . . . — "What Wondrous Love," Hymn 18 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "We care for one another and help one another." We made cards for people in our congregation who are sick or lonely.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about the ways family members help one another, for example, by taking care of each other when they are sick and giving them a hug when they are lonely. Widen your circle with ways that you help other people in your congregation.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Read one of the picture books suggested for this session:

- *How to Heal a Broken Wing* by Bob Graham, 2008. In a city full of hurried people, only young Will notices the bird lying hurt on the ground.
- *The Lion and the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney, 2009. In award-winning artist Jerry Pinkney's wordless adaptation of one of Aesop's most beloved fables, an unlikely pair learn that no act of kindness is ever wasted.
- *Hardworking Puppies* by Lynn Reiser, 2006. All puppies grow up to be dogs, but these 10 lucky puppies grow up to be dogs with jobs!
- *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* by Philip C. Stead and Erin Stead, 2010. Friends come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. In Amos McGee's case, they come in all sorts of species, too!

A Family Adventure. Participate in a social justice project with your congregation, such as a Crop Walk, collecting food donations, or reading to the elderly.

A Family Discovery. Read or sing "What Wondrous Love," Hymn 18 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Listen to an [instrumental version](#) on YouTube. (Note: The instrumental version is recommended, because the words in the UU hymn are significantly different from the traditional words.)

A Family Game. Make up a song about helping others, to the tune of "London Bridge" (e.g., "Helping others is our work . . .").

A Family Ritual. During the chalice-lighting at dinner, invite family members to share how they helped others during the day.

FIND OUT MORE

Sangha means *community*. [Dharma Talk: Sangha](#), a talk by Thich Nhat Hanh, published on the Mindfulness Bell website, describes how and why the next Buddha may be a Sangha, as mentioned in the Spiritual Preparation for leaders.

Read an April 2, 2006 UU sermon, "[What Wondrous Love Is This?](#)" by Dottie Matthews, Unity Church-Unitarian, St. Paul, MN.

SESSION 11: A SPECIAL JIGSAW PUZZLE

INTRODUCTION

There are no extra pieces in the universe. Everyone is here because he or she has a place to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big jigsaw puzzle. — Deepak Chopra

The activities in this session help children feel as if they are part of a wonderful variety of Unitarian Universalist families that make up the whole congregational family. It raises awareness of how alike and how different Unitarian Universalist families are, and encourages children to take pride in their family, be accepting of all types of families, and celebrate being part of the whole congregation.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that many different families make up the congregational family
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand that many different kinds of families make up the congregational family
- Feel pride in the uniqueness of their own family
- Make the connection that individual families are like pieces of a puzzle that make up the whole congregational family.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: A Special Jigsaw Puzzle	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Reflect on the variety of families who make up your congregation. Hold each in your mind's eye, observing their smiles, their concern for one another, their difficulties, their sadness, their joy and their love for one another. Try to remember your own feelings as a child about your family. These feelings can go deep, and that sometimes means deep hurt as well as deep love. Family is complicated, and yet we recognize family by our love for one another. Reflect on your pets as well, because they are certainly part of your family and often clearly show us unconditional love (well, maybe that love is more conditional if your pet is a cat!). As you prepare for this session, reflect on how your family fits into the puzzle that is the universe.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, story books, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5 and the Chalice Flannel Board from Session 9.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with room for others.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters (Session 1).

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, “Clean-Up Time,” to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, “Clap, Clap.” Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing “Circle Time” to the tune of “London Bridge”:

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it’s time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the “I Wiggle” chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I’ll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the “Clap, Clap” chant from “Turn around and jump!” to “Turn around and clap!” and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint

- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you “light” the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we’re feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, “No, thank you.”

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today’s theme, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to make a special jigsaw puzzle! It’s a puzzle about our families, and we will each draw our family, right on the puzzle. But, before we start to make the puzzle, let’s read a story about families.

Including All Participants

Hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:

- *The Family Book* by Todd Parr, 2010. *The Family Book* celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two moms or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, Todd Parr assures readers that every family is special in its own unique way.
- *Who’s In My Family?* by Robie Harris, 2012. This colorful, large-format picture book looks at all kinds of diverse families. Families live in different places, eat different foods, and enjoy doing different things together. They have different numbers of children, who might be adopted, and different combinations of mothers and fathers, who might get divorced and possibly remarry. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, foster parents, and pets are family, too.
- *Grandfather Counts* by Andrea Cheng, 2003. When Helen’s grandfather comes from China to live with her family, he’s shocked to find that none of his grandchildren speak Chinese. How will he communicate with them?
- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnall, 2005. In the zoo, there are all kinds of animal families—but Tango’s family is not like any of the others. A true story about two male penguins who raised a baby penguin.

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Ascertain if the group includes any foster children, adoptees, or children in mixed-race, LGBTQ, or other diverse families for whom you would like to provide some extra support and reassurance that their family is recognized by the congregation as a loving family, too. You may wish to alert families ahead of time to the topic of diverse families, so that they are able to prepare their children and so that you can discuss any issues that might arise during this activity and determine how best to affirm the child.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own,

Here’s how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don’t interrupt

the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: A SPECIAL JIGSAW PUZZLE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A large, blank jigsaw puzzle
- Multicultural markers or crayons
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Buy a large, blank jigsaw puzzle at a retail craft store, or online; this [“community puzzle”](#) would work well.
- Or, make a blank jigsaw puzzle with foam core or cardboard. To see someone make a puzzle, watch the video at the bottom of the web page [“How to Make a Jigsaw Puzzle”](#). You can purchase a large sheet of foam core from a craft or art/architect supply store. Pizza-box cardboard works well, if clean. Draw an outline of your congregation on a sheet of paper the same size as the foam core or cardboard (and make a copy, to use as a guide for putting the puzzle together). Glue the picture to the foam core or cardboard. Make enough pieces so that each child can have one or two. Foam core: Using a utility knife, cut the foam core into a variety of shapes. Large shapes with at least two semicircular shapes facing in or out will be easiest to work with. Leave a solid border of foam core as a frame for the puzzle. Cardboard: Turn over the cardboard and draw puzzle shapes on the back. Then, cut out the shapes.

Description of Activity

Children draw a picture of their family as part of the puzzle. This puzzle will be fun to share during Session 12, Family Snack Party or during the Faith in Action for this unit, a puzzle-and-snacks family gathering (see Session 9, Faith in Action).

Invite the children to the activity table. Say, in these words or your own:

Each person is a part of our church [congregation], and together we make a church [congregational] family.

Tell the children that they will get to draw their family on a puzzle piece. Show the outline of your congregation that you created. See if the children can guess what the shape is. Tell them that the puzzle they create will be in the shape of our church [congregation].

Give each child one or two puzzle pieces. Ask the children to draw themselves and their family members (including pets) on one or both puzzle pieces. Write the name of each child’s family on their piece, for example, “Tara’s family.” Leave some pieces blank for any children who are not in class today. (You might consider setting aside a few, blank puzzle pieces to welcome newcomers to the group throughout the year, who may add their own family puzzle pieces.)

Help the children put the puzzle together. Ask them if they’d like to add more people or details. Point out how many different kinds of people and families are part of the whole church [congregation]. Name and celebrate each family.

Invite the children to clean up. They can sort the markers and make sure the caps are on, return drawing supplies to storage, and throw out or recycle scraps of paper. Place the completed puzzle on a table to show to families, if possible. Optional: Take a picture of the completed puzzle.

Including All Participants

Emphasize that there are many different kinds of families—foster families, adopted families, families with one parent, families with two parents (two mommies, two daddies, one of each), families with grandparents, and more—and that *all* of our congregational families, with all of our differences, are recognized, celebrated, and loved by our congregation.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any Circle Games posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing “Welcome, Chalice Children” to the tune of “Little Rabbit Foo-Foo”:

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.

Jump into the circle,
 Jump, jump, jump.
 Welcome, Chalice Children,
 We are Universalists.
 Jump into the circle,
 Jump, jump, jump.
 Welcome, Chalice Children,
 My name is [leaders' and children's names, in
 turn].
 Jump into the circle,
 Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
 Welcome to our circle!
 We are Chalice Children!
 Clap, clap, clap!
 We are Unitarians!
 We are Universalists!
 Welcome to our circle!
 Clap, clap, clap!
 We are Chalice Children!
 Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the
 group]
 Welcome to our circle!
 Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
 One is silver and the other is gold.
 A circle is round, it has no end.
 That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
 I'll find a friend at church.
 Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at
 church.
 We'll skip around the room.
 We'll skip around the room.
 Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the
 room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 How are you this special day?
 We are glad you came to play.
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 So smile when you're in trouble.

It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of “s-m-i-l-e,” substitute “g-i-giggle-e”:

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute “ha-ha-ha-ha-ha”:

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, waving, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the “lit” preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over “flame” and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over “flame” and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over “flame” and gather to your heart again]

Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the “flame”]

Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]

Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of your congregation], all kinds of people can be friends, even if they are different from one another.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

There are no extra pieces in the universe. Everyone is here because he or she has a place to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big jigsaw puzzle. — Deepak Chopra

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was “There are many different kinds of families, and we all are part of our church [congregational] family.” We drew pictures of our families on pieces of a special jigsaw puzzle.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Invite your children to show you the picture of your family on our special puzzle.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Read one of the books suggested for this session:

- *The Family Book* by Todd Parr, 2010. *The Family Book* celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two moms or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, Todd Parr assures readers that every family is special in its own unique way.
- *Who's In My Family?* by Robie Harris 2012. This colorful, large-format picture book looks at all kinds of diverse families. Families live in different places, eat different foods, and enjoy doing different things together. They have

different numbers of children, who might be adopted, and different combinations of mothers and fathers, who might get divorced and possibly remarry. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, foster parents, and pets are family, too.

- *Grandfather Counts* by Andrea Cheng, 2003. When Helen's grandfather comes from China to live with her family, he's shocked to find that none of his grandchildren speak Chinese. How will he communicate with them?
- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnall, 2005. In the zoo, there are all kinds of animal families—but Tango's family is not like any of the others. A true story about two male penguins who raised a baby penguin.

A Family Adventure. Invite another family for lunch, or a picnic, or an ice cream together after church.

A Family Discovery. Make your own family puzzle using a blank, pre-cut [cardboard puzzle](#), or send a family photo to a commercial company such as [Shutterfly](#).

A Family Game. Pull out your favorite family puzzles to play with.

FIND OUT MORE

[Family Diversity Projects](#) creates books, curriculum, and easy-to-display exhibits to help eliminate prejudice, stereotyping, bullying, and harassment of people who are discriminated against due to sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, race, national origin, religion, and disabilities of all kinds. Bring one or more of its seven award-winning, traveling photo-text exhibits to your own community venue.

Family is a basic element of self-identification for young children; it is important for children to see their families reflected in the world around them, while at the same time seeing the diversity of families in our communities. Welcoming Schools offers this list of [resources celebrating family diversity](#).

The February 5, 2012 sermon, "[The Infinite Enlargement of the Heart](#)," by James (Jay) C. Leach, First Unitarian Church of Columbus, OH, won the 2012 Stewardship Sermon Award.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Imagine the world of the preschool child. They often like to be "big" and help with the chores and functions of their family—pushing the stroller by themselves, gathering dishes for a meal, helping with the vacuum, etc. Imagine their delight when they prepare a snack and serve it with pride to their families in this session. They are playing host, and that is a big responsibility! It is the same pride and responsibility we feel when someone comes to visit our home, to be welcomed and to understand how we have chosen to live. Hopefully, our guests admire our choices, and we feel understood and loved. Take time to reflect how important it is to feel affirmed in our choices and to be admired and loved by people important to us. Bring that reflection to your morning with the preschoolers.

SESSION 12: FAMILY SNACK PARTY

INTRODUCTION

*All kinds of people around the table . . . —
"We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table," Hymn
407 in Singing the Living Tradition*

Today, we celebrate our families and demonstrate to the children that there are many kinds of families. The children prepare for a family snack party to follow the worship service; Alternate Activity 1 gives guidance for hosting the party. At least a week in advance, invite the children's families (Leader Resource 1).

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that there are many kinds of families
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience creating a "welcome table" for their families
- Recognize diversity among families in the congregation
- Feel pride in introducing their family to the Chalice Children group.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Making Snack	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Hosting the Family Snack	15

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Family Snack Party Invitation](#) (included in this document)
- Name tags and markers
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, story books, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Adapt Leader Resource 1 to create an invitation and mail or email it to Chalice Children families at least a week in advance. Make additional copies of the invitation to give parents and caregivers as a reminder when they arrive to drop off children for today's session. The invitation can include graphics you are using in Chalice Children, so it looks more like fun and less like business.
- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5 and the Chalice Flannel Board from Session 9.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, give their parents or caregivers the handout, and invite the children into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table

that is tall enough to accommodate a wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters (Session 1).

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time they meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [sit down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change words of the "Clap,

Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregation] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Today we're having a Family Snack Party! We've invited your families to eat a snack with us after our class today. First, we will make a special snack. Next, we will set a pretty table together. And then, we will meet all of our beautiful, different families. But before we make the snack, let's read a story together about families.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions, or from any of the books suggested for in Session 11, Activity 4, Story:
 - *Daddy, Papa, and Me* by Leslea Newman, 2009. A toddler spends the day with their daddies (the gender of the child is non-specific). From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together.
 - *Heather Has Two Mommies: 20th Anniversary Edition* by Leslea Newman, 2009. This updated and revised version of *Heather Has Two Mommies* offers an enjoyable, upbeat, age-appropriate introduction to the idea of family diversity.
 - *Mommy, Mama, and Me* by Leslea Newman, 2009. A toddler spends the day with its mommies (the gender of the child is non-specific). From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together.
 - *Two Homes* by Claire Masurel, illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton, 2003. The gently reassuring text focuses on what is gained rather than lost when parents divorce, while the sensitive illustrations, depicting two unique homes in all their small details, firmly establish Alex's place in both homes.
 - *We Belong Together: A Book about Adoption and Families* by Todd Parr, 2007. Popular author-illustrator Parr illustrates the rewards of family ties in this heartfelt, supportive book geared toward adopted children and their parents.
 - *Lucy's Family Tree* by Karen Halvorsen Schreck, 2006. Lucy comes home from school with an assignment to create a family tree, but she worries that her adoption from Mexico makes her family too "different." She

asks her parents to write a note excusing her from the task.

- *This Is the Rope* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by James Ransome, 2013. The story of one family's journey north during the Great Migration starts with a little girl in South Carolina who finds a rope under a tree one summer.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Ascertain if the group includes any foster children, adoptees, or children in mixed-race, LGBTQ, or other diverse families for whom you would like to provide some extra support and reassurance that their family is recognized by the congregation as a loving family, too. You may wish to alert families ahead of time to the topic of diverse families, so that they are able to prepare their children and so that you can discuss any issues that might arise during this activity and determine how best to affirm the child.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own,

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so that they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: MAKING SNACK (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Family Snack Party Invitation](#) (included in this document)
- Snack supplies of your choice, serving plates or bowls, and napkins or small plates
- Newsprint roll or butcher paper
- Markers or crayons

- Hand sanitizer or access to a sink with soap and water
- Family jigsaw puzzle (Session 11, Activity 5, A Special Jigsaw Puzzle)
- Paper towels, moistened
- Optional: Other table decorations, bows, or crepe paper
- Optional: Adult-sized chairs

Preparation for Activity

- At least a week ahead, adapt Leader Resource 1, Family Snack Party Invitation and mail or email to Chalice Children families. (Print extra invitations to hand to parents and caregivers leaving their children at the start of the session, as a reminder.)
- If your meeting room lacks space to prepare snack and to accommodate all the families (including adult chairs, which you may need to bring in, and room for anyone using a wheelchair), arrange to use another location.
- Check on participant and family food restrictions and allergies and plan snacks appropriate for the group. Plan some items that children can help prepare during this activity. Suggestions include Ants on a Log (celery, peanut butter, and raisins—if any have peanut allergies, but all can eat dairy products, substitute cream cheese for peanut butter); popcorn (children can prepare individual servings in small paper bowls or paper coffee filters); bread, butter, and jam; graham crackers; fresh fruit; and hummus with veggies and/or pita chips. You might also check out the [Banana Pudding](#) snack on the *Teach Preschool* blog.
- Set up a "cooking area" with all the supplies needed to prepare the snack. Include enough staging areas so each child can have a place to be and a task to do.
- Set up the snack table by covering it with newsprint and butcher paper. Set out markers and any other items children may use to decorate.

Description of Activity

The children help make a special snack to serve to their families after this session.

Have all the children wash their hands well. Invite them to the "cooking" area. Tell them what snack they are going to make. Assign a task to each child.

Some children can decorate the "tablecloth," help pull up to the table any needed adult-size chairs, or help you decide where to display the family jigsaw puzzle.

Engage all the children to help clean up. They can carry utensils and cutting boards to the sink, return unused food to its container, and wipe the surfaces with moistened paper towels.

Including All Participants

Be sure your communication about allergies has been thorough before families enter the room to share the snack. Make sure the room is accessible for any family members or caregivers who may have special needs.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any Circle Games posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!

Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]

Welcome to our circle!

Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,

One is silver and the other is gold.

A circle is round, it has no end.

That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.

I'll find a friend at church.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.

We'll skip around the room.

We'll skip around the room.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping,

waving, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of your congregation], all kinds of people can be friends, even if they are different from one another.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

*All kinds of people around the table . . . —
"We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table," Hymn
407 in Singing the Living Tradition*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . we celebrated different kinds of families and prepared for the Family Snack Party.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share a story together from the suggested book list:

- *Daddy, Papa, and Me* by Leslea Newman, 2009. A toddler spends the day with their daddies (the gender of the child is non-specific). From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together.
- *Heather Has Two Mommies: 20th Anniversary Edition* by Leslea Newman, 2009. This updated and revised version of *Heather Has Two Mommies* offers an enjoyable, upbeat, age-appropriate introduction to the idea of family diversity.
- *Mommy, Mama, and Me* by Leslea Newman, 2009. A toddler spends the day with its mommies (the gender of the child is non-specific). From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together.
- *Two Homes* by Claire Masurel, illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton, 2003. The gently reassuring text focuses on what is gained rather than what is lost when parents divorce, while the sensitive illustrations, depicting two unique homes in all their small details, firmly establish Alex's place in both homes.
- *We Belong Together: A Book about Adoption and Families* by Todd Parr, 2007. Popular author-illustrator Parr illustrates the rewards of family ties in this heartfelt, supportive book geared toward adopted children and their parents.
- *Lucy's Family Tree* by Karen Halvorsen Schreck, 2006. Lucy comes home from school with an assignment to create a family tree, but she worries that her adoption from Mexico makes her family too "different." She asks her

parents to write a note excusing her from the task.

- *This Is the Rope* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by James Ransome, 2013. The story of one family's journey north during the Great Migration starts with a little girl in South Carolina who finds a rope under a tree one summer.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . looking at your family pictures together and talking about your family.

A Family Adventure. Invite another family to a picnic together after worship at your congregation.

A Family Discovery. Host another Family Snack Party for friends in your congregation, and have the preschoolers decide on the snack and help make it. If your preschooler didn't make banana pudding in their Chalice Children group, try making it as described on the [Teach Preschool](#) website. Also on the [Teach Preschool blog](#), read about how preschoolers can serve their own snack.

A Family Game. Play "Chalice, Chalice, Flame," the same way you play "Duck, Duck, Goose."

A Family Ritual. Invite your preschooler to help set a chalice at the dinner table. Light the chalice together. Say chalice-lighting words, such as, "We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action." Mention how nice it is to have help from your preschooler.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: HOSTING THE FAMILY SNACK PARTY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Prepared snacks, decorated snack table, and chairs for both adults and children
- Decorated snack table
- Hand sanitizer or access to hand-washing facilities
- Family jigsaw puzzle from Session 11
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone
- Optional: Games appropriate for children of different ages, such as the Memory Match Game (Session 5), puzzles, or playing cards

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Set up an activity area with games, puzzles, etc. This is an especially good idea if siblings of various ages have been invited.

Description of Activity

Chalice Children families enjoy a snack together that the children helped to prepare.

As families arrive, invite them to the snack table. If there are more people than you have room for at the table, invite people to use different seating areas in the room. Serve the special snack you've prepared. While you're eating, invite the preschoolers to introduce their families to the others.

When people have finished eating, play the game "Find a Friend at Church" with the children and their families.

Point out the special jigsaw puzzle the group made in Session 11. Invite families to have their preschoolers show them the depiction of their family in the puzzle.

At the end of the Snack Party, say, in these words or your own:

Thank you for coming to our Family Snack Party! As Chalice Children, we celebrate all of our families and welcome the differences in our families. We believe that love is what makes us families.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: FAMILY SNACK PARTY INVITATION

Dear Chalice Children families,

We would like to invite your family to join us on Sunday, [month and day], for a Family Snack Party, right after the worship service. Your whole family is invited to come to our room [or designated location] for about 15 minutes to enjoy food prepared by your preschooler and a game! We will talk about our families and affirm that all of our families are part of our congregation. Please let us know about any food allergies, accessibility needs, or other issues we should be aware of.

Sincerely,

[Leaders' names, plus a phone number or e-mail address for parents to contact you]

FIND OUT MORE

The Teach Preschool website offers a simple way to [make banana pudding](#) with a preschooler, and a blog post that describes how the [children prepare and serve their own snack](#).

An excerpt from a January 25, 2009 sermon, "[The Better Angels of Our Nature](#)," by Rev. Jessica Purple Rodela, First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada challenges UUs to find diversity through active practice.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Helping children accept and name their feelings requires that parents and leaders acknowledge the authenticity of whatever they are feeling. Our next step is to help them find the words to express what they are experiencing.

As leaders and Unitarian Universalist religious educators, our goal is to help children develop inner resources for dealing with the joys and sorrows of life. We need to be aware of our own feelings and attitudes and so that we can deal openly and honestly with children's questions and concerns. It's also important to be aware of children's differing needs and understandings after experiencing a loss or death, based on their age, experience, ability to verbalize, and temperament.

Some adults shy away from the topic of "feeling sad" because they believe it is a difficult subject to discuss, yet leaders often report good sharing and a feeling of increased understanding after such a lesson. Memorial services and end-of-life services are a universal part of the human religious experience and a vital part of our congregational life. Spending time with children, giving them comfort, and inviting them to remember and share their memories reassures them that we care and that it is okay to can talk openly with us about loss and grief.

SESSION 13: FEELING SAD

INTRODUCTION

Lean on me when you're not strong, and I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on. — "Lean On Me," Hymn 1021 in Singing the Journey

Preschool children need to know that everyone has sad feelings and that we are able to bring these sad feelings to our congregation. Being with others who are also sad, and sharing those feelings together, can often help people feel better. When someone has died, sharing our sad feelings together at a memorial service is one important part of being a community.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that we can bring our sad feelings to our congregation
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn that everyone has sad feelings and that death is a natural part of life
- Know that a memorial service is one way that we can comfort people when someone has died
- Understand that our congregation is a safe place to share our feelings and questions about death and loss.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Memorial Service	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Alert families that this week's topic is loss and death, and invite them to send in with their child a picture or memento of a loved one who has died.
- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a marker and a few extra blank name tags.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5, the Chalice Flannel Board from Session 9, and the family jigsaw puzzle from Session 11.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

If children have brought in a picture or memento of a loved one who has died, have them help you store their items in a safe place until the Memorial Service.

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play must include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for others.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- In advance, alert parents and caregivers about the topic of this session. Ask them to let you know about any losses or deaths their preschooler may be thinking about.
- Children's conversations about sadness often include instances of the death of a pet or a family member. Prepare yourself to respond to children's expressions of confusion or deep feelings.
- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

What makes people sad? What makes you sad? [Point to the sad face on your Feelings Chart, or, if you are using the Feelings Flashcards, point out the Sad Feelings Flashcard.] What do you do when you are sad? What do grown-ups do? Do they ever cry?

Share some times that you were sad, which will help elicit stories from the children. For example:

Once I broke my favorite cup, and that made me sad. I cried a little. When my dog Rusty died, I cried a lot. Can anyone tell us about a time when they were sad?

As you respond to the children, acknowledge their feelings, show your sympathy, and support their caring behavior. For example, you could say, in these words or your own:

That must have made you feel very sad. You miss your grandfather, don't you? I'm sorry that he died. It was good to hug your brother when he lost his best truck. You helped him feel better.

Make note of the people, pets, or other reasons for sad feelings which the children name, so that you can recall them during Activity 5, Memorial Service.

Tell the children about memorial services at your congregation, using these words or your own:

When someone dies, we can have a special service at our church [congregation], called a memorial service. At a memorial service, we remember the person who died. Sometimes people tell stories about that person or play their favorite music. Often, there are beautiful flowers. Today we will have our own Memorial Service for the sad things that we have shared with one another. But before we do that, let's read a story together.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility limitations, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley, 1992. Badger's friends are sad when he

dies, but they treasure the legacies he left them.

- *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown, 1958. Children offer a goodbye to a dead bird they find in the woods.
- *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judith Viorst, 1987. Trying to overcome his grief, a boy tries to think of the 10 best things about his dead cat.
- *My Grandson Lew* by Charlotte Zolotow, 1974. Lewis and his mother remember Grandpa, who used to come in at night when Lewis called.
- *A Ball for Daisy* by Chris Raschka, 2011. Any child who has ever had a beloved toy break will relate to Daisy's anguish when her favorite ball is destroyed by a bigger dog.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Stories about death may trigger deep feelings among the children. Be prepared to respond to any thoughts or worries the children share by acknowledging their feelings, showing your sympathy, and supporting their caring behavior.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: MEMORIAL SERVICE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A music player and a recording of "Pachelbel's Canon" or other solemn music
- Battery-operated tea lights, one for each child
- Paper towels, moistened

- For flower collages: Pictures of flowers, cut-out from magazines; child-friendly scissors, including left-handed scissors; construction paper (one sheet for each child); and glue sticks
- For tissue paper flowers: Tissue paper, pipe cleaners, and (optional) pictures of loved ones or mementos that children have brought
- "Generic" mementos such as stuffed animals, pictures of nature scenes, or toy plastic food items
- Optional: Script from a memorial service at your congregation
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether to have children make flower collages or tissue paper flowers. For the flower collage, cut out pictures of flowers from magazines. For the tissue paper flowers, [this video](#) shows you how to make them.
- Find a recording of "Pachelbel's Canon" or choose other solemn music to play during this activity.
- Find out how your congregation offers memorial services. Ask a minister or congregational leader or minister for a sample script or order of service. Decide which elements, if any, you will incorporate into your special Memorial Service.
- Decide whether to hold your Memorial Service outdoors, weather permitting. If your congregation has a Memorial Garden, it might be especially meaningful to hold your service there. Make sure an outdoor location is accessible to everyone who will join you and arrange to have adequate supervision to bring the children outside. If you will play music, make sure your music player does not require an electric outlet.
- It may take a while for some preschool children to articulate their sad feelings. Plan to speak in a slow and gentle voice, and leave lots of space for the children to share their feelings. By waiting and taking breaths between times when you speak, you will invite shy or quiet children to say something.

Description of Activity

Children create either flower collages or tissue paper flowers and participate in a special Memorial Service.

Invite the children to gather around the activity table to make flower collages or tissue paper flowers. Play the music you've chosen. Distribute the supplies, and tell them that they are going to make something beautiful to

add to the memorial service. Either have them glue flower pictures to a piece of construction paper, or demonstrate how to make a tissue paper flower. Optional: Take a picture of the children's completed collages or flowers.

Invite the children to bring their collages or flowers, and any family mementos or photos they brought with them, and join you in the circle. Give each child a tea light. Say, in these words your own:

We are now going to have our own Memorial Service for all the people, pets, or sad things that we named earlier, in our circle. First, we will light candles and place our flowers.

Have each child "light" their candle, place it in the middle of the circle, and place their flower pictures or flowers around them. As the children light their candles, you can encourage them to say the name of the person or pet they named during Circle Time, for example, "I light this candle for Grandpa Jerry" or "I place this flower for my cat, Audrey." Say, in these words or your own:

Sometimes at a memorial service, family members share their stories. Sometimes there is a book that everyone signs, where people can leave a loving note for the family. Sometimes there are pictures of the person who has died. People also might share mementos—objects or things that make you think of and remember the person. Did anyone bring a picture or a memento of a loved one who has died?

Invite the children to share their photo or memento and tell the group about it.

Say, in these words or your own:

If you didn't bring a picture or memento today, would you still like to share something about a loved one who has died?

If you have generic mementos, you can offer them at this time.

Say, in these words or your own:

It makes us sad to remember sad things. But it makes us feel loved when we are able to share our sad feelings together, and that helps us feel better.

Have the children give one another a big group hug!

Invite the children to clean up the activity area. They can wipe up glue from the table with moistened paper towels, put away the art supplies, put the tea lights in a bin, and put the photos and mementos in a safe place.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold the Memorial Service in a circle of chairs to make it easier to

include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces. If any children are not able to come forward to light a tea candle, have all the children participate from where they are seated or pre-arrange for a co-leader to assist any of the children who need help.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any Circle Games posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.

That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, waving, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we care for one another by sharing our sad feelings and offering comfort to people who are sad. We also have memorial services for people who have died.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Lean on me when you're not strong, and I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on. — "Lean On Me," Hymn 1021 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "At our church [congregation], we share our sad feelings and have memorial services for people who have died." We created a flower collage [made tissue paper flowers] and had our own Memorial Service with flowers and candles.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read one or more of this session's suggested books, together:

- *Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley, 1992. Badger's friends are sad when he dies, but they treasure the legacies he left them.
- *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown, 1958. Children offer a goodbye to a dead bird they find in the woods.
- *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judith Viorst, 1987. Trying to overcome his grief, a boy tries to think of the 10 best things about his dead cat.
- *My Grandson Lew* by Charlotte Zolotow, 1974. Lewis and his mother remember Grandpa, who used to come in at night when Lewis called.
- *A Ball for Daisy* by Chris Raschka, 2011. Any child who has ever had a beloved toy break will relate to Daisy's anguish when her favorite ball is destroyed by a bigger dog.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . creating your own ceremony for loss. Find guidance in [How to Bury a Goldfish and Other Ceremonies and Celebrations for Everyday Life](#) by Virginia Lang and Louise Nayer (Skinner House Books, 2007); read the section on loss.

A Family Adventure. Visit a cemetery and place flowers on a grave.

A Family Discovery. Together as a family, watch [Stevie Wonder's eulogy to George Duke](#) on YouTube.

FIND OUT MORE

["Creating Your Own Memorial Service,"](#) excerpts from Remembering Well by Sarah York, on the BeliefNet website.

[Teaching the World to Die: Unitarian Universalist Death Ways](#) is a September 24, 2012 sermon by Edward Searle. You can also find this title as an e-book.

SESSION 14: WEDDINGS AND OTHER SERVICES OF LOVE AND UNION

INTRODUCTION

Oh, you can be anybody you want to be, you can love whomever you will. — "Everything Possible," Hymn 1019 in Singing the Journey

The children learn that weddings and services of union happen in your congregation between two people who love each other. They spend time playing with the wedding-related items you brought and then hold a wedding for two stuffed animals.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that Unitarian Universalists support marriage between two people who love each other
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- See that the congregation is an important place for celebrations of many kinds, both happy and sad
- Learn that weddings and services of union happen between two people who love each other
- Understand that Unitarian Universalists accept all loving relationships between two adults who want to marry one another.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Wedding	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. What weddings or services of union did you attend as a child or as an adult? If you've had a wedding, do you remember feeling gladness, hope, nervousness? A wedding is really about hope—that despite all the things they know could go wrong, two people still wish to publicly declare their love for and commitment to one another. The wedding items you've gathered, whether from other families or your own, can help you help remember and experience this sense of hope and possibility in a very tactile way.

Send thoughts and prayers to all the folks who have wished to be married and are unable to. As Unitarian Universalists, it is our fervent hope that soon we won't have to even use the language of a "service of union" unless the wedding party desires to.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Two stuffed bears (or other stuffed animals)
- Wedding-related items

Preparation for Activity

- Collect wedding-related items such as plastic champagne glasses, fancy clothes, or a wedding album. You may invite the families ahead of time to bring in their own wedding items, such as an album, fancy clothes, or a dried bouquet. You can look for items around your congregation, and/or bring some from home.
- Make name tags for the children you are expecting. Set them out with a marker and a few blank name tags.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5, the Chalice Flannel Board from Session 9, and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle from Session 11. Include the wedding items you have collected, along with some stuffed animals.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

If children have brought family wedding-related items, store these in a safe place until the wedding.

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]

I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- Two teddy bears (or two other stuffed animals)

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our

church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Our church [congregation] is a place where weddings happen. When two people love each other and want to spend the rest of their lives together, they may want to get married, and they can have a ceremony in our church [congregation]. Have you ever been to a wedding or a service of union? Today we will have a wedding right here, between these two bears. But before we do that, let's read a story together.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility problems, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *The Wedding* by Eve Bunting, 2003. On her way to town, Miss Brindle Cow meets a host of animals who are late for a very important wedding.
 - *The Rabbits' Wedding* by Garth Williams, 1958. Animals in a moonlit forest attend the wedding of a white rabbit and a black rabbit. Note: Intimations of interracial marriage caused some Alabama politicians to call for this book to be banned in the late 1950s. But the racial concerns of the past seem to have dissipated; contemporary, online reviews are positive. One reader notes that the book "brought clarity and understanding to what my parents [white Scottish mother, black Caribbean father] must have had to experience in their own travels and after their own 'rabbits' wedding."
 - *King and King* by Linda de Haan and Stern Nyland, 2003. In this postmodern fractured fairy tale, a worn-out Queen is ready for retirement. After much nagging, the Prince, who "never cared much for princesses," finally caves in and agrees to wed in order to ascend the throne. However, no one strikes the Prince's fancy—until he meets Prince Lee. A "very special wedding" ensues!

- *Uncle Bobby's Wedding* by Sarah S. Brannen, 2008. Bobby's niece Chloe worries that when Bobby and Jamie, his boyfriend, get married, Chloe won't be his favorite person anymore. This warm story embraces the alternative family while keeping its focus on the uncle and niece's love for one another.
- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: WEDDING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Wedding Ceremony Readings](#) (included in this document)
- Two stuffed bears (or other stuffed animals)
- Wedding-related items
- Wedding music and equipment to play it
- Three battery-operated tea lights
- Something festive to drink, such as sparkling white grape juice
- Plastic cups or flutes
- Paper towels, moistened
- Optional: Dress-up clothes for wedding guests, for example, hats, tulle fabric, bow ties, ties, vests, fancy shoes, shiny dresses, wide bows, and belts
- Optional: Script from a service of union or wedding at your congregation
- Optional: Special wedding refreshments, such as cake, tiny sandwiches, fruit skewers, or pastel butter mints

- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Let the parents know about the topic for this session, and discuss the language you should use to describe their situation. Assure them that all individual choices will be affirmed, whether a parent is married, has been married but no longer is, is in a partnership raising children but not married, has chosen not to marry a partner, or is unable to marry a partner legally. You might note—to parents, and to children—that Unitarian Universalists are working toward changing the laws so that every couple who love each other and want to marry can do so.
- Collect wedding-related items (see Activity 1, Free Play).
- Practice reading Leader Resource 1, *Wedding Ceremony Readings*, aloud until the words come naturally to you.
- Decide how you will pick two children to hold Bear and Bear during the wedding ceremony.
- Choose an appropriate piece of music to play, such as "A Lover's Concerto (Minuet in G Major)" by Johann Sebastian Bach, "A Thousand Years—Instrumental" by The Piano Guys, or "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong.
- Set up the activity area with the stuffed bears, wedding items, tea lights, juice and cups, and any special refreshments you are serving.
- If you are providing special snacks, take note of any food allergies among the group and plan accordingly. Have plain water or apple juice available for children who dislike carbonated beverages.

Description of Activity

Children celebrate the wedding of two stuffed animals.

Invite the children to the activity table. Say, in these words or your own:

Here at church [name of congregation], people have weddings or services of union. [Hold up any wedding albums that have been brought in, and [show some of the pages.] In our church [congregation], people can make up their own wedding service with the words and the music they want. [As you name the various wedding items, show any examples you have.] They might wear special clothes, decorate the room with candles or flowers, invite their families and friends, have the minister read some special words, and celebrate with a party afterward, with

special food and sometimes a cake! Does that sound like fun? Let's set up a wedding right now for [Bear] and [Bear].

Start the wedding music and light the three tea lights. Read the words in Leader Resource 1, Wedding Ceremony Readings. When you come to the appropriate spot in the Reading 1, pretend to have the bears pour drinks for each other, and have the children pantomime having them drink.

Before beginning Reading 2, pour drinks for the children and invite them to hold their drinks as you read the charge. Invite them to say, "We will" at the appropriate time. Complete the reading and invite everyone to drink a toast to the new couple.

Serve any special snacks you have provided, and enjoy the wedding reception! Conclude by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we celebrated a very happy occasion—the wedding of two bears who love each other and want to spend their lives together. But it's important to remember that you can love someone and still choose not to marry them. And also, some people in this country aren't allowed to marry each other. Unitarian Universalists believe that each person must decide what is best for them. We also believe that two people should be allowed to be married if that is their choice.

Invite the children to clean up by wiping the table with moistened paper towels, helping to put away supplies and refreshments, and putting the wedding items in a safe place.

Including All Participants

Be sensitive to the fact that not all weddings or services of union have a bride and a groom, and be sure to use inclusive language and a variety of terms for people who are making a legal commitment to each other. Be aware of food allergies in your group, and plan snacks accordingly.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any Circle Games posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we have weddings and services of union. One way that Unitarian Universalists celebrate love is by helping people who love each other to get married.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Oh, you can be anybody you want to be, you can love whomever you will. — "Everything Possible," Hymn 1019 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "At [name of congregation], we have weddings and services of union celebrating love."

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Read one or more of the suggested books for this session:

- *The Wedding* by Eve Bunting, 2003. On her way to town, Miss Brindle Cow meets a host of animals who are late for a very important wedding.
- *The Rabbits' Wedding* by Garth Williams, 1958. Animals in a moonlit forest attend the wedding of a white rabbit and a black rabbit. Note: Intimations of interracial marriage caused some Alabama politicians to call for this book to be banned in the late 1950s. But the racial

concerns of the past seem to have dissipated; contemporary, online reviews are positive. One reader notes that the book "brought clarity and understanding to what my parents [white Scottish mother, black Caribbean father] must have had to experience in their own travels and after their own 'rabbits' wedding."

- *King and King* by Linda de Haan and Stern Nyland, 2003. In this postmodern fractured fairy tale, a worn-out Queen is ready for retirement. After much nagging, the Prince, who "never cared much for princesses," finally caves in and agrees to wed in order to ascend the throne. However, no one strikes the Prince's fancy—until he meets Prince Lee. A "very special wedding" ensues!
- *Uncle Bobby's Wedding* by Sarah S. Brannen, 2008. Bobby's niece Chloe worries that when Bobby and Jamie, his boyfriend, get married, Chloe won't be his favorite person anymore. This warm story embraces the alternative family while keeping its focus on the uncle and niece's love for one another.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Look at a wedding album and talk about the pictures together. Or, ask a relative to tell a story of their wedding or service of union.

A Family Adventure. Visit a cake decorating shop or crafts store and look at the variety of wedding cakes and decorations.

A Family Discovery. Find out more about weddings performed in your congregation. Is there a guide you can read? Currently, UUs are on the forefront of the marriage equality movement. Read about historic same-sex wedding ceremonies recently performed by UU ministers:

["U.U. Minister Says Historic "I DO" in Hawaii,"](#) *UU World Magazine*, December 9, 2013

["Michigan UU Ministers Marry 200 Same-Sex Couples,"](#) *UU World Magazine*, March 13, 2014

LEADER RESOURCE 1: WEDDING CEREMONY READINGS

From [The Same-Sex Wedding Guide](#): A Resource for Same-Sex Couples and Ministers, by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Concerns, 2004. The quotation in Reading 1 comes from *A Book of Pagan Rituals*, edited by Herman Slater, 1978.

Reading 1

"Love one another, but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup."

Will you now each drink to one another, filling each other's cup, as Gibran says, but drinking from your own. Remember that what matters most is not the cup, but the life within it. You can enrich each other's lives, but you must drink from your own. [Pretend to have the bears pour drinks for each other, then drink from their own cups.]

For the spirit is with you,

Now and always.

Reading 2

[Pour drinks for the children, and have them hold their drinks while you read the following.]

As [Bear] and [Bear] have asked us to share their joy, they are also asking us to share the responsibility of a loving community. Will you stand by them, hands open in friendship and support, listening when asked but not directing or giving unwanted advice? Will you, as a community, share this responsibility?

[Have the children respond, "We will."]

Please join me in raising a glass to [Bear] and [Bear]. We wish you a long and joy-filled life together!

[All drink.]

FIND OUT MORE

The UUA website provides [The Same-Sex Wedding Guide](#): A Resource for Same-Sex Couples and Ministers (2004).

Read two articles about historic same-sex wedding ceremonies recently performed by UU ministers:

["U.U. Minister Says Historic "I DO" in Hawaii](#)," *UU World Magazine*, December 9, 2013

["Michigan UU Ministers Marry 200 Same-Sex Couples](#)," *UU World Magazine*, March 13, 2014

Check out the [Standing on the Side of Love](#) campaign of the UUA.

Read the February 16, 2003, sermon by The Reverend Anne Felton Hines, Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, Canoga Park, California, "[Love Should Grow Up Like a Wild Iris](#)."

SESSION 15: BABIES

INTRODUCTION

Sleep, my child and peace attend you, all through the night. I who love you shall be near you, all through the night. — "Sleep, My Child," Hymn 409 in Singing the Living Tradition

Sophia L. Fahs identifies the discovery of one's own birth as one of 12 main types of experiences that are connected with natural religious development in young children. Celebrate new babies, as well as the growth and development of the preschoolers, who have changed so much since infancy. Take this opportunity to help the children know that child dedication ceremonies are an important ritual of our faith.

Activity 5, A Visit from a Baby, requires you to invite a parent/family with a baby to attend part or all of this session.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand a love of babies and the practice of a child dedication ceremony as part of the congregation
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn an important ritual of the congregation, the child dedication ceremony
- Understand that the child dedication ceremony is an expression of love
- Appreciate how much they have grown since they were a baby
- Feel a sense of accomplishment as they see how much they have learned since they were a baby.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15

Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: A Visit from a Baby	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Making a Bird Nest	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How long has it been since you were a baby, cradled in a parent's arms? Each of us holds that beginning within us. Bring to mind some of the people around you. Imagine the baby and child that they used to be. Find that place in your heart where you hold babies, both those who are babies now and those who have grown up. Is it pure love?

Take a moment to celebrate all of the skills and lessons you have learned since you were a baby, from rolling over and crawling to going to school, building and sustaining relationships, and nurturing others. Life is a great, grand cycle of which we are a part.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Gather a variety of baby-related items, such as baby stuffed animals, diapers, baby clothes, bottles, and rattles.
- Make name tags for the children you are expecting. Set them out with a marker and a few blank name tags.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the baby-related items you have gathered, Memory Match Game from Session 5, the Chalice Flannel Board from Session 9, and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle from Session 11.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- Flowers, one for each child plus some extra
- Slips of paper, one for each child plus some extra, and tape
- Vase, with water in it
- Optional: Container of clean water

Preparation for Activity

- Read the Description of Activity. If the child dedication ceremony provided here differs from your congregation's custom, adapt this activity to reflect customary practice.
- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Write each child's name on a slip of paper and tape it to a flower. Prepare some blank ones, for any new children who come to today's session.
- Set the flowers, the vase, and the container of clean water on the table or stand you use for your chalice, or on the floor.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

At church [In our congregation], we celebrate beginnings of life, when babies are born or come into a family.

Engage a conversation about babies and growing and changing. Ask what babies do that the children like and do not like. Say, in these words or your own:

At [name of congregation], we have a special ceremony called a child dedication ceremony. That is when we officially welcome babies into our church [congregation].

Act out a child dedication ceremony in the circle, welcoming each child in turn. Dip each flower in water, gently touch it to the child's forehead, then hand it to the child. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to our church [congregation], [name of child]. We all promise to take care of you and help you grow. We give you this flower, different from every other flower in the world, as a symbol that you are wonderful, because you are you.

If any new children are visiting, write their names on their flowers. Say, in these words or your own:

On behalf of [name of congregation], [name of co-leader] and I promise to support and nurture you in your spiritual life, as we learn and grow and change together.

Invite the children to place their flower in the vase until the end of the session, to keep it fresh. Say, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to have a very special visitor: a baby! We will learn all about this baby, and we might even get to play with some of the baby's toys. But first, let's read a story together about babies.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:

- *Welcoming Babies* by Margy Burns Knight, 2003. “Every day, everywhere, babies are born. We have many ways to show them we are glad they came into the world.”
- *Hello Baby!* by Mem Fox, illustrated by Steve Jenkins, 2009. After meeting a bevy of baby animals—including a clever monkey, a hairy warthog, and a dusty lion cub—the baby in this classic board book discovers the most precious creature of all . . . itself, of course!
- *Oscar’s Half Birthday* by Bob Graham, 2005. Oscar is only six months old, but his family can’t wait to celebrate his first birthday. They all go to the park for a picnic and a half-birthday party.
- *Baby Brains* by Simon James, 2007. It’s never too early to start bringing up the smartest baby in the whole world.
- *I Kissed the Baby* by Mary Murphy, 2004. It’s so exciting! News of the baby is buzzing from animal to animal, with each one—fish, bird, squirrel, insect, frog—boasting of seeing, feeding, singing to, tickling, and kissing the tiny little thing.
- *Jazz Baby* by Lisa Wheeler, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie, 2007. With a simple clap of hands, an itty-bitty beboppin’ baby gets his whole family singing and dancing.

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here’s how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don’t interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: A VISIT FROM A BABY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Baby toys and supplies

Preparation for Activity

- Contact a family with a baby and invite them to attend the session, whether for a brief time or for the whole morning. Discuss what you will need to make the baby and parent comfortable, for example: Can the baby be fed? Diapered? Bathed? Will the baby want to crawl around? When is the best time for the baby to visit? How long can the baby stay in the meeting room? How can the preschoolers interact with the baby? Will they be able to play with the baby, or to gently touch the baby—pat the baby’s head, touch its hands or feet, hand it toys?
- Gather baby toys and supplies that the children can play with, such as baby stuffed animals, diapers, baby clothes, bottles, and rattles.

Description of Activity

Children have an opportunity to observe and interact with a baby.

Introduce the baby and parent(s) to the children when they arrive. Invite the children to speak with and gently play with the baby, reminding them to be quiet and respectful of the baby. Follow the parent’s lead, and let them share the baby with the children however they want, so the baby is relaxed and happy.

Point out the baby’s teeth or lack of them. Ask the children to share any stories they know about their own babyhood. What are some things they can do that this baby can’t do yet? Invite the children to play with the baby toys and supplies.

Including All Participants

If any children have mobility issues, make sure that they are able to see and interact with the baby.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made.
- Optional: Prepare to share some games or songs that babies enjoy, such as Pat-a-Cake and Peek-a-Boo.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.

We'll skip around the room.

We'll skip around the room.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982):

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],

How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish

the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], babies are an important part of our congregation. Unitarian Universalists celebrate babies in a special service called a child dedication ceremony.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Sleep, my child and peace attend you, all through the night. I who love you shall be near you, all through the night. — "Sleep, My Child," Hymn 409 from Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . we talked about babies! Sophia L. Fahs identifies the discovery of one's own birth as one of 12 main types of experiences that are connected with natural religious development in young children. We celebrated new babies, as well as the growth and development of the preschoolers, who have changed so much since infancy. We learned that child dedication ceremonies are an important ritual in our congregation.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Read one or more of the books suggested for this session:

- *Welcoming Babies* by Margy Burns Knight, 2003. "Every day, everywhere, babies are born. We have many ways to show them we are glad they came into the world."
- *Hello Baby!* by Mem Fox, illustrated by Steve Jenkins, 2009. After meeting a bevy of baby animals—including a clever monkey, a hairy warthog, and a dusty lion cub—the baby in this classic board book discovers the most precious creature of all . . . itself, of course!
- *Oscar's Half Birthday* by Bob Graham, 2005. Oscar is only six months old, but his family can't wait to celebrate his first birthday. They all go to the park for a picnic and a half-birthday party.
- *Baby Brains* by Simon James, 2007. It's never too early to start bringing up the smartest baby in the whole world.
- *I Kissed the Baby* by Mary Murphy, 2004. It's so exciting! News of the baby is buzzing from animal to animal, with each one—fish, bird, squirrel, insect, frog—boasting of seeing, feeding, singing to, tickling, and kissing the tiny little thing.
- *Jazz Baby* by Lisa Wheeler, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie, 2007. With a simple clap of hands, an itty-bitty beboppin' baby gets his whole family singing and dancing.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . donating some of your child's outgrown toys to a local charity. Talk about how much your child has grown up.

A Family Adventure. Visit a baby!

A Family Discovery. Watch two episodes of the Lifetime Television series *Army Wives* (Season 3, Episodes 5 and 6), which feature a UU child dedication ceremony set in the historic Unitarian Church in Charleston, S.C., or [read the story](#) by Michelle Bates Deakin in *UU World Magazine*, August 10, 2009.

A Family Game. Role-play a child dedication ceremony. Many different versions can be found online, including [this one by Kate Howard](#) on the UUA website.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: MAKING A BIRD NEST (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pictures of baby birds in nests
- Small boxes, cottage cheese containers, or strawberry cartons, one for each child
- Nest-making supplies, such as sticks and twigs, straw or dried grass, string and yarn, cotton, hair, and/or dryer lint

- A permanent marker (e.g. a Sharpie (TM))
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: Eggs (hard-boiled, candy, or play-dough, or plastic eggs with a surprise inside), one for each child
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether to conduct part of this activity outdoors. Choose an appropriate place to take the children, ideally near some trees.
- Locate one or two birds' nests to show the children, and try to find out what kind of bird made them. If you will not take the group outside, you might photograph one or more nests, or identify one or two you can see from the meeting room windows.
- Write each child's name on the small box or container they'll use to build their nest.

Description of Activity

Children learn about nests, a nurturing and comfortable home for baby birds.

Tell the children that all babies, human and animal, need comfort and protection. Show the birds' nests (or photos) you brought. Tell the children what kind of birds made them. Show the pictures of baby birds in their nests. Variation: Take the children outside. Have them look around and try to locate safe places where a bird might choose to build a nest. Or have the children look out the window and see if they can find any nests outside.

Encourage the children to notice what materials the nests are made of and what the parents did to make the nests soft and comfortable for their babies.

Gather the children around the activity table, and show them the materials you have provided. Give each child a small container, and invite them to make a nest inside it.

Optional: Give each child an egg and have them put their egg in its new nest. Take pictures of the nests the children created.

Set the nests in a safe place until it is time to go home.

Invite the children to help clean up the activity area. They can collect the leftover nest-making materials and wipe the table with moistened paper towels.

Including All Participants

If you go outside, make sure you bring adequate adult supervision and that the area you choose is accessible to everyone in the group.

FIND OUT MORE

Check out the "[Ceremony of Child Dedication](#)" by Kate Howard on the UUA website.

Consider this blog post by John Halstead, "[Infant Dedication and Second Thoughts on Unitarian Universalism](#)," *The Allergic Pagan* blog, August 7, 2012.

Two episodes of the Lifetime Television series *Army Wives* (Season 3, Episodes 5 and 6) feature a UU child dedication ceremony set in the historic Unitarian Church in Charleston, SC. You can also [read the story](#) by Michelle Bates Deakin in *UU World* Magazine, August 10, 2009.

Read "[We Dedicate This Child](#)," a brochure by Rev. Linda Olson Peebles, Minister of Faith in Action at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, VA.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Special Worship Service: Flower Ceremony	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Water Ceremony	15
Alternate Activity 2: Sharing of Breads	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. What are the salient features of a special worship service at your congregation? The beauty of the flower ceremony, as the vases or piles of flowers grow with each contribution? The sounds of the water ceremony, as each container of water is poured into the bowl? The smell of the loaves as they are cut for the sharing of breads? Remember the sensory parts of a special worship service, the sights, sounds, and aromas. These are the moments that stay with us. Prepare to introduce moments like these to the preschool children.

SESSION 16: SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Roots hold me close; wings set me free; Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me. — "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in Singing the Living Tradition

Unitarian Universalists have many special worship services. This session guides you to introduce a flower ceremony (known in some congregations as a flower communion). The flower ceremony is one of our most beloved UU services, a ritual of togetherness and hope. Using flowers and nature, UUs give concrete expression to the humanity-affirming principles of our liberal faith.

You can use this session as a template to create more sessions based on the special worship services that take place in your congregation—perhaps a service before Dr. Martin Luther King Day, a Maypole Service, or a Blessing of the Animals. The two alternate activities focus on a water ceremony and a bread-sharing ceremony; each alternate activity suggests adaptations you can make to the Circle Time, Circle Games, Closing, and Taking It Home handout. Leader Resource 2 lists the basic elements of a special worship service geared for very young children. When you share in a special worship service with the preschoolers, you help them to understand the wider congregational life in which their family participates.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand some rituals and special services of this congregation
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore the sensory elements of a special worship service
- Feel themselves to be a part of the larger faith community by participating in and helping with the special service
- Understand that Unitarian Universalists near and far have special services in common.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game from Session 5, the Chalice Flannel Board from Session 9, and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle from Session 11.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [The Flower and Water Ceremonies](#) (included in this document)
- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Read Leader Resource 1, *The Flower and Water Ceremonies*, for background information and terminology regarding the flower ceremony.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce the special worship service by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to explore the beauty of flowers. At [name of congregation], we celebrate the beauty of flowers with a special service called a flower ceremony. At the flower ceremony, people bring flowers from home and take different flowers back home with them.

Share your own feelings to add warmth to the description of the service and convey the enjoyment of the special worship service in your own life, for example:

I remember getting such pretty flowers—sometimes a wildflower, sometimes a fancy rose. Each time was different, and each flower was different, and each was beautiful.

Some children may remember participating in a flower ceremony. Ask, in these words or your own:

- Has your family ever brought flowers to church [our congregation] for this service?
- What did they look like?
- Where did you get them?

State in simple terms how this service is connected to our faith, for example:

At [name of congregation], we like differences in flowers, just as we like differences in people. They are all beautiful.

Introduce the next activities by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to have our own flower ceremony, but first let's read a story about flowers.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - "The Flower Ceremony, A Plain and Simple Beauty," adapted from a story by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer in her book *Lamp in Every Corner: Our UU Storybook* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004). This story can be found in [Love Surrounds Us](#), a Tapestry of Faith curriculum for grades K/1.
 - *Ava's Poppy* by Marcus Pfister, 2012. Ava is delighted when she discovers a brilliant red poppy in the middle of her yard.
 - Search through the UUA's [Tapestry of Faith](#) free, online curricula. You can search by keyword (e.g., flower ceremony), age group

(e.g., children), and resource type (e.g., story). If you find a story you wish to use, cut out pictures from magazines to accompany the story or draw simple pictures as you tell the story. Note: Most Tapestry stories are more appropriate for older children than for preschoolers; expect to adapt a story for your group.

- Review How to Read a Storybook, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE, FLOWER CEREMONY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [The Flower and Water Ceremonies](#) (included in this document)
- Fresh flowers of many different varieties, at least one for each child and extras for the altar
- Pretty tablecloth
- Vase(s) or basket(s)
- Materials for a supplementary, sensory activity
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1 for background information and terminology regarding the flower ceremony.
- Choose a short reading or simple hymn such as a few lyrics from "Singer of Life," Hymn 196 in *Singing the Living Tradition* ("Singer of Life, all flowers are songs, with petals do you write . . ."), or "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in *Singing the*

Living Tradition ("Roots hold me close, wings set me free . . ."). Consult the Topical Index of Readings/Hymns in the back of *Singing the Living Tradition* for other suggestions. Or, choose a reading from your congregation's special worship service resources. If the words of a reading seem too sophisticated for the preschoolers, revise as needed.

- Choose an activity to supplement the flower ceremony with a sensory experience (sight, smell, and touch). For example, bring the children on a walk to observe the flowers growing in a garden or wild in a field, using some of the talking points from *Teach Mama's* blog post "[dandelions and clovers](#)." Or you might turn a bouquet of flowers into individual flower boutonnieres (small corsages) for each child by cutting the stems short and wrapping them in floral tape. The Tapestry of Faith online curricula offer more ideas (use the [search feature](#) and search for "flower ceremony" and choose "activity" for "type of resource"). Remember that these activities will need to be adapted for preschoolers.
- Gather materials you'll need for your supplementary, sensory activity.
- Choose a site for your flower ceremony. Set up a service altar with a tablecloth, vases or baskets, and flowers.

Description of Activity

Children participate in a flower ceremony, preschool-style.

Invite the children to join you at the area you've chosen for the flower ceremony. Have them sit in a circle. Tell them that they are going to role-play a special worship service: the flower ceremony. Say, in these words or your own:

The flower ceremony celebrates the different beauty of each flower and person. Just as no two flowers are alike, no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together, each flower and each person makes the world as beautiful as a colorful bouquet.

Give each child a flower. Encourage them to take a moment to fully appreciate their flower—how it looks and smells and how it feels in their hand. Invite them to go up to the altar, one at a time, and add their flower to the vase or basket on the altar. As children place their flowers, read the words or sing the song you've chosen. Say, in these words or your own:

Everyone will now have a chance to choose a new flower. By exchanging the flowers, we show

that we are willing to share our own beauty and uniqueness with the people we care about.

Invite each child to go to the altar, in turn, and choose a different flower to bring home with them. Optional: Take pictures of the children with their flowers.

Invite the children to the activity area, and lead them in the sensory activity you have planned. When you are done, invite them to help with clean-up.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you can conduct the role-play in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces. If you decide to go outdoors, choose an area accessible to all and make sure the group has adequate adult supervision.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made.
- Two new songs and games—Five Little Flowers and Ring Around the Rosy—appear in this session in honor of the flower ceremony. You could research additional circle games or songs connected to this special worship service, or make up your own flower-related words to a common tune.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs and games. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [a name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Five Little Flowers

Teach the children this finger play in honor of today's Flower Ceremony:

Five little flowers standing in the sun. [hold up five fingers]
See their heads nodding, bowing one by one?
[bend fingers several times]
Down, down, down comes the gentle rain, [raise hands, wiggle fingers, and lower arms to simulate falling rain]
And the five little flowers lift their heads up again! [hold up five fingers]

Ring Around the Rosy

Ring around the rosy, a pocket full of posies.
Ashes, ashes, we all fall down!
Ring around the rosy, the vase is full of posies.
Ashes, ashes, we all fall down!
Ring around the rosy, we share our pretty posies.
Ashes, ashes, we all fall down!

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy it for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we celebrate the unique beauty of each person in a special Unitarian Universalist worship service called a flower ceremony.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Roots hold me close; wings set me free; Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me. — "Spirit of Life," Hymn 123 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "At [name of congregation], we have a special worship service called a flower ceremony." [Describe what you did, e.g., "We held our own flower ceremony, then took a walk and looked for flowers growing."]

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read one or more of the suggested books for this session:

- "The Flower Ceremony, A Plain and Simple Beauty," adapted from a story by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer in her book *Lamp in Every Corner: Our UU Storybook* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004). This story can be found in [Love Surrounds Us](#), a Tapestry of Faith curriculum.
- *Ava's Poppy* by Marcus Pfister, 2012. Ava is delighted when she discovers a brilliant red poppy in the middle of her yard.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . asking each family member to find a flower that represents them in some way (for example, a bright red rose for Mama's red hair, a daisy with white petals for all the white teeth in Daddy's smile). Arrange all the flowers in a vase together to make a bouquet of your family.

A Family Adventure. Visit a local botanical garden, greenhouse, or a farm where flowers are grown.

A Family Discovery. Explore "[Celebrating the Flower Ceremony](#)" on the UUA website for sermons and information related to the Flower Ceremony. Or, read two articles from *UU World Magazine*: "[Czech Unitarians, Who Developed Flower Communion, Invite the World to Their 90th Anniversary](#)" by Petr Dolak Samojsky, Summer 2012; and "[What Does Your Flower Communion Bloom Symbolize?](#)" by Sonja L. Cohen, Spring 2012.

A Family Game. Do the "Five Little Flowers" finger play with your child:

Five little flowers standing in the sun. [hold up five fingers]
 See their heads nodding, bowing one by one?
 [bend fingers several times]
 Down, down, down comes the gentle rain, [raise hands, wiggle fingers, and lower arms to simulate falling rain]
 And the five little flowers lift their heads up again! [hold up five fingers]

A Family Ritual. Involve the whole family in gathering flowers to bring to this year's flower ceremony. Create a family version of the flower ceremony to do at home.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WATER CEREMONY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [The Flower and Water Ceremonies](#) (included in this document)
- Pretty tablecloth
- Attractive, clear vase or pitcher of water
- Clear plastic cups, one for each child
- A large bowl
- Paper towels
- Materials for a supplementary, sensory activity
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Read Leader Resource 1, *The Flower and Water Ceremonies*, for background information and terminology regarding the water ceremony.
- Choose an activity to supplement the water ceremony with a sensory experience (sight, smell, and touch). For example, you could take the children outside and use the water from the ceremony to give a drink to a plant. You could take them on a walk to explore a nearby creek, or engage them in water play or making bubbles. [This video](#) suggests a way to incorporate music play into water play. In [Session 9, Activity 3](#) of the *Toolbox of Faith Tapestry of Faith* program, you will find an alternate water service, designed for children a bit older (grades 4/5). You can also search the *Tapestry of Faith* online curricula for more ideas (use the [search feature](#) and search for "water service" and choose "activity" for "type of resource"). Activities will need to be adapted for preschoolers.
- Gather materials for a supplementary, sensory activity.

- Choose a short reading or simple hymn, such as "I've Got Peace Like a River," Hymn 100 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Consult the Topical Index of Readings/Hymns in the back of *Singing the Living Tradition* for other suggestions. You could also use a reading from your own congregation's special worship service resources. If the words of the reading seem too sophisticated for the preschoolers, revise them as needed.
- Choose a site to hold the water ceremony. Set up a service altar with a pretty cloth, a vase or pitcher of clean water, and a large bowl.

Description of Activity

Children participate in a water ceremony, preschool-style.

Invite the children to join you at the area you've chosen for the ceremony. Have them sit in a circle. Tell them that they are going to role-play a special worship service: the water ceremony. Say, in these words or your own:

Many Unitarian Universalist congregations hold a water ceremony at the end of the summer, where people of all ages bring water from somewhere they traveled this summer or from a place that is special to them. They each pour their special water into one big bowl. The combined water represents our shared faith, which comes from many different sources. [Tell how your congregation uses the water, for example, in child dedication ceremonies, or to water plants in the memorial garden.] We will now have our own water ceremony.

Give each child a plastic cup, and pour some water into it from the pitcher. Ask them to think about a place that is special to them that has some water. Prompt with ideas, if necessary, for example:

- Do you like to play in the ocean? Do you like to take a bubble bath?
- What's your favorite place to go swimming?
- Do you remember some hot, hot days this summer? Did you cool off in a sprinkler or at a water park? Did you have a big glass of really cold water?

Invite them to go up to the altar, one at a time, and pour their water into the bowl. As they pour, ask them to say aloud the name of the place their water came from. Model this for them, if needed. As the children pour their water, read the words or sing the song you've chosen. Optional: Take pictures of the children pouring their water.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now all the water is connected, just as everyone and everything are connected by the Spirit of Life.

Invite the children to the activity area, and lead them in the sensory activity you have planned.

When you are done, invite them to help with clean-up. Have them wipe up any spilled water with paper towels.

Circle Time (Activity 3) Adaptation for Water Ceremony

Introduce the special worship service by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to explore the wonder of water. At [name of congregation], we have a special service called a water ceremony. At the water ceremony, people bring water from somewhere they visited this summer or from a place that is special to them. We all pour our special water into one big bowl.

Share your own feelings to add warmth to the description of the service and convey the enjoyment of the special worship service in your own life, for example:

I remember bringing water from the river by my mother's house. I had such a nice visit with my mother that summer. It was fun to remember walking by the river with her.

Some children may remember participating in a water ceremony. Ask, in these words or your own:

Have you or your family ever brought in some water to church [our congregation]? Where did that water come from?

State in simple terms the connection between a water ceremony and our faith, for example:

At [name of congregation], when we combine everyone's water from all these different places, we also think about the faith we share. Our Unitarian Universalist faith also comes from many different sources.

Introduce the next activities by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to have our own water ceremony, but first let's read a story about water.

Story (Activity 4) Adaptation for Water Ceremony

Choose a story from the following suggestions:

- *Water Dance* by Thomas Locker, 2002. How does water dance? From rain, to river, to lake, to sea, to cloud, with half a dozen more

sidesteps in the circle. (Note: You may wish to simplify the text; in this book, the pictures will be more important for preschoolers.)

- *The Wonder Thing* by Libby Hathorn, 1996. Readers are guided on a journey around the world to a deeper appreciation of "the wonder thing"—water—that is all around us.

You might also consider "singing" a story, such as "[Wheel of the Water](#)" by [Tom Chapin](#).

Circle Games (Activity 6) Adaptation for Water Ceremony

A new song—"Five Little Ducks"—appears in this session. Teach the children the song or show it to them in a [YouTube video](#). You might also research additional circle games or songs connected to this special worship service, or make up your own water-related lyrics to a common tune.

Five Little Ducks

Five little ducks went out one day,
Over the hills and far away.
Mother Duck said, "Quack, quack, quack,
quack,"
But only four little ducks came back.

(And so on, each time decreasing the number of ducks)

Final verse:

Mother Duck went out one day,
Over the hills and far away.
Mother Duck said, "Quack, quack, quack,
quack,"
And all of the five little ducks came back.

Closing Adaptation for Water Ceremony

May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we celebrate the many different sources of our faith in a special worship service called a water ceremony.

Taking It Home Adaptation for Water Ceremony

Wade in the water, wade in the water, children
— "*Wade in the Water*," Hymn 210 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "At [name of congregation], we have a special worship service called a water ceremony." [Describe what you did, e.g., "We held our own water ceremony and then watered the garden with our special water."]

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read one or more of the books suggested for this session:

- *Water Dance* by Thomas Locker, 2002. How does water dance? From rain, to river, to lake, to sea, to cloud, with half a dozen more

sidesteps in the circle. (Note: You may wish to simplify the text; the pictures in this book will be more important for preschoolers.)

- *The Wonder Thing* by Libby Hathorn, 1996. Readers are guided on a journey around the world to a deeper appreciation of "the wonder thing"—water—that is all around us.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Run some tap water into a pitcher and look at it closely. Tell your child that this water has been many places (water molecules are recycled over and over; they never cease to exist). Name some water places your child knows about, and say that the water in your pitcher right now might once have been, for example, part of the Amazon River, a local creek or pond, a rain cloud in the sky, the blood or saliva of a tiger in India, snow on top of a mountain. See if your child can think of more places where a water molecule in the pitcher might once have been.

A Family Adventure. Visit as many different bodies of water as you can think of and get to—a lake, a river, a creek, a swimming pool, a bathtub, a puddle. Collect water from every place in clear containers. Label them, then compare all the different waters you've collected.

A Family Discovery. Explore sermons and information related to water ceremonies on the web page, [Celebrating the Water Communion](#), on the UUA website. In *UU World* magazine, Sonja L. Cohen published the article, "[When You Pour Water Into Your Congregation's Water Communion Bowl, Where Will It Come From?](#)" on May 15, 2013.

A Family Game. See how to incorporate music play into water play with your child, in [this video](#). Sing "[Five Little Ducks](#)" with your child.

A Family Ritual. Involve the whole family in collecting water to bring to a water ceremony or water communion at your congregation. Create a family water ceremony to do at home, perhaps at the end of each season.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you can conduct the role-play in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces. If you decide to go outdoors, choose an area accessible to all and make sure the group has adequate adult supervision.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: SHARING OF BREADS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pretty tablecloth
- Variety of breads, including some that are gluten-free, and baskets

- Cutting board and knife
- Plastic wrap
- Moistened paper towels
- Materials for a supplementary, sensory activity
- Optional: Toppings, such as jam, butter, and honey, and plastic knives
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Choose an activity to supplement the sharing of breads, ideally one that can engage the children's senses of smell, touch, and taste. For example, you could make biscuits or pretzels with the children, make homemade play-dough, or play with trays or bowls of different types of flours. You can also look through the Tapestry of Faith online curricula for ideas (use the [search feature](#) and search for "Bread Service" and choose "activity" for "type of resource"). Remember that these activities will need to be adapted for preschoolers.
- Gather materials for a supplementary, sensory activity.
- Choose a short reading or simple hymn for the sharing of breads, such as "Give Thanks," Hymn 69 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, or "Bring Out the Festal Bread," Hymn 220 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Consult the Topical Index of Readings/Hymns in the back of *Singing the Living Tradition* for other suggestions. You could also use a reading from your own congregation's special worship service resources. If the words of the reading seem too sophisticated for the preschoolers, revise as needed.
- Find out whether any children in the group have allergies, and be sure to include gluten-free and other appropriate alternatives among the bread selections, as needed.
- Slice or cube the breads and arrange the small pieces in baskets. Cover with plastic wrap until the ceremony.
- Choose where you will hold your Sharing of Breads, and set up the "service altar" with a pretty cloth and the baskets of bread.
- Optional: Set out toppings and plastic knives for spreading.

Description of Activity

Children participate in a sharing of breads ceremony, preschool-style.

Invite the children to join you at the area you have arranged for the ceremony. Have them sit in a circle. Tell them that they are going to role-play a special worship service: the sharing of breads. Say, in these words or your own:

Many Unitarian Universalist congregations hold a sharing of breads ceremony, where people bring different kinds of bread to share. Some bring breads that are part of their cultural heritage, like pita bread from the Middle East, or Irish soda bread from Ireland. Breads around the world are very different, but every civilization that has ever lived on the earth has made some type of bread. We will now have our own sharing of breads.

Invite children to the altar, one at a time, and allow each child to choose a piece of bread. As they choose their bread, read the words or sing the song you've chosen. Invite the children to take a moment to fully experience their piece of bread—how it looks, smells, and feels in their hand. Say a blessing for the bread, in these words or your own:

We lift our hearts in thanks today for all the gifts of life—for families, for friends, and for this good bread.

Invite the children to taste their bread. Optional: Children may add a topping to their bread, such as butter or jelly.

Point out the different varieties of bread in the basket(s), and allow the children to choose another type of bread, if they like. Optional: Take pictures of the children eating their bread.

Say, in these words or your own:

Bread is something people all over the world have in common. There are many different kinds of bread, but bread feeds everyone! Our sharing of bread ceremony reminds us that when we all share the different kinds of gifts we have, we all can be fed.

Invite the children to the activity area, and lead them in the activity you've chosen. When you are done, invite them to help with clean-up. They can re-cover the bread basket(s) and wipe the table with moistened paper towels.

Circle Time (Activity 3) Adaptation for Sharing of Breads

Introduce the special worship service by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to explore the deliciousness of many different types of bread. Many Unitarian Universalist churches [congregations] have a special service called a sharing of breads.

People bring breads to share that have some meaning to them.

Share your own feelings to add warmth to the description of the service and convey the enjoyment of the special worship service in your own life, for example:

I once brought a loaf of French bread that I made using my mom's special recipe. She and I made bread together for the first time when I was only four years old! I have so many happy memories of baking bread with Mom.

Some children may remember participating in a sharing of breads ceremony. Ask, in these words or your own:

- Has your family ever brought bread to church [our congregation] for this service? What kind was it?
- Do you remember tasting a new kind of bread at this service? Did you like it?

State in simple terms a way this service is connected to our faith, for example:

At [name of congregation], eating and sharing bread together reminds us to be grateful for all that we have, including the joy of being together in community.

Introduce the next activities by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to have our own sharing of breads ceremony, but first let's read a story about bread.

Story (Activity 4) Adaptation for Sharing of Breads

Choose a story from the following suggestions:

- *Sun Bread* by Elisa Kleven, 2004. Winter's gray chill has set in and everyone misses the sun—especially the baker. So she decides to bring some warmth to the town by making sun bread.
- *Bread, Bread, Bread* by Ann Morris, illustrated by Ken Heyman, 1993. Bread is a food enjoyed by people in all parts of the world. Its many shapes, sizes, textures, and colors are as varied as the people who eat it.
- *Cranberry Thanksgiving* by Wende Devlin, 2012. Grandmother certainly didn't want to ask Mr. Whiskers for Thanksgiving dinner! She was very angry when Maggie asked him. She was even more angry when *someone* stole her secret recipe for cranberry bread! Was Mr. Whiskers the thief?
- *Tony's Bread* by Tomie de Paola, 1996. Tony dreams that one day he'll become the most famous baker in northern Italy.

Circle Games (Activity 6) Adaptation for Sharing of Breads

Do You Know the Muffin Man?

Sing this song in honor of the sharing of breads:

Do you know the muffin man,
The muffin man, the muffin man,
Do you know the muffin man,
Who lives on Drury Lane?
Yes, I know the muffin man,
The muffin man, the muffin man,
Yes, I know the muffin man,
Who lives on Drury Lane.

Closing Adaptation for Water Ceremony

May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we celebrate being nourished by a community in a special worship service called the Sharing of Breads.

Taking It Home Adaptation for Sharing of Breads

The bread we share this day is sacred. — "The Bread We Share," Reading 727 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "At [name of congregation], we have a special worship service called the Sharing of Breads." [Describe what you did, e.g., We held our own Sharing of Breads ceremony, and then we made play-dough with different kinds of flour.]

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read one or more of the books suggested for this session:

- *Sun Bread* by Elisa Kleven, 2004. Winter's gray chill has set in and everyone misses the sun—especially the baker. So she decides to bring some warmth to the town by making sun bread.
- *Bread, Bread, Bread* by Ann Morris, illustrated by Ken Heyman, 1993. Bread is a food enjoyed by people in all parts of the world. Its many shapes, sizes, textures, and colors are as varied as the people who eat it.
- *Cranberry Thanksgiving* by Wende Devlin, 2012. Grandmother certainly didn't want to ask Mr. Whiskers for Thanksgiving dinner! She was very angry when Maggie asked him. She was even more angry when *someone* stole her secret recipe for cranberry bread! Was Mr. Whiskers the thief?
- *Tony's Bread* by Tomie de Paola, 1996. Tony dreams that one day he'll become the most famous baker in northern Italy.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . Making pita bread! In the Tapestry of Faith multigenerational

curriculum, Hebrew Scriptures, find [an easy recipe](#) to use with children.

A Family Adventure. Bring some different varieties of bread to your local food bank or food pantry.

A Family Discovery. Look up the session on [The Ritual of Communion](#) in the Tapestry of Faith curriculum Signs of Our Faith, which describes flower, water, and bread communions held in UU congregations. Read about Janie Johnson, who vowed to bake all her family's bread for 40 days, rather than purchase bread from a store or bakery ("[Campaign Honors 40th Anniversary of Earth Day](#)" by Donald E. Skinner, UU World Magazine, June 6, 2010).

A Family Game. Play "Muffin, Muffin, Roll," the same way you play "Duck, Duck, Goose." Or play a personalized version of "pat-a-cake":

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man.
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Pat it, and roll it, and mark it with a [child's first initial],
Then put it in the oven for [child's name] and me!

A Family Ritual. Create a family bread communion. Your ritual can include the breaking and passing of bread, which you then eat or feed to one another. Have each person share something they are grateful for.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could conduct the role-play in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces. Be sure to find out about any allergies among the group and to have some gluten-free and other options available, as needed.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE FLOWER AND WATER CEREMONIES

Adapted from [The Flower Communion: A Service of Celebration for Religious Liberals](#) by Reginald Zottoli, published online by the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship with permission from the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, which first published this resource in *The Communion Book*, edited by Carl Seaburg.

The Flower Ceremony

The Unitarian Universalist Flower Festival service was created by Dr. Norbert Capek [pronounced CHAH-peck] (1870—1942), who, along with his wife, Maja V. Capek, founded the Unitarian Church in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He introduced this festival to the church on June 4, 1923, as a ritual of togetherness and hope. Capek turned to his surroundings—the countryside—and created a simple service using flowers and nature. On the last Sunday before the summer recess of the Unitarian church in Prague, all the children and adults participated in this colorful ritual, which gives concrete expression to the humanity-affirming principles of our liberal faith.

According to Capek's daughter, Capek intentionally called this service a Flower Festival or Flower Celebration because he did not want to confuse or alienate his congregants with the term "communion," which had many connotations from the Christian tradition. It is for this reason that the Chalice Children curriculum refers to the ritual as the Flower Ceremony, rather than Flower Communion, as it is known in many UU congregations.

Read more about the origins of this ceremony in the Tapestry of Faith program [A Place of Wholeness, Workshop 5](#).

The Water Communion

The water ceremony was conceived in 1980 by Carolyn McDade, composer of the beloved hymn "Spirit of Life," and Lucile Schuck Longview, one of our movement's leaders, at the Women and Religion continental convocation, as a way for women who lived far apart to connect the work each was doing locally to the whole.

Each woman brought a jar of water from the place she lived, and during the ceremony poured it into a bowl, naming what made it precious to her. Then, dipping their hands into the water they'd combined, each blessed the woman next to her, imparting strength to continue her work.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE — BASIC ELEMENTS

Materials for Activity

- Items needed for the service
- Service altar items
- Materials for a supplementary, sensory activity
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Choose an activity to supplement the special worship service, ideally one with a sensory component (sight, touch, taste, smell). You can search the Tapestry of Faith online curricula for ideas (use the [search feature](#) with keywords such as "blessing of animals," "building dedication," etc. and choose "activity" for "type of resource"). Remember that these activities will need to be adapted for preschoolers.
- Gather the materials for the supplementary activity you have chosen.
- Choose a short reading or simple hymn for the service. Consult the Topical Index of Readings/Hymns in the back of *Singing the Living Tradition* for suggestions. You could also use a reading from your own congregation's special worship service resources. If the words of a reading seem too sophisticated for preschoolers, revise as needed.
- Decide where to hold the special service, and set up a service altar with the items you will need.
- Adapt each element of the session to reflect your special worship service. You will need to add new language to Activity 3, Circle Time; Activity 4, Story; the final words of the Closing, and Taking It Home. You may also wish to introduce a new song or game in Activity 6, Circle Games.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to join you at the area you have set up for the ceremony. Have them sit in a circle. Tell them that they are going to role-play a special worship service. Say what the service is called (for example, "a blessing of the animals"). Briefly describe what happens in the service and state in simple terms how the ceremony connects to our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Role-play the special worship service. Include a reading or hymn in your ceremony. Give the children opportunities to participate in the service.

Wrap up the ceremony with closing words, and invite the children to participate in the sensory activity you've chosen on the special worship theme, to reinforce their experience. Engage everyone to help with clean-up.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could conduct the role-play in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces. Consider accessibility issues for any activity you choose.

FIND OUT MORE

Read more about the [Flower Ceremony](#).

Explore Carl Seaburg's [The Communion Book](#) and other resources for special services that are available from the UUA Bookstore.

Look through Tapestry of Faith, the free online UUA curricula, to learn more about special UU worship services. You can use [the search feature](#) to search by keyword (e.g., flower ceremony), age group (e.g., children) and resource type (e.g., story).

SESSION 17: WONDERING ABOUT STARS

INTRODUCTION

As the darkness deepens o'er us, lo, eternal stars arise. — "Now on Land and Sea Descending," Hymn 47 in Singing the Living Tradition

This session introduces Unit 3 and the theme, "We wonder." Religious educator Sophia L. Fahs said that contact with the natural world is one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. This session guides children to celebrate the beauty of stars and to experience the mystery and awe stars prompt in us.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Explore the beauty of stars and connect it to their church experience
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience a sense of wonder about stars and the night sky
- Express their sense of wonder through song, movement, and art
- Understand that wondering about stars is an experience we all share.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: You As a Star	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10

Faith in Action: You Are My Sunshine 60

Closing 5

Alternate Activity 1: Draw a Star 5

Alternate Activity 2: Shooting Stars 10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How do you feel when you gaze at the stars? Gazing into the heart of the universe is often a time when we feel the presence of things larger than ourselves, and preschool children are also capable of feeling wonder and awe. When we gaze at the stars, we reflect, we ponder, and we become comfortable with silence. We sometimes find nighttime darkness a fertile ground for our spiritual nature. Bring that mixture of comfort and discovery into your work with the young children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Activity area with star-related items
- Optional: A computer with Internet access, and speakers

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Gather and set out items relating to stars, such as a music box playing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," a star puzzle, or a star to color with silver and gold crayons.
- Consider playing the hour-long YouTube version of "[Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star](#)" as background music during free play or other activities.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table

that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Church [Our congregation] is a place to wonder and ask questions. Do you ever wonder about the stars?

Invite the children to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" with you. Then say, in these words or your own:

Can you guess how many stars there are? No one knows for sure, but we know there are a lot! When I look at the stars, I feel so small. How do you feel? What are some times when you have looked at the stars? [Pause for comments and responses.] The stars are very beautiful in the night. We gaze at stars to help us feel the wonder of all things. Today we are going to draw a very special constellation, which is a big group of stars that form a pattern in the sky. But first, let's read a story about stars!

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Draw Me a Star* by Eric Carle, 1992. An artist's drawing of a star begins the creation of an entire universe; the book includes a star drawing activity.
 - *How to Catch a Star* by Oliver Jeffers, 2004. Once there was a boy who loved stars very much—so much so that he decided to catch one of his very own. But how?
 - *Stargazing Sky* by Deborah Kogan Ray, 1991. A little girl and her mother stay up late to watch a shower of shooting stars. This story can lead into a hands-on activity, Alternate Activity 2, Shooting Stars.
 - *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* by Jerry Pinkney, 2011. A curious little chipmunk leaves his nest to greet the twilight and gazes at the glittering sky above him.
- Review *How to Read a Storybook*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't

interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: YOU AS A STAR (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A large roll of paper or sheets of paper taped together
- A thick permanent marker (Sharpie™) and a pencil
- Paper-decorating supplies such as markers or crayons, star stickers, shiny paper cut into stars or other shapes, and glue sticks
- Rubber bands
- Optional: Adult scissors
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Prepare sheets of paper, large enough to draw an outline of each child.

Description of Activity

Children create a picture of themselves as a constellation.

Invite the children to the activity table. Say, in these words or your own:

Who knows what a constellation is? A constellation is a group of stars in the night sky that make a pattern that reminds us of something—like the Big Dipper constellation or the Little Bear constellation. Let's make you into a constellation!

Have each child lie on a large sheet of paper, and outline their body with a thick marker. Give each child their outline and invite them to add to their constellation with the supplies you have provided. They can add starry eyes or fingertips with star stickers, and they can draw with the markers or crayons.

Invite the children to help with clean-up. They can recycle the paper scraps and put away the paper-decorating supplies.

When the constellations are dry, roll them up, secure each with a rubber band, and write each child's name on

their roll with a pencil. (Optional: Cut out the individual constellations first.) Put the constellations near the door for the children to take home later, or arrange to display them in your religious education area.

Including All Participants

If any children have difficulty lying on the floor, you could do hand constellations rather than whole-body constellations.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs, especially the new, star-related songs introduced in this activity. You can also research additional circle games or songs about stars, or make up your own star-related words to a common tune.
- If you are not sure how to do the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" as a finger play, watch [this video](#) on YouTube.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask the children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!

Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Teach the children this finger play in honor of today's theme:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, [flutter fingers in the air]
How I wonder what you are? [put one finger on cheek, nod head]
Up above the world so high, [stretch arms way up]
Like a diamond in the sky. [touch index fingers and thumbs of right and left hands to form a diamond shape]
Twinkle, twinkle, little star, [flutter fingers in the air]
How I wonder what you are? [put one finger on cheek, nod head]

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,

If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]

So laugh when you're in trouble.

It will vanish like a bubble,

If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]

The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]

And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]

Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]

Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]

Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]

May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we wonder about stars.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

FAITH IN ACTION: YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Solar Oven Instructions](#) (included in this document)
- Cardboard pizza boxes, one for each solar oven
- Rulers, at least one per table
- Markers, at least one per table
- Box cutters or sharp scissors, at least one per table
- Aluminum foil, two large pieces for each solar oven
- Glue, at least one bottle per table
- Packing or duct tape, at least one roll per table
- Plastic wrap, two large pieces for each solar oven
- Black construction paper, one large piece for each solar oven
- Ruler, stick, or large, stiff straw, one for each solar oven
- Ingredients for a treat to cook in the solar ovens
- Clear plastic or glass plates, such as a pie plate, one for each solar oven
- Oven mitts
- Tables and chairs
- Optional: Towels, one for each solar oven
- Optional: Handout 2, [Solar Cookers International](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Camera or smartphone or video camera

Preparation for Activity

- Read the Description of Activity. Decide whether to plan solar oven cooking as the Faith in Action for Unit 3 or to investigate other options (some are suggested below).
- Consult with the religious educator to choose a date and time for this event.
- Decide what kind of treat you will cook in the solar oven (e.g., s'mores, toasted cheese bread,

hot dogs, quesadillas, nachos), and determine what ingredients you'll need. Consider any known allergies in your group, and make sure to provide alternatives.

- Identify a space with enough work tables for small groups to make solar ovens and share supplies. Designate a sunny location outside or a full-sun window where the solar ovens can be set up.
- Draft an invitation to the Chalice Children families. In the invitation, ask families to bring a clean cardboard pizza box (or, you can designate a co-leader or parent to obtain and bring as many pizza boxes as you will need). Note that the congregation will provide the rest of the supplies. If your congregation has a committee or group devoted to environmental issues, consider extending a special invitation to them.
- E-mail or post the invitations and publicize the event in your congregation's newsletter or social media.
- Set up tables and chairs.
- Gather all the materials needed, and set them out along the tables so they are easily accessible. You may wish to have extra cardboard pizza boxes and newspapers on hand.
- Optional: Recruit volunteers to take photographs during the event or to videotape the event.

Description of Activity

The theme of Unit 3 of Chalice Children is "We wonder." The Faith in Action activity described below—making and using a solar oven—speaks to "wondering about nature." This activity introduces children to solar energy—the wonder of the sun.

Instead, the Faith in Action activity for this unit could be a visit to a planetarium, perhaps after Session 17, *Wondering About Stars* or Session 18, *Wondering About the Moon*. You will find additional ideas among the 16 Faith in Action activities in the Tapestry of Faith program [World of Wonder](#), which is geared toward children in kindergarten or first grade—two of these activities are [Help the Honeybees](#) in Session 2, *Nature's Partnerships* and [Worm Composting](#) in Session 7, *Decomposition*. There are more activities in the Tapestry of Faith Toolkit Book [Creating Justice Together](#), which provides nearly 40 social justice projects, including ecology-focused projects, for UU families and multigenerational groups.

Learn more about involving children in planning, implementing, and processing a service activity in *Creating Justice Together*. The Tapestry of Faith

children's program [Sing to the Power](#) discusses service activities in four steps: [identifying](#), [planning](#), [executing](#), and [reflecting](#).

Solar Oven Cooking

Children experience solar energy by making a solar oven and then cooking (and eating!) a treat.

Welcome participants and invite them to sit at the tables. Try to have people of mixed ages at each table. Say, in these words or your own:

Our Chalice Children have been wondering—about the stars, the moon, rainbows, and more. Today we'll experiment with one way that nature provides "green energy"—energy that comes from sources that are cleaner and low-polluting and will last forever, such as sun, wind, and water. Today we will use solar energy—the power of the sun—to cook a special treat.

Distribute Handout 1, *Solar Oven Instructions*, to older children, teen, and adult participants. Invite the people at each table to introduce themselves to one another and to follow the instructions on the handout to make a solar oven. As the guests work, encourage discussion by asking:

- What are some ways you save energy or use green energy in your family?
- Have you ever seen a solar panel? Does anyone in your neighborhood have solar panels?
- Besides energy, what else does the sun provide?

When each table has made a solar oven, show participants where to put their ovens, for maximum sunlight, and invite them to use their solar ovens to cook the treat you have planned. Note: You can preheat the oven as high as 200 degrees Fahrenheit by setting it in direct sunlight for 30 minutes before cooking your treat.

Optional: While the treats are cooking, distribute Handout 2, *Solar Cookers International*.

Make sure that participants have oven mitts. Remind them to use caution when removing the hot plates from their ovens. Invite participants to eat and enjoy the treats they've made!

An important but often neglected aspect of a Faith in Action project is the opportunity to reflect together on the experience. When the event is close to ending, ask everyone to help clean up and then gather briefly in a circle. Remind the children and families that our congregation is a place to wonder and to ask questions, and ask them to share some of the things in nature they wonder about. Say, in these words or your own:

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that that all people and animals and plants are part of an invisible web of life. One important way that we can care for this interdependent web is to save energy—which we did today, by using the awesome power of the sun to cook our treat!

Close the gathering with one of the Chalice Children songs.

Including All Participants

Make sure the areas you select for the event is accessible to all. When planning what snack(s) to serve, be aware of any food allergies in the group, and offer alternatives.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

As the darkness deepens o'er us, lo, eternal stars arise. — "Now on Land and Sea Descending," Hymn 47 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "wondering about the stars." According to religious educator Sophia Fahs, contact with the natural world is one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. Today, we celebrated the beauty of stars and the awe we feel when we look at the stars.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the suggested books for this session:

- *Draw Me a Star* by Eric Carle, 1992. An artist's drawing of a star begins the creation of an entire universe; the book includes a star drawing activity.
- *How to Catch a Star* by Oliver Jeffers, 2004. Once there was a boy who loved stars very much—so much so that he decided to catch one of his very own. But how?
- *Stargazing Sky* by Deborah Kogan Ray, 1991. A little girl and her mother stay up late to watch a shower of shooting stars.

- *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* by Jerry Pinkney, 2011. A curious little chipmunk leaves his nest to greet the twilight and gazes at the glittering sky above him.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . creating shooting stars from cardboard and silver streamers, then putting on some music for a dancing stars night.

A Family Adventure. Take a night walk and look at the stars. Share what you wonder about.

A Family Discovery. Enjoy [this version](#) of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" on YouTube, or try [this simpler version](#). You might also use this [hour-long version](#) as background for free play. You can also check out "[The Most Astounding Fact](#)" and hear astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson discuss our connectedness with the universe.

A Family Game. Play and sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" together as a finger play:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. [flutter fingers in the air]
How I wonder what you are? [put one finger on your cheek, nod your head]
Up above the world so high, [stretch arms way up]
Like a diamond in the sky. [touch index fingers and thumbs of right and left hands to form a diamond shape]
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. [flutter fingers in air]
How I wonder what you are? [put one finger on cheek, nod your head]

A Family Ritual. Before bedtime, sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" as a bedtime lullaby and then talk about the day.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: DRAW A STAR (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Drawing paper
- Markers, crayons, and/or paints and paintbrushes
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: *Draw Me a Star* by Eric Carle

Preparation for Activity

- Read *Draw Me a Star* by Eric Carle or watch [this YouTube video](#) to see how Carle's book teaches the activity. If you want to share the book with the children, obtain it from a public library or purchase the book for your congregation.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to draw stars as demonstrated in Eric Carle's book *Draw Me a Star*. Make sure that each child puts their name on their drawing.

When you've finished making stars, invite the children to help with clean-up. They can put away the drawing supplies and wipe the table with moistened paper towels. Put the drawings near the door for the children to take home later.

Including All Participants

If any child is in a wheelchair, make sure that there is a table at their height, with places for other children as well, so they may draw along with everyone.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: SHOOTING STARS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Cardboard star shapes, 1 foot wide, one for each child
- Markers or crayons
- Decorations such as sparkly paper, chenille stems (pipe cleaners), and glitter; and, glue sticks to share
- Silver streamers, and a stapler
- Star music, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and a music player
- Moistened paper towels

Preparation for Activity

- Cut out the stars from cardboard, one for each child. Or, purchase a foil or cardboard star for each child, plus a few extra, from a craft store.
- Make or purchase silver streamers (Mylar works well).
- Choose some music for children to dance to and set up the equipment needed to play it.

Description of Activity

Children decorate and dance with a star.

Invite the children to color and decorate their stars. Make sure each child puts their name on their star. Staple the streamers to one side of the star shape. Play the music and invite the children to be shooting stars as they dance around the room.

Invite the children to help with clean-up. They can put away the drawing supplies and wipe the table with moistened paper towels. Put the stars near the door for the children to take home later.

Including All Participants

If any child uses a wheelchair, make sure there is a table at their height, with places for other children as well, so they may decorate a star along with everyone. You can substitute other actions for dancing, such as moving the stars with their hands from a seated position. Children with mobility limitations can also accompany the dancing by shaking a rhythm instrument, such as a maraca, rain stick, or shaker, or keep rhythm with a clicker. If any children struggle with fine motor coordination, have children work in pairs to create a star and then dance together.

HANDOUT 1: SOLAR OVEN INSTRUCTIONS

- On the top of a pizza box, use a ruler and a marker to draw lines parallel to three sides of the box—the left, right, and front (where the box opens)—one inch from each edge.
- Using a box cutter or sharp scissors, cut along the three lines to make a flap in the lid of a pizza box. Fold the flap so that it stands up when the box lid is closed.
- Cut aluminum foil to cover the inner side of the flap.
- Glue the aluminum foil to the inner side of the flap, shiny side out.
- Open the box and tape one sheet of plastic wrap across the inside of the opening you made when you cut the flap in the lid. Then close the box and tape the second sheet of plastic wrap across the same opening, on the outside. Tape very securely, to seal out air. You are making an airtight window for sunlight to enter the box.
- Glue aluminum foil to the inside bottom of the pizza box, and then cover it with black construction paper. Black absorbs heat, and this black surface is where your food will be set to cook.
- Place the box in a sunny spot, as directed by the leader. Adjust the flap to get the most sunlight possible to reflect off the aluminum foil and onto the plastic-covered window. Use a ruler, stick, or large straw to prop the flap where you want it. Optional: You can tilt the box by rolling a towel and placing it underneath the box.
- To keep the paper liner clean, place the items you're cooking on a clear plastic or glass plate.
- To remove food from the oven, lift the lid of the pizza box, and use oven mitts or potholders to remove the glass dish.

HANDOUT 2: SOLAR COOKERS INTERNATIONAL

"Solar Cookers International (SCI) is a nonprofit organization that works to improve human health, quality of life, and the environment by spreading solar cooking awareness and skills worldwide, particularly in areas with plentiful sunshine and diminishing sources of cooking fuel. Since its founding in 1987, SCI has enabled more than 30,000 families in Africa to cook with the sun's energy, freeing women and children from the burdens of gathering firewood, carrying it for miles, and then cooking over an open fire."

"Solar cooking can improve a woman's health, her children's health, her household budget, her field's ability to grow crops, her personal safety, and her educational opportunities. The sun's free, zero-emissions energy produces no household air pollution, preserving the environment as people cook food and pasteurize drinking water."

Learn more at the [SCI website](#).

FIND OUT MORE

On YouTube, watch "[13.7 Billion Years of Evolution in 85 Seconds](#)" produced by Connie Barlow; "[Journey to the Edge of the Universe](#)" with Jay Johnson; or "[The Most Astonishing Fact](#)" with Neil deGrasse Tyson.

Check out the website of [The Great Story](#).

A UU sermon on night sky topics is "[King Midas Meets the Queen of Death Valley](#): Deconstructing Two Environmental Stories" by Rev. Dr. Todd F. Eklof, Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, WA, November 18, 2012.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Consider the moments when you have noticed the moon. What do you think about as you gaze at the moon? Do you hum a song ("When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie . . ."), do you wonder about werewolf legends, do you wish our planet had more than one moon? Do you miss someone who's far away, and imagine them looking at the same moon? The moon is a focal point for myths, romance, and science. It is the part of the night sky that's closest to us. It is a powerful force, affecting the tides and, some say, the behaviors of our species. Remember the powerful force of the moon in folklore, in our stories, and in science as you prepare to explore the wonder of the moon with the children.

SESSION 18: WONDERING ABOUT THE MOON

INTRODUCTION

The light of the moon on each upturned face . . . we gaze up in wonder above to the sky. — "The Sun at High Noon," Hymn 14 in Singing the Living Tradition

The moon is part of our natural world. Experiences with the natural world are one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. In this session, children share their wonder about the moon and find out more about the moon. We share our wonder together as part of our congregational community.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that wondering about the moon is something we all share
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience the wonder of the moon and the night sky
- Invent their own ideas of what the images in the moon are
- Connect a story with wondering about the moon.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Moon Painting	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Activity area with moon-related items

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Gather and display items relating to the moon, such as a moon puzzle or "Moon Sand" (now called "Shape-It Sand") and trays. You can read [this description](#) of "Moon Sand" or try [this recipe](#) to make your own.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to

"Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Today we wonder about the moon. The moon is something we share with all the people in the world. It circles our whole planet. Sometimes you can see the moon during the day, and sometimes it shines brightly at night. People have always wondered about the moon. Some people thought it might be made of cheese. Some people thought that the shadows on the

moon made it look like a face. People have wondered and wondered.

Ask the children questions about the moon and encourage them to respond, for example:

- Where and when have you seen the moon? What shape is it? What color?
- Have you seen the moon covered by clouds?
- What would you do if you could take a trip to the moon? How would you get there? What would you bring?

Say, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to make some moon pictures, but first let's read a story about the moon.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me* by Eric Carle, 1991. Monica's father fulfills her request for the moon by taking it down when it is small enough to carry, but it continues to change in size.
 - *Kitten's First Full Moon* by Kevin Henkes, 2004. In this award-winning picture book, a kitten pursues a big bowl of milk, not realizing it is the moon.
 - *Moon Plane* by Peter McCarty, 2006. A young boy sees a plane overhead and imagines himself in it, traveling all the way to the moon. What does he see on his way?
 - *Moon Man* by Tomi Ungerer, 2009. The man in the moon looks down on the happy, dancing people on Earth every night, wishing he could join them.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: MOON PAINTING (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newspaper or other covering for tables
- White paper plates, at least one for each child, a hole punch, and yarn
- Red, orange, white, and black tempera paint, and paint brushes
- Glitter
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: Paint smocks
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Punch a hole at the top of each paper plate.
- Cover the activity table(s) with newspaper and set out paper plates, paint, and brushes.

Description of Activity

Children create a painting of the moon.

Invite children to make a moon painting using tempera paint and white paper plates. Make sure that each child puts their name on their paper plate. Optional: Have each child put on a smock.

Encourage children to use their imaginations as they paint. You might prompt them with questions, for example:

- Can you make a new moon? A full moon?
- Can you make a face on the moon? Can you make a moon with an animal on it?
- Do you think you would like to go to the moon? Can you draw how you would get there?

Sprinkle the wet paint with glitter and place the moon plates somewhere safe to dry. After they dry, thread a length of yarn through the hole in each plate, for hanging. Optional: Take pictures of the children with their finished moons.

Put the moons near the door for the children to take home later.

Invite the children to help clean up. They can gather the newspaper to recycle or throw away, put away art supplies, and wipe up paint from the table with paper towels. Have them wash their hands. Make sure no one has wet paint on their clothes or shoes.

Including All Participants

If any child is in a wheelchair, make sure that there is a table at their height, with places for other children as well, so they may paint along with everyone. Children who are not able to hold a paint brush can finger-paint, instead.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Two new songs and games—Big Yellow Moon and "Hey Diddle Diddle"—appear in this session, in honor of the moon theme. You could research additional circle games or songs connected to the moon, or make up your own moon-related words to a common tune.
- If needed, watch [this video](#) of "Hey Diddle Diddle" on YouTube.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask the children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,

My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].

Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Big Yellow Moon

Introduce this moon game, leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

Big yellow moon shines so bright, [lift arms above head in a circle]
Glides across the starry night. [slowly move arms from left to right]
Looks down at me, [shade eyes with hands]
Asleep in bed, [put hands together at side of face]
Whispers, "Good night, sleepyhead." [put forefinger in front of mouth]
Big yellow moon, your turn is done. [move arms down in front of body]
Here comes Mr. Morning Sun! [lift arms above head in a circle]
I wake up. [stretch arms out]
You go to bed. [put hands together at side of face]
"Sleep well, Moon, you sleepyhead." [put forefinger in front of mouth]

Hey Diddle Diddle

Hey, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed to see such fun,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Lead more Circle Time songs and games, as time allows.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and

skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]

Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]

Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]

May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we wonder together about the moon.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

*The light of the moon on each upturned face . . .
we gaze up in wonder above to the sky. —
"The Sun at High Noon," Hymn 14 in Singing
the Living Tradition*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "We wonder about the moon." The moon is part of our natural world. Contact with the natural world is one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. We shared our wonder about the moon and found out more about the moon. We learned that we share our wonder together as part of our congregational community.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested for this session:

- *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me* by Eric Carle, 1991. Monica's father fulfills her request for the moon by taking it down when it is small enough to carry, but it continues to change in size.
- *Kitten's First Full Moon* by Kevin Henkes, 2004. In this award-winning picture book, a kitten pursues a big bowl of milk, not realizing it is the moon.
- *Moon Plane* by Peter McCarty, 2006. A young boy sees a plane overhead and imagines himself in it, traveling all the way to the moon. What does he see on his way?

- *Moon Man* by Tomi Ungerer, 2009. The man in the moon looks down on the happy, dancing people on Earth every night, wishing he could join them.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Find a big window or outdoor spot where you can watch the moonrise together, at night.

A Family Adventure. Find out if there is a planetarium nearby that you could visit.

A Family Discovery. Explore the moon by watching NASA's [Solar System Exploration videos](#).

A Family Game. Separate sandwich cookies with a white filling and scrape off the filling to make different moon phases—and then eat the cookies! Or, learn how to sing the traditional nursery rhyme "[Hey Diddle Diddle](#)":

Hey, diddle, diddle
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.
The little dog laughed to see such fun,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

A Family Ritual. Watch for the full moon every 29 evenings, when it appears. Or read *Walk When the Moon Is Full* by Frances Hamerstrum and begin a family tradition of full-moon walks.

FIND OUT MORE

Check out NASA's [Moon Portal](#) for everything you've ever wanted to know about the moon.

Find a [Moon Phases Calendar](#) online.

Read "[Moon Tides](#)," a sermon preached by Rev. Joel Miller, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis, OR, February 17, 2013.

SESSION 19: THE WONDER OF WEATHER

INTRODUCTION

For the sun, for rain and thunder, for the seasons' harmony . . . — "For the Earth Forever Turning," Hymn 163 in Singing the Living Tradition

The weather is part of our natural world, and contact with the natural world is one of twelve main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children, according to religious educator Sophia Fahs. In this session, the children share their wonder about the weather and find out more about the weather. We share our wonder together as part of our congregational community.

Tailor the session to your local climate and typical weather phenomena (e.g., snow, extreme heat). Be prepared to calm fears about violent forces of nature, such as hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes, if these happen in your area; be ready to tell the children there are many people whose job it is to keep people safe in all types of weather.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that all ages share wonder about the weather
- Begin to comprehend the science of how weather happens
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore wind, rain, storms, and/or snow, as appropriate to location and the season
- Share their wonderings about the natural world with one another
- Connect the story they read in this session with the wonder of weather.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Sunny and Stormy Skies	10
Activity 6: Raindrops and Clouds	5
Activity 7: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

Alternate Activity 1: Outdoors in Wind or Snow 10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How do you observe the weather? Are you likely to casually glance out a window or more likely to monitor weather on a radio station or website? What are the main types of weather in your area? How do windy, rainy, stormy, and clear days make you feel? When is weather a humdrum, background element of your day; when do you experience weather as a miracle of our earth? Imagine weather as a wondrous event, brought to us by the marvel of our blue-green planet, each day. Imagine weather—all kinds—as something to be grateful for. Consider the weather in all its forms, as if you were an astronaut orbiting the earth, watching the clouds over the continents, waiting to feel the sun on your face again after the cold darkness of space. Bring that mindfulness of the wonder of weather to the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Activity area with weather-related items

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting. Set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Gather and display weather-related items such as a rainstick, a raincoat and rain boots, paper snowflakes to cut out, or cotton balls and feathers for children to blow like the wind.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child who uses a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time

can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own; be sure to refer to weather familiar to the children:

Today we wonder about the weather. Sometimes it rains, sometimes it snows, sometimes it is sunny, sometimes it is foggy, or windy. Each type of weather is part of nature here on our planet, Earth. What kind of weather do we have today? What is your favorite kind of weather? What do you do when it rains? When it snows? When it's sunny? When it's stormy? Today we are going to do some fun activities

about different kinds of weather, but first let's read a book about the weather.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility limitations, form your circle with chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Wind* by Marion Dane Bauer, 2003. Though you can't see the wind, you can certainly feel it when it blows! But where does the wind come from? (Note: This author also wrote *Rain*, *Clouds*, and *Snow*.)
 - *Big Snow* by Jonathan Bean, 2013. While "helping" his mother with holiday housecleaning, a boy keeps a watchful eye on the progress of a winter storm. He's hoping for a big snow!
 - *Maisy's Wonderful Weather Book* by Lucy Cousins, 2011. Whether it's snowy, rainy, or sunny, readers can explore the natural world with Maisy and find out how wonderful weather can be!
 - *Hi, Koo!* by Jon J. Muth, 2014. This book of seasons features Stillwater, the Zen Panda, sharing 26 Haiku poems.
 - *Clouds* by Anne Rockell, illustrated by Frane Lessac, 2008. Do you ever wake up and wonder what the weather will be? Instead of turning on the TV to find out, you can just look out your window at the clouds.
 - *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle, 1996. Little Cloud drifts away from his wispy friends and entertains himself by changing into a variety of forms—a lamb, an airplane, a shark, a clown, etc.—before joining the others to form one big cloud that rains.
 - *A Starlit Snowfall* by Nancy Willard, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney, 2011. "My cave is big enough for two!" a bear declares to a rabbit, inviting his small friend to share his den through the longest, coldest season.
 - *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, 1963. This Caldecott Medal winner is the simple tale of a boy waking up to discover that snow has fallen during the night. *The Snowy*

Day was the first full-color picture book to feature a small black hero—yet another reason to add this classic to your shelves. It's as unique and special as a snowflake.

- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: SUNNY AND STORMY SKIES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Cotton balls, at least 12 per child
- Glue sticks
- Light blue construction paper, one sheet per child
- Dark color construction paper, such as purple or black, one sheet per child
- Markers or crayons, including silver markers or white or light-colored crayons for drawing on dark construction paper
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Consider having the group do this activity and Activity 6, *Raindrops and Clouds* at the same time. If you have a large group and room for multiple activity areas, plan to set up one drawing area and multiple stations for the water play in Activity 6 and to rotate small groups of children to the stations.
- If the day is windy or snowy, consider replacing this activity and/or Activity 6, *Raindrops and*

Clouds, with Alternate Activity 1, *Outdoors in Wind or Snow*.

- Set up an activity area with construction paper, markers or crayons, cotton balls, and glue sticks.

Description of Activity

Children create two skies, one stormy and one sunny, using cotton balls for clouds.

Invite the children to the activity table.

Ask the children to describe what the sky looks like in sunny weather and in stormy weather. Tell them that they are going to make two skies: a sunny weather sky and a stormy weather sky. For the sunny sky, have them use the light-blue construction paper. Invite them to add a sun, some cotton-ball clouds, and other things they see in sunny weather. For the stormy sky, have the children use the dark-colored paper. Invite them to add cotton-ball clouds and to draw rain, lightning, or other things they see in stormy weather.

Help the children put their names on their skies. Put the sky pictures near the door for the children to take home later.

Invite the children to help clean up by putting away the art supplies and wiping the table with moistened paper towels.

Including All Participants

If any child is in a wheelchair, make sure that there is a table at their height, with places for other children as well, so they may create a sky along with everyone. A child with vision limitations can make a daytime sky; talk to them about the texture a cloud might have and engage them to feel cotton balls and glue them to paper. If you have 3-D star stickers, the child can make a nighttime sky by feel, as well. If any children have short attention spans and finish their pictures long before everyone else, you could invite them to make another sky picture to hang on the wall of the Chalice Children meeting room. If more activity is needed, you could invite them to pretend to be the wind and blow a cotton ball across the floor.

ACTIVITY 6: RAINDROPS AND CLOUDS (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- For each station: Two clear bowls of warm water; a tray; cotton balls, several for each child; (optional) tongs
- Paper towels
- Optional: Blue food coloring

Preparation for Activity

- View [pictures and description](#) of this activity on the Teach Preschool blog.
- Set up the activity area with the supplies. If the group is large, make more than one station. At each station, fill one bowl with cotton balls and one with water, and place the bowls on a tray. Optional: Color the water with blue food coloring.

Description of Activity

In this water play activity, children experiment with rainy and cloudy weather.

Call the children to the activity area. Show them the bowls, and tell them that the cotton balls are clouds. Give each child a cotton ball to hold, and tell them to pretend that they are holding a cloud. Ask them how the cloud feels: heavy, light, soft, hard? Have the children dip the cotton balls in the water and then hold the wet cotton balls above the bowl. Say, in these words or your own:

How does the cloud feel now? What is happening with the water? The water is dripping from the cloud. The cloud can't hold all that water because it's too heavy.
Have them squeeze their cotton balls. It is raining!

Invite the children to experiment with how the clouds carry rain and how the rain falls from the clouds by dipping cotton balls in the water and squeezing out the rain. Optional: Have them try using tongs to squeeze out the water.

Invite the children to help clean up by wiping up any spilled water with paper towels.

Including All Participants

If any child is in a wheelchair, you can place the bowls, on a tray, on the arms of the wheelchair or in the child's lap. If a child cannot manipulate a cotton ball to squeeze it, have the children experiment in pairs.

ACTIVITY 7: CIRCLE GAMES (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Cotton balls

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction, and the new songs and games suggested for this session. You can also research more circle games or

songs about weather, or make up your own weather-related words to a common tune.

- Prepare to teach the children to build a rainstorm. The [children](#) in Julie Rogers' class and the [Perpetuum Jazzile group](#) demonstrate on YouTube.
- Hear the tune of "It's Raining, It's Pouring" on this [YouTube video](#).
- If you don't know the tune of "One Misty, Moisty Morning," you can watch [this video](#) on YouTube.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask the children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Create a Rainstorm

Teach the children how to "make a rainstorm:" Rub two fingers together. Rub hands together. Snap fingers. Clap two fingers on palm. Clap hands. Slap hands on thighs. Stomp feet.

To make the rainstorm subside, do these actions in reverse order.

It's Raining, It's Pouring

Teach the children this song, in honor of today's theme:

It's raining, it's pouring,
The old man is snoring.
He went to bed and bumped his head
And couldn't get up in the morning.

A Wind Game

Have the children pretend to be the wind by blowing cotton balls across the floor.

One Misty, Moisty Morning

Teach the children this song, in honor of today's theme. You can also have them act out the song; at the "How do you do?" lines, have them bow to one another and shake hands:

One misty, moisty morning,
When cloudy was the weather,
I chanced to meet an old man
Clothed all in leather.
All clothed in leather,
With a cap under his chin.
"How do you do?" and "How do you do?"
And "How do you do?" again.

Lead more Circle Time songs and games, as time allows.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we wonder together about nature and weather.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

For the sun, for rain and thunder, for the seasons' harmony . . . — "For the Earth Forever Turning," Hymn 163 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "We wonder about the weather." The weather is part of our natural world. Contact with the natural world is one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children, according to religious educator Sophia Fahs.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Read some of the books suggested for today's session:

- *Wind* by Marion Dane Bauer, 2003. Though you can't see the wind, you can certainly feel it when it blows! But where does the wind come from? (Note: This author also wrote *Rain, Clouds, and Snow*.)
- *Big Snow* by Jonathan Bean, 2013. While "helping" his mother with holiday housecleaning, a boy keeps a watchful eye on the progress of a winter storm. He's hoping for a big snow!
- *Maisy's Wonderful Weather Book* by Lucy Cousins, 2011. Whether it's snowy, rainy, or sunny, readers can explore the natural world with Maisy and find out how wonderful weather can be!
- *Hi, Koo!* by Jon J. Muth, 2014. This book of seasons features Stillwater, the Zen Panda, sharing 26 Haiku poems.
- *Clouds* by Anne Rockell, illustrated by Frane Lessac, 2008. Do you ever wake up and wonder what the weather will be? Instead of turning on the TV to find out, you can just look out your window at the clouds.
- *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle, 1996. Little Cloud drifts away from his wispy friends and entertains himself by changing into a variety of forms—a lamb, an airplane, a shark, a clown, etc.—before

joining the others to form one big cloud that rains.

- *A Starlit Snowfall* by Nancy Willard, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney, 2011. "My cave is big enough for two!" a bear declares to a rabbit, inviting his small friend to share his den through the longest, coldest season.
- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, 1963. This Caldecott Medal winner is the simple tale of a boy waking up to discover that snow has fallen during the night. *The Snowy Day* was the first full-color picture book to feature a small black hero—yet another reason to add this classic to your shelves.

A Family Adventure. Go outside to experience wind, rain, or snow together. Imagine weather as a wondrous event, one of the miracles of our blue green planet, something to be grateful for. Be mindful of the weather in all its forms, as if you were an astronaut orbiting the earth, watching the clouds over the continents, waiting to feel the sun on your face again after the cold, darkness of space.

A Family Discovery. Learn about rain, snow, and other weather in "[How's the Weather?](#)", an animated video from The Kids' Picture Show.

A Family Game. Build a rainstorm! On YouTube, the [children](#) in Julie Rogers' class and the [Perpetuum Jazzile group](#) demonstrate. Here's how: Rub two fingers together. Rub hands together. Snap fingers. Clap two fingers on palm. Clap hands. Slap hands on thighs. Stomp feet. To make the rainstorm subside, do these actions in reverse order.

Or sing "It's Raining, It's Pouring" (hear the tune on [YouTube](#)):

It's raining, it's pouring,
The old man is snoring.
He went to bed and bumped his head
And didn't get up until morning.

A Family Ritual. Adopt a morning weather routine. Each person shares a two-word weather description—one that describes how the weather *feels* (warm, cold, etc.), and one that describes what they can *see* (sun, rain, clouds, etc.). Read more at the [Teach Preschool blog](#).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: OUTDOORS IN WIND OR SNOW (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Map out a walk around the grounds, making sure that it will be accessible to everyone in the group.
- Make sure that the children bring their coats and any other outdoor apparel appropriate for the weather.

Description of Activity

Children take a walk outdoors, exploring the effects of the wind or snow.

Take advantage of a windy or snowy day by leading the children outdoors. Encourage them to notice how the weather affects the landscape around them. If it's windy, can they see leaves blowing or trees bending? Can they hear the rustle of the wind? Does the wind carry any unusual smells or aromas? Can they feel the wind tickle their hair, ears, fingers? If it's snowy, can they see limbs bending under the weight of the snow? Can they feel a snowflake on their cheek, or taste one on their tongue? Does snow have a smell or a sound?

Including All Participants

Make sure the outdoor area is accessible for all.

FIND OUT MORE

The quote for this session comes from "For the Earth Forever Turning" by Kim Oler, Hymn 163 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. [Learn about](#) the hymn's creation as part of Paul Winter's "Missa Gaia" ("Earth Mass") and its connection to Robert Heinlein's science fiction novel *The Green Hills of Earth*.

Read a February 13, 2012 blog post by Laura Emerson, "[Weather, Light and Temperature at Latitude 61](#)."

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. The rainbow is a transient, beautiful feature of nature, appearing rarely enough to cause us to pause and wonder. Its magic has been the focus of many legends and folklore. In North American culture, it is associated with the movie *The Wizard of Oz* and a sense of hope of a different, better world. To help you be mindful of the moments when a rainbow appears, consider adopting this ritual:

When you see a rainbow, pause.

Take hands with anyone you are with and say (or sing) this snippet from "De Colores," Hymn 305 in *Singing the Living Tradition*:

All the colors, as a rainbow appears when a storm cloud is touched by the sun.

Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mi.

All the colors abound for the whole world around and for everyone under the sun.

SESSION 20: RAINBOWS

INTRODUCTION

All the colors, as a rainbow appears when a storm cloud is touched by the sun. — "De Colores," Hymn 305 in Singing the Living Tradition

Rainbows are part of our natural world. Contact with the natural world is one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children, according to religious educator Sophia Fahs. In this session, the children discover and share their wonder and questions about rainbows as they learn more about them.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand the wonder we all share at seeing a rainbow
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience a shared sense of wonder
- Learn that their congregation is a place where questions and wondering are encouraged
- Connect the story they read in this session with their experiences of rainbows.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Painting a Rainbow	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Rainbow-related items

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting. Set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Gather items related to this session's theme, such as a rainbow stacking toy or a prism you can set near a window so that it will cast a rainbow.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child who uses a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time

can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- A picture of a rainbow

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Find one or more pictures of rainbows in books or magazines that you can show the children and perhaps pass around.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Today we wonder about rainbows. Have you ever seen a rainbow in the sky? Here is a picture of a rainbow. [show the picture] A rainbow actually contains more than a million colors. But, our eyes can only really see six or

seven of them: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo (dark blue), and violet. Can you see all those colors?

Rainbows can be hard to find—they only happen every once in a while. We see them on bubbles, near waterfalls, and sometimes after a rainstorm. Rainbows are part of many stories because when people see a rainbow, they remember how beautiful the world is. Here at [name of congregation], we share the beauty of rainbows and our love of nature together. Today we are each going to paint a rainbow, but first let's read a story about rainbows.

Including All Participants

You could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *The Rainbow Book* by Kate Ohrt, 2011. This book explores the relationship between colors and the sentiments they might inspire. Does yellow suggest happiness? Is blue peaceful? Each turn of the page reveals another color, leading to a bright rainbow of feelings.
 - *A Rainbow of My Own* by Don Freeman, 1978. A young child tries to catch a rainbow, outside and inside, in this enduring classic.
 - *Ruby's Rainbow*, published by Grossett and Dunlap, 2012. Max and Ruby need something to do during a rainy day. Ruby decides to paint a rainbow for Grandma, while Max wants to play in the backyard. When Ruby has trouble remembering the colors of the rainbow, Max's red boots, orange hat, and yellow raincoat give her all the right clues.
 - *Extra Yarn* by Mac Barnett, illustrated by Jon Klassen, 2012. This Caldecott Honor Book tells the story of how a young girl and her box of magical yarn transform a community.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: PAINTING A RAINBOW (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Watercolors or tempera paint in rainbow colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo (dark blue), and violet (purple)
- Heavy stock white paper, two or three pieces for each child
- A paintbrush for each color of tempera paint, or a can of water to rinse the watercolor brushes, and rags or paper towels
- Small dishes, one for each color of tempera paint
- Newspapers or other table covering
- Pencils or crayons
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: Paint smocks, one for each child
- Optional: Picture of a rainbow, and tape
- Optional: Rainbow music and equipment to play it
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone
- Optional: Sheets of tissue paper in rainbow colors, and glue sticks

Preparation for Activity

- Determine where you will set the wet pictures to dry, such as a drying rack, a clothesline with clothespins, or an extra table. Optional: This [website](#) shows you how to make a [drying rack from pizza boxes](#).
- Set up the activity area by covering the table with newspaper and setting out paints, brushes,

dishes for the paint or water to rinse the brushes, paper towels or rags, and art paper.

- Optional: Post a picture of a rainbow.
- Optional: Choose rainbow music to play in the background, such as "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" by [Israel "IZ" Kamakawiwo'ole](#), [Celtic Woman](#), or [Leona Lewis](#). You might also play [this video clip](#) from *The Wizard of Oz*. Make sure you have the equipment you need to play the music or video.
- Optional: If painting is impractical, plan to have children create rainbows with colored tissue paper. Cut the tissue paper into one-inch squares. Invite the children to crumple the squares and glue them onto paper in a rainbow shape.

Description of Activity

Children create rainbows with paint (or, tissue paper).

Invite the children to the activity table. Tell the children they are going to paint their own rainbows. Optional: Give each child a smock.

Remind them of the shape of a rainbow. Show the picture of a rainbow if you have displayed one. Demonstrate how to form an arc by moving one arm from the shoulder; have them move their arms to make an arc.

Point out the rainbow colors on the activity table. Encourage them to experiment with making their own version of a rainbow, and let them know they can use two or three pieces of paper. Help each child write their name on their rainbow. Optional: Take a picture of the children with their rainbows.

Put the finished rainbow pictures in the drying area for the children to take home later.

Invite the children to help clean up. They can gather the newspaper to throw out, put away the art supplies, and wipe paint from the table with moistened paper towels. Have them wash their hands. Make sure that no one has wet paint on their clothes or shoes.

Including All Participants

If any child uses a wheelchair, make sure that there is a table at their height, with places for other children as well, so they can paint along with everyone. For some children, simply manipulating the paints will be satisfying enough; you need not insist on a rainbow shape, multiple colors, or a finished picture.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Recording of the "Rainbow Song" or other music
- Optional: Scarves or crepe paper streamers, in colors of the rainbow
- Optional: Percussion instruments

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction, and the new songs and games suggested for this session. You may also research additional circle games or songs about rainbows, or make up your own rainbow-related words to a common tune.
- Optional: Learn the "Rainbow Song" or plan to play the [YouTube video](#) or other music during this activity.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask the children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!

Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Rainbow Dance

Give each child one or two scarves or streamers and/or a percussion instrument. Play the "Rainbow Song" or teach it to the children. Invite the children to dance to the music as they imagine the beauty and wonder of a rainbow.

Rainbow Rhyme

Sing to the tune of "Hush, Little Baby:"

Rainbow purple,
Rainbow blue,
Rainbow green,
And yellow too.
Rainbow orange,
Rainbow red.
Rainbow shining
Over head.

Lead more Circle Time songs and games, as time allows.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell":

I'll find a friend at church
I'll find a friend at church
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, We'll skip around the room.

Sit in a circle. One player walks around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. First player returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second player walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

Variation

Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action. Examples are run, walk, hop, and jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation

Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 How are you this special day?
 We are glad you came to play.
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping, standing, or dancing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position. Children with mobility limitations can keep rhythm to accompany the dancing by shaking an instrument, such as a maraca, rain stick, a shaker, or a clicker.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we share the wonder and beauty of rainbows and our love of nature together.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?

- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

All the colors, as a rainbow appears when a storm cloud is touched by the sun. — "De Colores," Hymn 305 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "We wonder about rainbows." Rainbows are part of our natural world. Contact with the natural world is one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children, according to religious educator Sophia Fahs. In this session, the children shared their wonder about rainbows and found out more about them. We share our wonder together as part of our congregational community.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested for this session:

- *The Rainbow Book* by Kate Ohrt, 2011. This book explores the relationship between colors and the sentiments they might inspire. Does yellow suggest happiness? Is blue peaceful? Each turn of the page reveals another color, leading to a bright rainbow of feelings.
- *A Rainbow of My Own* by Don Freeman, 1978. A young child tries to catch a rainbow, outside and inside, in this enduring classic.
- *Ruby's Rainbow*, published by Grossett and Dunlap, 2012. Max and Ruby need something to do during a rainy day. Ruby decides to paint a rainbow for Grandma, while Max wants to play in the backyard. When Ruby has trouble remembering the colors of the rainbow, Max's red boots, orange hat, and yellow raincoat give her all the right clues.
- *Extra Yarn* by Mac Barnett, illustrated by Jon Klassen, 2012. This Caldecott Honor Book tells the story of how a young girl and her box of magical yarn transform a community.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . making Rainbow Toast! See how it's done in [this video](#) from Teach Preschool.

A Family Adventure. Place or hang a prism or crystal in a window through which sunlight shines. The prism or crystal will "throw" a magical light show of rainbow colors.

A Family Discovery. Make a musical [Rainbow Connection](#) by listening to music together. On YouTube, hear Joan Baez sing "[De Colores](#)." Explore versions of the song "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" by [Israel "IZ" Kamakawiwo'ole](#), [Judy Garland](#), [Celtic Woman](#), and

[Leona Lewis](#). Which do you like best? Which make you feel like dancing?

A Family Ritual. When you are lucky enough to see a rainbow, take hands and say or sing these words from "De Colores," Hymn 305 in *Singing the Living Tradition*:

All the colors, as a rainbow appears when a storm cloud is touched by the sun.

Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mi.

All the colors abound for the whole world around and for everyone under the sun.

FIND OUT MORE

On YouTube, [this Vsauce video](#) shows the science of rainbows.

"[Somewhere Under the Rainbow](#)" is a sermon given by Rev. Kathleen Hepler, First Parish in Framingham, MA, October 6, 2013.

SESSION 21: DREAMS

INTRODUCTION

Come dream a dream with me, that I might know your mind. — from "Come, Sing a Song with Me," Hymn 346 in Singing the Living Tradition

Religious educator Sophia L. Fahs identifies a child's realization that the world of reality sensed during wakefulness is different from the reality sensed in sleep as one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. She suggests that this realization leads to an appreciation for that which is invisible in the personality. In this session, we celebrate the wonder of dreams!

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that everyone dreams and everyone wonders about dreams
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore the feelings associated with nighttime sleeping and dreaming
- Connect the story they read in this session with their sense of comfort and safety at bedtime
- Express images or stories remembered from their own dreams by decorating an engine or car to display in a group "Dream Train."

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: What Is on Our Dream Train?	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Consider these words from "[Dreams and Dreaming in World Religions](#)" UU minister and dream work expert Jeremy Taylor:

The scriptures and sacred narratives of all the world's many religious traditions also speak with a single voice on this question: human beings are in closer and more direct communion and communication with the Divine in our dreams than any other state of consciousness.

How have your dreams connected you to something larger than yourself? Have you had recurring nightmares or satisfying dreams that seem to point you toward a certain insight?

Many believe that dreams are important to religious development—that they allow us subconscious access to truths we cannot discover when we are awake. After a dream, try asking yourself, "What is my subconscious trying to tell me?"

Young children are just beginning to encounter this lovely phenomenon—the stuff that dreams are made of!

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Items that suggest night-time dreaming

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting. Set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Display items related to this session's theme of sleep and dreams, such as soft blankets, cuddly stuffed animals, or night lights that cast a design on a wall.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time you meet will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child who uses a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to

"Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that no one needs to sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Anticipate that some children may find darkness frightening or may have anxiety about going to sleep for other reasons. Be ready to talk about the quiet, safe, and comforting aspects of the world when it is dark. The Families insert in the Spring, 2013 *UU World* magazine (theme: Sacred Rest: The Beauty and Purpose of the Dark) has ideas and words to help you; [read and download the Families insert](#). An excerpt:

Many families have bedtime rituals and routines. Young children love to talk about favorite stories, songs, and prayers. But often darkness can be frightening. Talking about what the world is like when it is dark and exploring what is beautiful and magical about darkness and dreams can help children feel more comfortable with the night and with their subconscious.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart

[Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words your own:

Today we are going to draw pictures of dreams we have had or want to have. Dreams can be funny, they can be sad, or even scary. Have you ever dreamed of pink puppies sharing a hot fudge sundae? I think that might be a fun dream to have. What about a scary dream—one where you wake up afraid? If you ever wake up in the night from a scary dream, here's what you can do: Take slow, deep breaths until you know you are awake and the dream happened only in your head, not in real life. Sometimes it may help if you turn a light on, or tell someone about the dream.

Children may want to talk about their dreams. Tell the group they will have time to tell about dreams they have had, after you share a story. Say, in these words or your own:

We are going to see if we can remember our dreams later, and make a dream train together. But first, let's read a story about nighttime.

Including All Participants

Consider holding circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, 1947. This bedtime classic offers the comfort of quiet repetition.
 - *Steam Train, Dream Train* by Sherri Duskey Rinker, illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld, 2013. The dream train pulls into the station, and one by one the train cars are loaded . . .
 - *Stormy Weather* by Debi Gloiri, 2009. As a mama fox tucks her baby into bed, she soothes his nighttime fears of the storm outside his window with the promise of

watching over him while he sleeps, just like all other baby animals around the world.

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story.

When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: WHAT IS ON OUR DREAM TRAIN? (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, Dream Train Engine and Cars
- Markers, crayons, and pencils in a variety of colors

Preparation for Activity

- Using Leader Resource 1, make multiple copies of the two different train car illustrations and one or two copies of the engine car (depending on how large your group is, and how many complete Dream Trains you will display).
- Identify a bulletin board or wall where you can display the children's artwork as a train, when the drawing is done.

Description of Activity

Children learn that everybody dreams as they create picture stories of the dreams they may remember.

Distribute the individual pages of a train engine or car and invite the children to see if they can remember a dream and draw a story about it on their train engine or car. Say that when they are done drawing they can tell about their dreams and you will display everyone's dream stories together in a dream train. Show or tell the children where you will put up the display.

It may be difficult for children this age to remember their dreams. Tell the children that everybody dreams, but not everyone can recall what they dreamed. Invite them, if they cannot remember a dream, to use their imaginations to invent a silly and fun dream they may want to have.

Give the group time to draw on the train cars. If a child finishes quickly, offer them another train car to illustrate with another dream story.

When the group is finished drawing, ask for volunteers to tell the story of what they drew. Do not attempt to guess at what a picture might be. The point of the activity is the child's experience and how they explain it. You may choose to model making a silly picture and only explain yours as a dream you have had, or think it would be fun to have.

You may ask:

- Does anyone want to tell the story of your dream?
- Was it easy or hard to remember your dream? Did you decide to make one up, instead?
- Has anyone had the same dream, more than one time?
- Isn't it interesting to think about our mind telling stories, when we are sleeping?

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Blankets or towels, one for each child
- Optional: Lullaby or other music, and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction, and the new songs and games suggested for this session. You may want to practice guiding a waking dream so you will be comfortable leading the "Dream Time" game. You may also wish to research additional circle games or songs about dreams or nighttime, or make up your own words to a common tune.
- If you don't know the tune of "Toora Loora-Loora," you can watch [this video](#) on YouTube.
- If you'd like to play a lullaby during the "Dream Time" game, choose one and prepare to play it during this activity.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Dream Time

Invite the children to find a place on the rug (or, sit at the activity table and lay their heads on their arms) and pretend to go to sleep. Darken the room, cover children with blankets, and sing a song or play a lullaby. Then send them on a "dream"—floating on the clouds, flying over the congregation, the town, and the whole day. Say "hi" to the moon, say "hi" to a goose flying up in the sky. Ask children for suggestions about what they could be dreaming. Then invite children to "wake up" and stretch.

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask the children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Toora Loora Loora

Teach the chorus of this classic Irish lullaby to the children:

*Toora, loora, loora,
Toora, loora, li,
Toora, loora, loora,
Hush, now, don't you cry.
Toora, loora, loora,
Toora, loora, li,
Toora, loora, loora,
It's an Irish lullaby.*

Dream Time

Invite the children to find a place on the rug and pretend to go to sleep. Darken the room, cover each child with a blanket or towel, and sing or play a lullaby. Send them on a "dream." You might float on the clouds, fly over your church [congregation], say "hi" to the moon, say "hi" to a goose flying up in the sky—let your imagination soar. You can also ask the children for suggestions about what they could be dreaming.

When you are ready, have the children "return" to the room, wake up, and stretch.

Lead more Circle Time songs and games, as time allows.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping or standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.

- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we celebrate the wonder of dreams!

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Come dream a dream with me, that I might know your mind. — from "Come, Sing a Song with Me," Hymn 346 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "We wonder about dreams." Unitarian Universalist religious educator Sophia L. Fahs identified a child's realization that the world of reality sensed during wakefulness is different from the reality sensed in sleep as one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. She suggests that this realization leads to an appreciation for that which is

invisible in the personality. In this congregation, we celebrate the wonder of dreams.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested for this session:

- *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, 1947. This bedtime classic offers the comfort of quiet repetition.
- *Steam Train, Dream Train* by Sherri Duskey Rinker, illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld, 2013. The dream train pulls into the station, and one by one the train cars are loaded.
- *Stormy Weather* by Debi Gloiri, 2009. As a mama fox tucks her baby into bed, she soothes his nighttime fears of the storm outside his window with the promise of watching over him while he sleeps, just like all other baby animals around the world.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . telling one another about your dreams, over breakfast together.

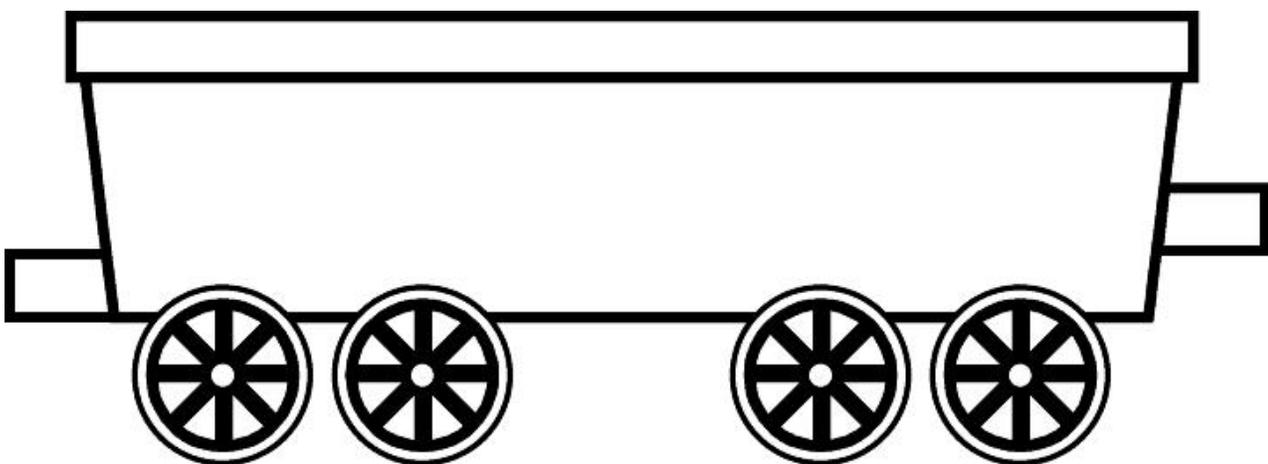
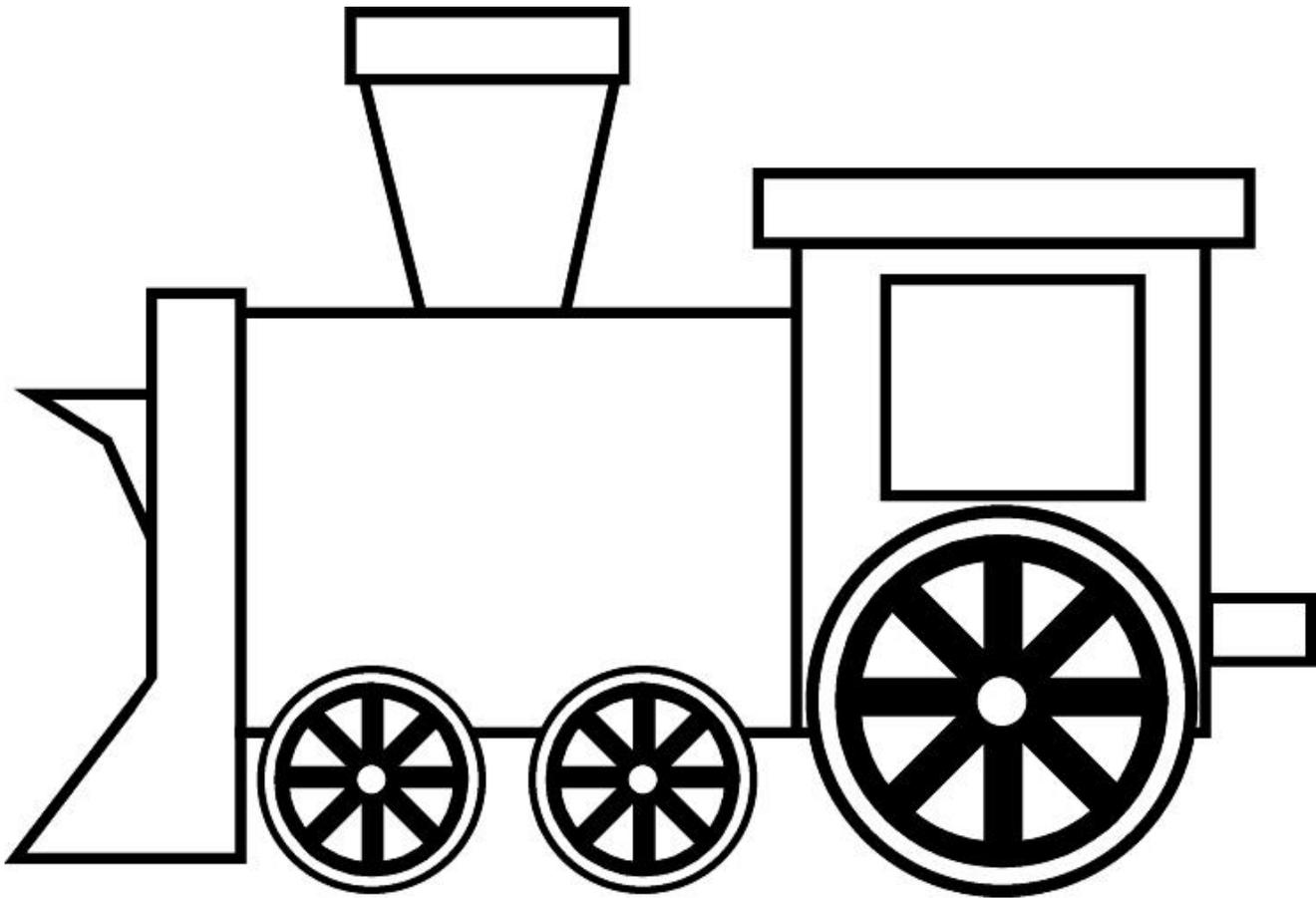
A Family Discovery. The UUA provides the Families pages in *UU World* magazine for sharing at home. "Sacred rest: The beauty and purpose of the dark" was the theme of the Spring, 2013 Families pages which you can access online ([PDF format, 4 pages](#)) for stories, activities, and reflections related to the themes of this session, with a focus on the inviting, comforting, and wonderful aspects of nighttime.

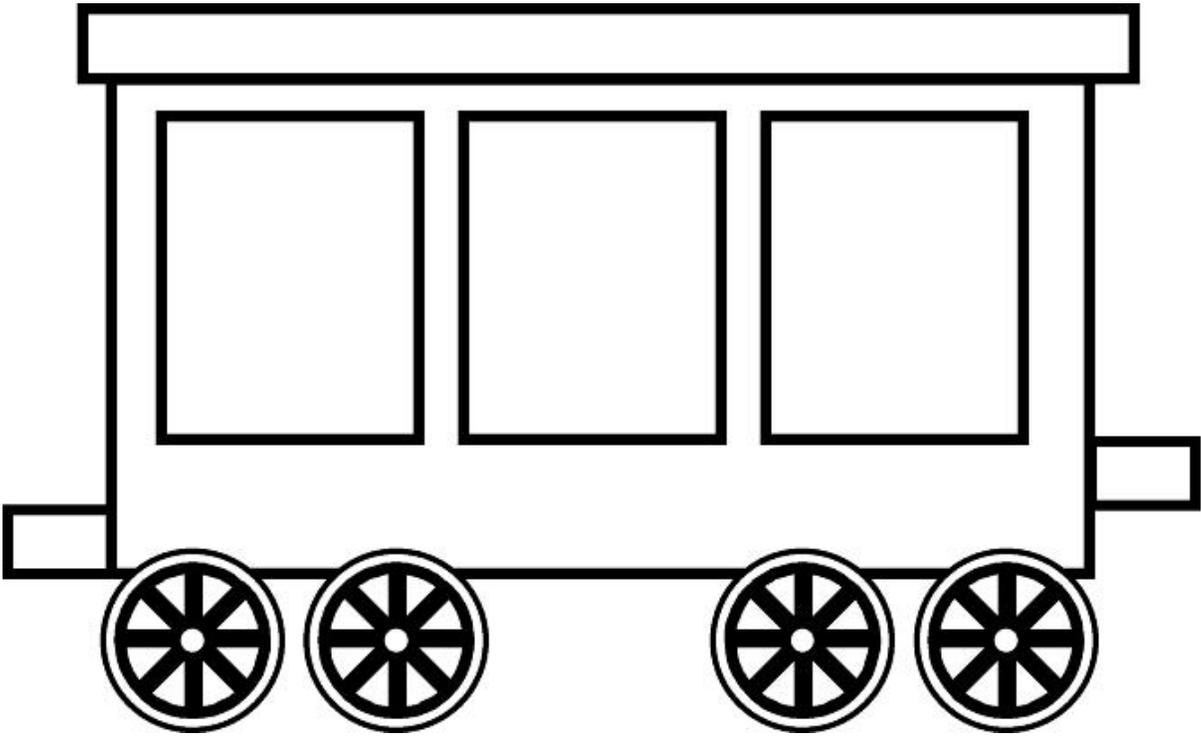
A Family Game. Play "bedtime" with your child and their favorite stuffed animal. At a time which is not their usual time to go to sleep, give your child a blanket and have them pretend to tuck in their stuffed animal for the night.

A Family Ritual. Sing a favorite song or songs at bedtime each night to remind your family of the love and deep peace that you share.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: DREAM TRAIN ENGINE AND CARS

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





FIND OUT MORE

UU minister Jeremy Taylor writes, in "[The Creative Impulse in Dreams](#):"

There is an archetypal creative impulse woven into the fabric of every dream. Sometimes this creative energy is clearly visible to the dreamer, but more often it is hidden by the emotional experience of the dream. It may require an unusual effort of imagination (often aided by the suggestions and assistance of other people) to bring the dream's message more fully into the light of conscious self-awareness, but with careful study, we often find dreams provide solutions to problems the conscious mind is grappling with to no avail.

See more of Taylor's writing about dreams on his [website](#).

Read [Dreams vs. "Dreams"](#) by Dr. Angela Morgan, a blog post on *HuffPost Healthy Living*.

Read "[Dreams, Nightmares, and Visions](#)," a sermon given by Matthew Johnson-Doyle, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockford, Illinois, September 15, 2013.

SESSION 22: IMAGINATION

INTRODUCTION

I seek the wonder of a child, a child who sees delightfully, now clowns in cloud, now gold in sun—imagination true and free. — "I Seek the Spirit of a Child," Hymn 338 in Singing the Living Tradition

Unitarian artist Arthur Lismer once said, "Art is a way of life, a release for spiritual forces which are strong in children and as essential to growth as body-building exercises and mental stimulus" (*September Gale: A Life of Arthur Lismer* by John McLeish, 1955). Long before they have language, children express their imaginations and their understanding of the world around them through art. As Unitarian Universalists, we value imagination, creativity, and creative problem solving. This session encourages and affirms the creative expression of each child's unique spirit and inner world.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand the value that Unitarian Universalists of all ages place on imagination and creativity
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Express their imagination through art
- Experience a connection between imagination and creativity
- Understand that people of all ages can use their imagination to wonder and to express feelings.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5

Activity 5: Imagination Art	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Explore the craft materials you will use in this session. How do they work? What does playing with them feel like? When was the last time you played with modeling clay or paints? Do you—or would you—enjoy the freedom to make something without an end product? Can you imagine the unique art you might make? Does an inner censor stop your imagining?

Give yourself time to let your thoughts unfold in an unhurried way. Reflect on the importance of imagination in spirituality and religion, as we try to grasp concepts larger than ourselves. Reflect on how Unitarian Universalism values imagination, curiosity, and creative expression as vehicles for each individual's lifelong seeking. Bring your awareness to your work with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Additional items to engage children's imaginations

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Gather items to stimulate children's imaginations, such as sarongs and scarves to use for dress-up play, modeling clay, a tray modeling clay, a bucket of things that don't seem to go together (such as wooden blocks, plastic dinosaurs, and a sheath of pipe cleaners), or a stack of empty boxes.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children meeting room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to

"Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Today we are thinking about our imaginations—the part of our brain that lets us think of things in unusual, silly, or different ways than usual. In our church [congregation], we want people to discover and think for themselves. Does your imagination let you think of things in a silly or different way? Can you use your imagination to make a sound of a purple elephant? Let's hear

it! Can you use your imagination to show us how a three-legged boboclownd animal would look when it is very happy? Can you use your imagination to eat a bananopopitupanddown fruit? Today we are going to use our imaginations to make some unusual and interesting art, but first let's read a story about imagination.

Including All Participants

Consider holding circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Journey* by Aaron Becker, 2013. In this picture book, a lonely girl draws a magic door on her bedroom wall and escapes through it into a world where wonder, adventure, and danger abound. Note: If you choose this story, practice ahead of time how you will "read" it to the children, since there is no text.
 - *Not a Box* by Antoinette Portis, 2006. A box is just a box . . . unless it's not a box. A small rabbit discovers that when your imagination takes over, a cardboard box can be a mountain, a rocket ship, a robot—anything!
 - *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg, 2010. It's OK to make a mistake. In fact, hooray for mistakes! A mistake is an adventure in creativity—a portal of discovery!
 - *Press Here* by Herve Tullet, 2011. Press the yellow dot on the cover of this book, follow the instructions within, and embark on a magical journey!
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if

they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: IMAGINATION ART (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- For sculpture: Modeling clay, in different colors, a fist-sized ball for each child; plastic sandwich bags, one for each child; and a permanent marker
- For Rorschach painting: Newspaper to cover work tables; tempera paint, two colors; dishes for paint; paint brushes; heavy paper, a least three sheets for each child; pencil
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: Smocks, one for each child
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether children will sculpt, paint, or have a choice.
- Obtain supplies.
- For the Rorschach painting, prepare each sheet of paper by gently folding it in half, drawing a pencil line along the crease, then unfolding the paper.
- Cover work tables with newspaper. Then, set out materials on work tables.

Description of Activity

Children make a soft clay sculpture or a Rorschach painting.

Sculpture. Have the children gather at the activity table. Invite them to use their imaginations and create a sculpture of something crazy or different or silly—whatever they can dream up! Suggest that if they'd like to add other colors to their sculpture, they may ask their neighbors to share. Encourage the children to experiment with different designs. Give a few minutes warning before children must finish their work. Place each play dough sculpture in a plastic sandwich bag and write the child's name on the bag. Set bags near the door for the children to take home later.

Rorschach painting. Gather children at the activity table. Give each child a smock to wear (optional). Point

out that there is a line on the paper, a "halfway" line. Ask them to paint on one half (one side) of the paper only. Encourage them to use their imaginations and to use several different colors, if they like. When they have painted half of a page, have them fold the paper and press the sides together to "print" their design on the other half of the paper. What do they think it looks like? Encourage them to make a variety of designs. Write their names on the paintings. Set paintings aside to dry.

Invite the children to help clean up. They can gather the newspaper to throw out, put away the art supplies, and wipe the table with moistened paper towels. Have children wash their hands. Make sure no one has wet paint or modeling clay on their clothes or shoes.

Including All Participants

If any children in the group have gluten allergies, make homemade play dough without cream of tartar; find a good recipe [here](#). If any child uses a wheelchair, make sure there is a work table at the appropriate height that has room for other children to join them and work together.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the Circle Games and songs from previous sessions and the new songs and games suggested for this session. Learn how to use ["zipper songs"](#) in Chapter 6 of the Tapestry of Faith resource "Making Music Live," by Nick Page. One fun zipper song is ["Aikendrum,"](#) a traditional participatory song where children clothe a moon dweller out of food items they call out. You can research additional circle games or songs about imagination, or make up your own imagination-related words to a common tune.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask the children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,

We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in
turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Throwing Balls

Lead this imagination-based game:

This is my ball. [use your hands to show how big
or small it is]
It is a [pretend the ball is another object—a
watermelon, ping-pong ball, pea, kickball,
soccer ball, etc.]!
I throw it to [say the name of a child in the
group, and pretend to throw the ball].
Your turn!

Repeat until every child has had a chance to choose a
new kind of ball and then "throw" it.

A "Zipper Song"

In a zipper song, with each new verse most of the words
stay the same but one or two words change. "This Old
Man" is a classic zipper song:

This old man, he played one.
He played knick-knack on my thumb.
With a knick-knack paddy-wack,
Give the dog a bone,
This old man came rolling home.

Additional verses:

Two . . . on my shoe.
Three . . . on my knee.
Four . . . door.
Five . . . hive.
Six . . . sticks.
Seven . . . up in heaven.
Eight . . . plate.
Nine . . . spine.

Ten . . . once again.

Other good Zipper Songs are "Old McDonald" and
"She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain."

Freeze and Melt

Players pretend to do or be something, moving slowly at
first. Gradually, they increase their pace and make their
movements more dramatic, until the leader calls
"Freeze!" This is the signal for players to stop moving.
They stay still and hold the frozen position until the
leader calls "Melt!" Play then resumes, with players
doing a new action. Encourage the children to be
creative in their movements. Invite them to pretend to
be: the wind, a lion, a flower, very small, the rain, very
tall, a fish, a mountain, the moon, the sun, a rainbow, a
fish...

Lead more Circle Time songs and games, as time
allows.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult,
substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or
wiggling, or sing the songs and play games from a
seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document)
handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or
ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy
for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity
table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each
envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the
envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the
chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish
the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after
you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over
"flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and
gather to your heart again]

And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we celebrate the power of our imagination!

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

I seek the wonder of a child, a child who sees delightfully, now clowns in cloud, now gold in sun—imagination true and free. — "I Seek the Spirit of a Child," Hymn 338 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "imagination." Unitarian artist Arthur Lismer once said, "Education for life includes the idea of art, in the fullest sense, for life's sense. . . . Art is a way of life, a release for spiritual forces which are strong in children and as essential to growth as body-building exercises and mental stimulus" (*September Gale: A Life of Arthur Lismer* by John McLeish, 1955). Through art, children organize the world around them and express their understanding of what they observe and experience long before they can articulate this understanding verbally. The power of the imagination expressed in the creative process is a vehicle for the release of feelings and wondering. As Unitarian Universalists, we value creativity and creative problem solving. This session was a time to reinforce the creative expression of each child's uniqueness and inner world.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the suggested books for this session:

- *Journey* by Aaron Becker, 2013. In this wordless picture book, a lonely girl draws a magic door on her bedroom wall and through it escapes into a world where wonder, adventure, and danger abound.
- *Not a Box* by Antoinette Portis, 2006. A box is just a box . . . unless it's not a box. A small rabbit discovers that when your imagination takes over, a cardboard box can be a mountain, a rocket ship, a robot—anything!
- *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg, 2010. It's OK to make a mistake. In fact, hooray for mistakes! A mistake is an adventure in creativity—a portal of discovery!
- *Press Here* by Herve Tullet, 2011. Press the yellow dot on the cover of this book, follow the instructions within, and embark on a magical journey!

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . making your own homemade play dough and sculpt with it. Watch [this recipe video](#) on YouTube.

A Family Adventure. Tell a story to each other in the car when travelling; each person adds a bit of the story, using their imagination.

A Family Game. Sing a Zipper Song, such as "[Aikendrum](#)," where a moon dweller is clothed by foods called out by the children. Or play the game Freeze and Melt: Players pretend to do or be something, moving slowly at first. Gradually, they increase their pace and make their movements more dramatic, until the leader calls "Freeze!" This is the signal for players to stop moving. They stay still and hold the frozen position until the leader calls "Melt!" Players then do a new action. Try pretending to be the wind, a lion, a flower, the rain, very tall, a fish, a mountain, the moon, or a rainbow, and be creative in your movements or actions.

FIND OUT MORE

Check out "[Research Uncovers How and Where Imagination Occurs In the Brain](#)" by Carolyn Gregoire, posted on *HuffPost*, September 17, 2013.

Learn more about Arthur Lismer in [Session 12](#) of the children's Tapestry of Faith program World of Wonder.

Read a sermon titled "God Bless You, Mr. Vonnegut, or Imagining Faith" from Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist, Bordentown, N.J., February 15, 2008.

- Connect the story they read in this session with the fact that all people are afraid sometimes.

SESSION 23: MY SHADOW

INTRODUCTION

*Gathered here in the mystery of the hour. —
from "Gathered Here," Hymn 389 in Singing the
Living Tradition*

The theme of Unit 4 is "We make friends." Each session emphasizes the idea that the Chalice Children group (and the congregation as a whole) is a place to make friends and to be a friend, and that being a member of this group means helping to make it a friendly place for others. In Sessions 25—29, a "friend"—each child's teddy bear—is used to introduce potentially scary concepts (being lost, or sick) in a nonthreatening way.

Preschoolers' social development can vary greatly. The youngest children may still engage in parallel play; four-year-olds may be learning to express their feelings; kindergarteners may be more willing to conform to goals and norms established by parents, teachers, congregational leaders, and society.

In this session, the children explore and play with shadows. Sophia L. Fahs identifies play with one's shadow as one of the 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. Playing with our shadow is an experience that awakens wonder and the thrill of discovery. Shadows also bring a bit of mystery into our world. However, darkness and shadows can also be frightening for small children. Sharing our fears with our friends can help us feel less afraid and less alone in the darkness.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Understand that all people, and every object, have shadows and that sometimes we might find them scary
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reduce their fears by playing with shadows and talking about what they are afraid of
- Be reminded that they can ask questions about things they do not understand

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Shadow Play	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Faith in Action: Reaching Out in Friendship	60
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How do mystery and shadows intersect for you? From the point of view of a young child (and sometimes, perhaps, an adult), shadows contain or come from the unknown, which can cause of fear. A large, threatening shadow that stands your hair on end may turn out to be a pile of laundry or a bunch of bushes. Overcoming the unknown is one way to shrink the mystery and shrink the fear.

Another way to feel less afraid is to reflect on those who have overcome their fears. Who comes to mind when you think of models and mentors for overcoming fear? What did these people do to overcome their fear?

Still another way is to take a lighthearted attitude toward shadows. Being playful makes the shadow's mystery diminish—much like whistling a happy tune when you're scared.

Reflect on your own responses to fear and what you do to diminish fear. Bring that awareness to your work with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper.
- Equipment or supplies for a free play activity relating to shadows

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting, and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add an activity relating to shadows, such as the "[Shadow Play](#)" episode of *Peep and the Big Wide World*, available on YouTube.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time you meet will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child who uses a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to

"Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that no one needs to sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- A bright work lamp or flashlight

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- As shadows can be frightening for small children, anticipate that children may bring up a variety of fears. Helping children think and talk about shadows, their shapes, and how and why shadows occur can help children feel more at home with their shadow and the world of shadows. In general, be sensitive to children's feelings and help them talk about their fears. The article [Top 10 Toddler Fears](#) from the *Parents Magazine* website offers some additional tools for helping children talk about their fears and offering reassurance.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Today we are talking about shadows. Who has seen a shadow? Who knows what causes a shadow? When an object blocks the light, the light creates a dark area around the object. This dark area where the light can't reach is called a shadow. Who would like to see a shadow now?

Project your own shadow on a wall, using a lamp or flashlight. Draw out the children's feelings about shadows with questions, for example:

- What does your shadow look like?
- Does it look like mine?
- What does your shadow do?
- Can you play with it?

Gently draw out any fears by asking, in these words or your own:

When I was little, there was a tree outside my window that made big, weird shadows on my bedroom floor at night—and sometimes I was afraid of those shadows. I would hide under my pillow until I fell asleep! Are you afraid of a shadow? Are you afraid of other things? I'm afraid of grasshoppers, and I used to be afraid of cows. What do you do when you are scared?

Reinforce the fact that all people have fears and that sharing our fears together is one way to help overcome them. Say, in these words or your own:

Here at [name of congregation], we know that everyone has fears—both grown-ups and children do. Sharing our fears with one another can help us feel less afraid. Today we're going to play with our shadows, but first let's read a story about shadows.

Including All Participants

Consider holding circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:

- *Moonbear's Shadow* by Frank Asch, 2000. Moonbear tries to outwit his troublesome shadow in this beloved classic.
- *Whoo's There: A Bedtime Shadow Book* by Heather Zschock, 2005. Gentle rhymes about six nighttime creatures, including an owl, fireflies, and a raccoon. You can shine the beam of your own flashlight through the transparent "windows" to cast silhouettes on the wall as you read with your child—a fun and comforting way to end the day and experience a book together
- *I'm Not Scared* by Todd Parr, 2011. With his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity, Todd Parr explores the subject of all things scary and assures readers that all of us are afraid sometimes.
- *Not Afraid of Dogs* by Susanna Pitzer, illustrated by Larry Day, 2006. Daniel is the bravest boy of all! Daniel isn't afraid of spiders, or snakes, or even thunderstorms. And no matter what his sister says, he's *certainly not* afraid of dogs—he just doesn't *like* them.

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story.

When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: SHADOW PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- A bright light with a focused beam, such as a flashlight or desk or work light
- Variety of toys and shapes to cast shadows

- Paper and markers
- Optional: Tape
- Optional: Camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Watch [this YouTube video](#) on making shadow puppets with your hand. Practice making some hand shadow animals.
- Gather some interesting-shaped toys and some cardboard shapes of people, animals, and chalices.
- Choose an area of your meeting room that you can darken. Set up the light, and check to make sure that you can create good shadows.
- Optional: If the day is sunny enough for shadows, consider doing your shadow play outdoors.

Description of Activity

Children create shadows using different objects, including their own hands.

Introduce the activity by talking about what it feels like to be in a dark room, in these words or your own:

Let's talk for a minute about being in the dark. Sometimes I'm scared when I'm alone in the dark and when I see shadows that I don't recognize. Does anyone else find it a little scary? What can we do to make it not scary? We can sit together. We can find out more about shadows. Who remembers what makes a shadow? [When something blocks the light, the light creates a dark area—a shadow—behind the object] Are we ready to play with some shadows?

Invite the children to the darkened area of your meeting room. Create shadows by using a light against the wall. Invite the children to hold up different toys and shapes and to experiment with the shapes of the shadows.

Invite each child to come forward individually and hold their hand in front of the light to make a shadow hand. Outline it on white paper. (You may like to tape paper to the wall first.) Help the children write their names on their shadow pictures.

Return to the well-lit area. Have the children hold up the pictures of their shadow hands next to their actual hands. Point out how the shadow hands are different from their real hands. Optional: Take a picture of the children with their shadow hands.

Invite the children to help clean up by putting away the supplies. Place the shadow hands near the door for the children to take home.

Including All Participants

If any children have big fears about shadows or the dark, keep the discussion light and short. Include words of reassurance that they are safe at your congregation.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction. Display any posters you have made.
- A new finger play—What Is a Shadow?—appears in this session, in honor of today's theme. You can research additional circle games or songs connected to shadows, or make up your own shadow-related words to a common tune.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!

Clap, clap, clap!

What Is a Shadow?

Teach the children this traditional finger play in honor of today's theme:

If I walk, my shadow walks. [Make two fingers move in a walking motion]
If I run, my shadow runs. [Make the fingers move in a running motion]
And when I stand still, as you can see, [Hold the same fingers still]
My shadow stands beside of me. [Bring two fingers of the other hand to stand beside the first two fingers]
When I hop, my shadow hops. [Make the first two fingers hop]
When I jump, my shadow jumps. [Make the fingers jump]
And when I sit still, as you can see, [Make the fingers bend at the knuckles to sit]
My shadow sits beside of me. [Bring two fingers of the other hand to sit beside the first two fingers]

Lead more Circle Time songs and games, as time allows.

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we wonder about the mystery of our shadows, and we know that we can share our fears with one another.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

FAITH IN ACTION: REACHING OUT IN FRIENDSHIP (60 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Lined paper or stationery; plain drawing paper; pens or pencils; and markers, color pencils, or crayons
- Envelopes and stamps
- Optional: Globe or map
- Optional: Pictures of and information about recipients
- Optional: Digital camera and printer, or photos of children and families brought from home, and scissors and glue sticks

Preparation for Activity

- Decide to whom letters and drawings will be sent—for example, a Partner Church, other Unitarian Universalist congregations, UUs in the military, UU youth who have "bridged" and are living away from home. Plan how you will introduce the recipients group to your participants (child and adult) in a way that is accessible for all ages.
- In consultation with the director of religious education, determine a time and location for a gathering of Chalice Children families, or for the congregation at large. Make the sure location has sufficient tables, chairs, and other work spaces so everyone will have a place to write or draw.
- Email and/or mail invitations. Publicize the event in your congregation's newsletter, on its Facebook page, etc. Optional: Invite attendees to bring pictures of themselves to the event to send with their letters and drawings.
- Prepare a list of letter-writing prompts and copy it for each table. You might include:
 - The name of our congregation [or, church] is . . .
 - I'm writing to you because . . .
 - My favorite person at our congregation [or, church] is . . . because . . .
 - My favorite song to sing at congregation [or, church] is . . .
 - My favorite holiday is . . . because . . .
 - I believe . . .
 - I care about . . .

- My favorite thing we do at our congregation [or, church] is . . .
- Set up tables and chairs for the activity, making sure to have different heights and sizes to accommodate a multi-generational and otherwise diverse group. Set out letter-writing and drawing materials at each table.
- Optional: Gather pictures of and other information about the recipients of your letters and drawings to share with the group.
- Optional: Address envelopes in advance.

Description of Activity

The theme of Unit 4 is "We make friends." Being a member of this group (and being a Unitarian Universalist) means helping to make the group a friendly place for others. Writing letters and drawing pictures to send to Unitarian Universalists outside your congregation is a way to introduce the Chalice Children to the many potential UU friends in other parts of their city, state, or country.

Besides the letter-writing activity described below, there are many other ways to implement the Unit 4 Faith in Action project. Here are additional suggestions for connecting with other UUs:

- **Partner Church Program.** Does your congregation have a partnership with another UU congregation? If not, is there interest in starting one across national boundaries? Partnerships are already in place throughout Europe, Africa, India, and Asia. Visit the [UU Partner Church Council website](#) to learn more.
- **Military Ministry.** Does your congregation have members who serve, or whose family members serve, in the military? Are you connected to one of the armed services UU military chaplains? Are there any veterans in your congregation? Learn about congregational options for military ministry and ways young children can participate; see the new [Military Ministry Toolkit](#).
- **UU Pen Pals.** The [UU Pen Pal activity](#) in Session 14 of the children's Tapestry of Faith program [Wonderful Welcome](#) is designed for children in kindergarten or first grade or multigenerational groups, and can be adapted for preschoolers.
- **Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard.** For inspiration about a different form of collaboration and partnership, read about the children of the All Souls Church, Unitarian, in Washington, D.C., and the response of the Japanese children in Hiroshima in an article titled [Children's Gifts Redeemed "Legacy of Devastation"](#) (*UU World*,

April 2009) and in the [UUA International Office blog](#). You can also watch [a film](#) about this project.

Learn about the four-parts of a service activity ([identifying](#), [planning](#), [executing](#), and [reflecting](#)) in the Tapestry of Faith program [Sing to the Power](#). While this program is geared toward older children, you may find the structure for Faith in Action work helpful for working with younger children.

Welcome the participants. Introduce the group to whom you are reaching out in friendship.

Optional: Show where the group is located on the globe. Optional: Share the pictures and materials you've gathered.

Invite the guests and children to write letters and/or draw pictures to send to the group. Point out the materials and letter-writing prompts on each table. Encourage attendees to use the prompts as a guide but not to feel limited by these suggestions. Ask adults to help the children write a letter in addition to drawing a picture. A reader can interview a pre-reader and help them write their answers to complete the prompts.

Optional: Take and print pictures of the guests, which they can glue to their letters or pictures, or have them glue on the photos they brought from home. Distribute envelopes and have the children fold and insert their finished letters and drawings. If you have not addressed envelopes, ask for volunteers with neat handwriting to do it.

An important but often neglected aspect of a Faith in Action project is the opportunity to reflect together on the experience. With ten minutes left, ask everyone to help clean up and then gather briefly in a circle. Invite the children and families to share some thoughts about the gathering:

- Why is it important to know about other Unitarian Universalists in far-away places?
- Why is it a good idea to communicate with them?
- What did you learn about the people or group we are reaching out to?
- What do you want to know more about?

Say, in these words or your own:

Chalice Children come to [name of congregation] to make new friends, to see old friends, and to help to make our church [congregation] a friendly place for others. All kinds of people can be friends, even if they live far away from one another. Today we might have made some new friends—Unitarian Universalists who live in [another part of our city,

state, country]. It will be exciting to see if we hear back from them!

Optional: Close the gathering with one of the Chalice Children songs.

Including All Participants

Provide tables and chairs that are accessible to people of all ages, sizes, and abilities, and space for those using a wheelchair or walker.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Gathered here in the mystery of the hour. — from "Gathered Here," Hymn 389 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "My shadow." Sophia L. Fahs identifies play with one's shadow as one of 12 main types of experiences connected with natural religious development in young children. Playing with our shadow is an experience that awakens wonder and the thrill of discovery. Shadows also bring mystery into our world—but, darkness and shadows can be frightening sometimes. We learned that sharing our fears with friends can help us feel less afraid.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested in this session:

- *Moonbear's Shadow* by Frank Asch, 2000. Moonbear tries to outwit his troublesome shadow in this beloved classic.
- *Whoo's There: A Bedtime Shadow Book* by Heather Zschock, 2005. Gentle rhymes about six nighttime creatures, including an owl, fireflies, and a raccoon. You can shine the beam of your own flashlight through the transparent "windows" to cast silhouettes on the wall as you read with your child—a fun and comforting way to end the day and experience a book together.
- *I'm Not Scared* by Todd Parr, 2011. With his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity, Todd Parr explores the subject of all things

scary and assures readers that all of us are afraid sometimes.

- *Not Afraid of Dogs* by Susanna Pitzer, illustrated by Larry Day, 2006. Daniel is the bravest boy of all! Daniel isn't afraid of spiders, or snakes, or even thunderstorms. And no matter what his sister says, he's *certainly not* afraid of dogs—he just doesn't *like* them.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . playing with shadows on a sunny day. Can you keep the others from jumping on your shadow?

A Family Adventure. Take a walk in the late afternoon. Measure how long your shadows are!

A Family Discovery. This [YouTube video](#) offers simple instructions for making hand shadow animals.

Watch [Peep and the Big Wide World: Shadow Play](#) and have a conversation about shadows.

The article, "[Top 10 Toddler Fears.](#)" on the *Parents Magazine* website, suggests what you can do to help children through their insecurities and offers tips for building children's resilience to manage their fear.

A Family Ritual. Have everyone guess whether the groundhog will see its shadow on Groundhog Day. Then find out what happens.

FIND OUT MORE

Look over the [Top 10 Toddler Fears](#) on the *Parents Magazine* website. Toddlers exhibit many fears, and it can be tough to know how to reassure them of their safety. Dr. Ayelet Talmi, associate director of child development and infant health at The Children's Hospital in Denver, talks about the most common toddler fears and what you can do to help your children through their insecurities. She also offers tips on raising a child who is capable of managing fear.

Check out "[Be Not Afraid](#)," a UU sermon by Susan Maginn, on the UUA Worship Web.

SESSION 24: BLOCK SUNDAY

INTRODUCTION

We are building a new way. — from "Building a New Way," Hymn 1017 in Singing the Journey

This session's theme is "We are community." Children work cooperatively to build a neighborhood with blocks.

Preschoolers' social development can vary greatly. The youngest children may still engage in parallel play; four-year-olds may be learning to express their feelings; kindergarteners may be more willing to conform to goals and norms established by parents, teachers, congregational leaders, and society.

This session emphasizes both imaginative and cooperative play. Children share with and care for one another, to celebrate being in community together.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Explore ways to care and share through cooperative play
- Experience the Chalice Children group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- See themselves as cooperative and caring friends in a community
- Practice the skills needed to work cooperatively with others
- Connect the story they read in this session with living in community.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Building a Neighborhood	15

Activity 7: Circle Games 10

Closing 5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How do you live in community with others? How do you live a sharing and caring life? It can be as easy as a smile for lonely 12-year-old, or as difficult as a phone call to the family of an elderly neighbor who needs help. Living in community means being part of an interdependent web.

How do you live in the community of your congregation? You give to this community by sharing your time and talent as a teacher. How have you received from the community? Are you in a covenant group or small-group ministry? How being in the community of your congregation affected your life?

Bring this awareness of living in community to your session with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Items for a free play activity relating to community

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting, and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book.
- Add a free play activity relating to creating a community, such as a rug with streets on it, or a bucket of Legos and toy people.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time you meet will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child who uses a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that no one needs to sit on the floor.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- A bright work lamp or flashlight

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Today we are talking about community. A community is a place where people live, work, and play together. It can also be a group of people who come together for the same purpose, even if they don't live near one another. What are some communities that you are part of? [family, school, neighborhood, this congregation] What are some things that you might find in a community? It's important for a community to have things like heat, water, food, bathrooms. It's also important for the people in a

community to be good friends and to help one another. Today we will build a whole community out of blocks. But before we start, let's read a story about building a block community.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *When I Build with Blocks* by Niki Alling, 2012. Step into the block area of a pre-K/kindergarten classroom, through the eyes and imagination of a child. Each block structure included originated from ideas in actual pre-K and kindergarten classrooms.
 - *Changes, Changes* by Pat Hutchins, 1987. In this charming, wordless picture book, a little wooden couple are happy in their building-block house—until it catches fire. The solution? They transform the house into a fire engine! But then there's so much water that they have to build a boat.
 - *Block City* by Robert Louis Stevenson, illustrated by Daniel Kirk, 2005. Renowned illustrator Daniel Kirk has joined his "blocks"—in this case, bright colors, bold shapes, and retro style—with Robert Louis Stevenson's classic poem to construct a nostalgic yet exuberant celebration of fun and imagination. It is a joyous look at playtime that will encourage toddlers to build dreams all their own!
 - *Be My Neighbor* by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko, 2006. Around the world, children live in community with others, sharing homes, resources, and experiences with their neighbors.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: BUILDING A NEIGHBORHOOD (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Wooden building blocks
- Toy people, animals, cars, and other items for the neighborhood
- Blue painter's tape
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Clear a space or spaces large enough for children to build cooperatively.
- Set out the blocks and other toy items. Note: If you don't have access to blocks, you can use another type of manipulative building toy, such as Legos, Tinker Toys, or Lincoln Logs.
- Blue painter's tape is ideal for creating roads because it won't leave adhesive on the floor or carpet. If you must use a different product, test it ahead of time to make sure it doesn't damage your floor or carpet.
- Help preschoolers experience themselves as cooperative and caring friends. Be ready to talk about choices, feelings, and the consequences of behavior. By hearing esteem-building messages, children experience themselves as cooperative and caring. Be prepared to help the children speak and listen respectfully to one another. Plan to model how to ask for something with words such as "Please," "Thank you," and "May I?" Be ready to help the children verbalize their feelings and to listen and hear what is being said to them.

Description of Activity

Children use blocks to create a neighborhood.

Introduce the activity, in these words or your own:

Now we are going to work together to build a community out of blocks! What are some ways

that we can use our best manners when we build with blocks together? [Say please and thank you, share the blocks.] If two of you reach for the same block, you can ask, "May I use this block?" Let's all be good, caring friends as we build our block neighborhood together.

Invite the children to the block area. Say, in these words or your own:

Let's use these blocks to make a community together! First we'll need some roads and houses.

Tear off strips of blue painter's tape for making roads, and encourage the children to build houses with the blocks. Say, in these words or your own:

There are many ways to create a neighborhood. Does every house have a road near it? Is there a church [congregation] like ours? Is there a school, or a grocery store? What other places do we need for our neighborhood?

As the children play together, model how to use manners as needed, and reinforce any caring and sharing behaviors you see.

Encourage the children in imaginative play. Prompt with questions such as:

- Can I come and visit you? Would you like to come and visit me?
- Can we build a road to go under this table?
- Do we need people, animals, cars in our neighborhood?

Optional: Take a picture of the children and their block community.

Invite the children to help clean up by peeling the tape from the rug and putting away blocks and toys.

Including All Participants

If any children are having trouble engaging in cooperative play, set them up with materials to build on a table. As the activity progresses, find a way to connect their building to the "neighborhood."

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction. Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend:

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.

We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],

How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Taking It Home handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we care for our community by working and playing nicely together.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

We are building a new way. — from "Building a New Way," Hymn 1017 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "We are a community." We built a neighborhood together out of blocks, using our sharing and caring skills and working cooperatively.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested for this session:

- *When I Build with Blocks* by Niki Alling, 2012. Step into the block area of a pre-K/kindergarten classroom, through the eyes and imagination of a child. Each block structure included originated from ideas in actual pre-K and kindergarten classrooms.
- *Changes, Changes* by Pat Hutchins, 1987. In this charming, wordless picture book, a little wooden couple are happy in their building-block house—until it catches fire. The solution? They transform the house into a fire engine! But then

there's so much water that they have to build a boat . . .

- *Block City* by Robert Louis Stevenson, illustrated by Daniel Kirk, 2005. Renowned illustrator Daniel Kirk has joined his "blocks"—in this case, bright colors, bold shapes, and retro style—with Robert Louis Stevenson's classic poem to construct a nostalgic yet exuberant celebration of fun and imagination. It is a joyous look at playtime that will encourage toddlers to build dreams all their own!
- *Be My Neighbor* by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko, 2006. Around the world, children live in community with others, sharing homes, resources, and experiences with their neighbors.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . recreating your own neighborhood with blocks or other building toys. (Your replica need not be exact!)

A Family Adventure. Visit a construction site. Observe the machines at work. What role will the new building play in your neighborhood?

A Family Discovery. Explore the blog post "[44 Block Activities for Preschoolers](#)" by Jamie Reimer (posted March 28, 2014) at the Hands on As We Grow website.

A Family Game. Recite "This Is the House that Jack Built" together, faster and faster! You can find the words [here](#).

FIND OUT MORE

Explore [Toy Blocks and Construction Toys: A Guide for the Science-Minded](#), by Gwen Dewar, on the Parenting Science website.

Consider the [Stages of Block Development](#) described by Sharon MacDonald.

Read "[The Work That Is Play](#)," a UU sermon preached by Jeff Merkel, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fairbanks, Alaska, January 8, 2008.

SESSION 25: TEDDY BEAR MONTH — FRIENDSHIP

INTRODUCTION

When I am lonely, will you be my friend? — from "When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in Singing the Journey

The theme of this unit, and this session in particular, is that the Chalice Children group (and our congregation) is a place to make friends and to be a friend, and that being a member of this group means helping to make it a friendly place for others. The sessions of Teddy Bear Month (Sessions 25, 26, 27, and 28) use a third party—teddy bears—to introduce in a gentle, non-threatening way some potentially scary concepts including being lost and being sick.

Remember that preschool children vary greatly in their social development. The youngest children may still engage in parallel play; four year olds may be learning to express their feelings; kindergarteners may be more willing to conform to the goals and norms established by parents, teachers, church leaders, and society.

Note: Before this session, ask families to have their children bring a favorite stuffed bear or another animal to each session in this unit. See Leader Resource 1, Teddy Bear Month Invitation.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn how to make the Chalice Children group feel like a friendly place
- Experience caring and sharing as a way of affirming themselves and others
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Practice the skills involved in making friends with others
- Feel a sense of competence by teaching the bears the Chalice Children songs and games.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity Minutes

Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Bear Beds	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. What are some ways that you experience friendship? Do you have friends who live far away? How do you make new friends? How do you keep your old friends?

Reflect on these words attributed to C. Raymond Beran:

Friends are people with whom you dare to be yourself. Your soul can be naked with them. They ask you to put on nothing, only to be what you are. They do not want you to be better or worse. When you are with them, you feel as a prisoner feels who has been declared innocent. You do not have to be on your guard. You can say what you think, as long as it is genuinely you.

Friends understand those contradictions in your nature that lead others to misjudge you. With them you breathe freely. You can avow your little vanities and envies and hates and vicious sparks, your meannesses and absurdities, and in opening them up to friends, they are lost, dissolved on the white ocean of their loyalty. They understand.

You do not have to be careful. You can abuse them, neglect them, tolerate them. Best of all, you can keep still with them. It makes no matter. They like you. They are like fire that purges to the bone. They understand. You can weep with them, sing with them, laugh with them, pray with them. Through it all—and underneath—they see, know, and love you. A friend? What is a friend? Just one, I repeat, with whom you dare to be yourself. (Published in *Bits & Pieces*, September 19, 1991.)

Keep these thoughts with you when you are with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Items for an activity relating to Teddy Bear Month

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting, and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add a free play activity relating to Teddy Bear Month, such as a special tea party table for visiting bears, or a basket of doll clothes for bears to play dress-up.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You can change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and

clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Teddy Bear Month Invitation](#) (included in this document) , one copy for each child
- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Extra stuffed animals, for those who did not bring one
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- A week or more before this session, adapt Leader Resource 1, Teddy Bear Month Invitation and send to the families to tell them when their child should bring a favorite bear or stuffed animal to Chalice Children.
- Gather some stuffed animals to have on hand for any child who doesn't bring one.
- Post the chalice-lighting words near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to get their teddy bear or to select one from the collection of extras. Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce the theme of Teddy Bear Month in these words or your own:

As you can see, today we have some special guests—our teddy bears! The bears are invited for the next three weeks to help us learn about making friends and being friends. Our congregation is one place that we can make friends—and being a member of this group means helping to make it a friendly place for others.

Engage the children in talking about the teddy bear they brought (or a favorite that they have at home) by asking questions, such as:

- What is your teddy bear's name?
- Do you take your teddy bear to bed with you?
- Where does your teddy bear stay when you are away?

Introduce the idea of making friends by saying, in these words or your own:

Now that we have met the bears, would they like to meet each other? How can you help your bear make friends with another bear? What are some things your bear could do or say? [Elicit that the bear could be friendly, offer to share something, ask how the other bear is doing, invite the other bear to do something fun, etc.]

Have two children role-play a friendly interaction between two bears. Conclude by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we will care for our bears by making beds for them to nap in here at church [our congregation]. But first, let's read a story about teddy bears.

Including All Participants

You can hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Patchwork Helps a Friend* by Gail Greiner, illustrated by Jacqueline Schmidt, 2013.

Patchwork, a colorfully quilted stuffed bear, sets forth on a quirky journey and enlists the help of his wildly eclectic bunch of buddies—including a great blue whale, a mama-loving llama, and a gracious narwhal—to help him repair his best pal, a raggedy bear named Fred.

- *Bear Hug* by Kathleen and Michael Hague, 2013. A real bear hug is one that's straight from the heart. This charming picture book is a celebration of the love between children and their teddy bears.
 - *Who Wants an Old Teddy Bear?* by Ginnie Hoffman, 2003. Andy is hoping for a toy rocket ship for his birthday. When Grandma sends a teddy bear instead, he is unhappy and disappointed. But a nightmare adventure turns Andy and the teddy bear, Arthur, into fast friends.
 - *Bear's New Friend* by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman, 2009. Eager to play in the fall leaves, Bear heads out to find his friend, Mouse, but is startled by the clatter in a tree. Determined to find out who is making all the noise, Bear goes on a short journey, picking up all of his friends along the way. The source of the clatter is revealed to be a bashful owl, whom Bear declares is their new friend!
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story.

When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: BEAR BEDS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Bear-sized boxes, one for each child
- Felt
- Materials to decorate boxes, such as color markers, stickers, cloth scraps, glue sticks
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Gather some stuffed animals to have on hand for any child who has not brought one.
- Collect or purchase boxes for the bear beds. Shoeboxes should work. Have some larger boxes on hand in case some children bring larger stuffed animals.
- Purchase felt. Cut into squares to make "blankets" for bears.
- Set up the activity area with boxes and the materials for decorating the beds.

Description of Activity

Children create a bed for their teddy bear.

Invite the children to the activity table. Say that they are going to make a bed for their teddy bear. You might say:

Your bear is your friend. You are going to make a cozy bed for your friend. Won't it be nice for your bear to take a nap?

Point out the variety of materials to glue or stick to their bed, and the markers for drawing on their bed.

Give each child a felt square "blanket" to put in their beds. Invite them to tuck their bears in bed for a nap.

Optional: Take a picture of the children with their bear beds.

Engage the children to help clean up by putting away the supplies and wiping the table with moistened paper towels.

Including All Participants

If any children have fine motor challenges, suggest that children work in pairs to help each other with gluing and decorating.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Teddy Grahams

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor, with the teddy bears.

Play the games and sing the songs. Encourage the children to teach the Chalice Children songs and games to the bears. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle

while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

End the Circle Games with this traditional chant, which children can do with their teddy bears. Start by standing in a circle, and lead the children in the actions noted after each line:

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around. [children and bears swirl around]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground. [children and bears touch the floor]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, show your shoe. [children and bears show their shoes]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, I love you [children and bears run around, then return to the circle]

Repeat the chant faster and faster, until all are tired.

Put the bears back in their beds for a nap and (optional) serve Teddy Grahams as a snack while the bears sleep.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position. If you plan to serve a snack and any children in the group have wheat allergies, find a gluten-free alternative to the Teddy Grahams.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Decide whether you will invite children to leave their bears and bear beds in the meeting space or ask families to take bears and bear beds home between the Teddy Bear month sessions. You may wish to designate a place in the meeting space where the children may safely leave their bear beds and/or bears until the next time the group meets.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: [Name of congregation] is a place for making and being friends.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

*When I am lonely, will you be my friend? —
"When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in Singing
the Journey*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . The theme of this unit, and this session in particular, is that our congregation is a place for making friends and being a friend, and that being a member of this group means helping to make it a friendly place for others.

Teddy Bear Month uses a third party—teddy bears—to introduce some potentially scary situations (being lost, being sick) in a nonthreatening way. Please have your child bring a teddy bear or other favorite stuffed animal to each session in Teddy Bear Month: [add dates].

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested in this session:

- *Patchwork Helps a Friend* by Gail Greiner, illustrated by Jacqueline Schmidt, 2013. Patchwork, a colorfully quilted stuffed bear, sets forth on a quirky journey and enlists the help of his wildly eclectic bunch of buddies—including a great blue whale, a mama-loving llama, and a gracious narwhal—to help him repair his best pal, a raggedy bear named Fred.
- *Bear Hug* by Kathleen and Michael Hague, 2013. A real bear hug is one that's straight from the heart. This charming picture book is a celebration of the love between children and their teddy bears.
- *Who Wants an Old Teddy Bear?* by Ginnie Hoffman, 2003. Andy is hoping for a toy rocket ship for his birthday. When Grandma sends a teddy bear instead, he is unhappy and disappointed. But a nightmare adventure turns Andy and the teddy bear, Arthur, into fast friends.
- *Bear's New Friend* by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman, 2009. Eager to play in the fall leaves, Bear heads out to find his friend, Mouse, but is startled by the clatter in a tree. Determined to find out who is making all the noise, Bear goes on a short journey, picking up all of his friends on the way. The source of the clatter is revealed to be a quite bashful owl, whom Bear declares is their *new friend!*

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Invite your child's favorite stuffed bear to join the family at dinner. Set a place for the bear. Model hospitality: Ask the bear its preferences and pretend to serve food and beverages. After dinner, thank the bear for joining you!

A Family Adventure. Invite a new friend—and their bear!—from your congregation to your house for a playdate.

A Family Ritual. Invite the teddy bear to join you as you light a chalice together. Say chalice-lighting words, such as, "We light this chalice for the warmth of love and friendship, the light of truth, and the energy of action."

LEADER RESOURCE 1: TEDDY BEAR MONTH INVITATION

Send this letter to the Chalice Children families before Session 25.

Dear Chalice Children families:

For the next four sessions, the Chalice Children are celebrating Teddy Bear Month! Children are invited to bring a small stuffed bear or other favorite cuddly stuffed animal each Sunday. Please help them to remember. (But don't worry if they forget—we'll have extras on hand.)

The sessions are:

[Date]: Teddy Bear Month — Friendship — making and keeping friends

[Date]: Teddy Bear Month — Sick! — helping others feel better

[Date]: Teddy Bear Month: Lost — feelings of fear

[Date]: Teddy Bear Party — celebrating the bears

See you there!

Your leaders,

[Names]

FIND OUT MORE

Did you know that teddy bears are named for President Theodore Roosevelt? Learn the [Real Teddy Bear Story](#).

Read "[Friendship as a Calling](#)," a sermon preached by Barbara F. Meyers at Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Fremont, CA, November 30, 2008.

SESSION 26: TEDDY BEAR MONTH — SICK!

INTRODUCTION

*Will you be there for me, comfort me tenderly?
— from "When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in
Singing the Journey*

The theme of this session is "Caring for one another when we feel sick." Teddy Bear Month uses a third party, teddy bears, to gently introduce potentially scary concepts, such as being sick.

Preschool children vary greatly in their social development. The youngest children may still engage in parallel play; four-year-olds may be learning to express their feelings; kindergarteners may be more willing to conform to the goals and norms established by parents, teachers, our congregation, and society.

Before the session, remind families to have their children bring a favorite bear or stuffed animal (see Session 25, Leader Resource 1). If children made bear beds (Session 25), contact parents whose child missed that session but may be attending today. Suggest they help their child make a bear bed at home to bring with them. You can send parents the instructions from Session 25, Activity 5, Bear Beds.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn how to make the Chalice Children group feel like a caring place
- Experience caring as a way of affirming themselves and others
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Feel empowered to care for others
- Practice the skills of helping someone who is sick to feel better.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
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Activity 1: Free Play	15
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Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
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Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Bear Blankets	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How do you like to be cared for when you are ill? Do you prefer to be alone, or do you wish for contact? What are your go-to comfort foods? How does it feel when someone reaches out to you in a caring way?

Some congregations have a "Prayer Shawl Ministry" or "Blanket Ministry," in which a person who is ill is given a homemade shawl or blanket as a gift to help them remember that they are loved. What would it feel like to receive such a gift?

Keep this awareness with you during your time with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Items for free play activity relating to Teddy Bear Month

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting, and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add a free play activity relating to Teddy Bear Month, such as a special tea party table for visiting bears, or a basket of doll clothes for bears to play dress-up.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You can change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or

with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Extra stuffed animals for those who did not bring one
- Bear beds made by children (Session 25, Activity 5, Bear Beds) and extra boxes to make bear beds (e.g., shoeboxes)
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Before the session, remind families for children to bring their bear and the bear bed from the last session (see Session 25, Leader Resource 1). For children who did not attend the last session, suggest that parents help the child make a bear bed from a shoebox, and bring it with their teddy bear or another favorite stuffed animal today.
- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to get their teddy bears and bear beds or to select a stuffed animal from the collection of extras. Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Have the children introduce (or re-introduce) their teddy bears. Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Last time we met, we talked about helping our teddy bears make friends. Today we will talk about how to take care of our bears when they are sick.

Let's pretend that our bears don't feel well. What would we do for them? [elicit ways to care for a sick person, such as bringing them a drink or a blanket, reading a story to them, getting a cool cloth for their forehead, asking what they need] I think our bears look sleepy. Letting a sick bear sleep is a great way to help take care of them. While they are sleeping, we will read a story and then decorate blankets for our bears to sleep under. [have children put the bears in their beds]

Including All Participants

You can hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Corduroy* by Don Freeman, 1976. A slightly dusty teddy bear is fixed up and finds a new home.
 - *Teddybears and the Cold Cure* by Susanna Gretz and Alison Sage, 1998. When William's cold lingers too long and his demands for attention increase, the other bears work a miraculous cure.
 - *The Best-Loved Bear* by Diana Noonan, illustrated by Elizabeth Fuller, 1994. All the children in Tim's class are taking their teddy bears to school to find out which one is the best loved. Tim feels embarrassed. What will everybody think of his poor old battered teddy?
 - *Bear Feels Sick* by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman, 2007. Autumn has come to the woods, and Bear doesn't feel well. He snuffles and sneezes. He cannot sleep. He

aches all over. Worst of all, he's feeling too poorly to play with his friends.

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: BEAR BLANKETS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Felt or fabric squares, one for each child
- Items to glue on the blankets for decoration, and glue in squeezable bottles
- Trays to hold decoration items
- Moistened paper towels
- Optional: A shawl or blanket from your congregation's Prayer Shawl Ministry or Blanket Ministry
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Collect or purchase the felt or fabric, and cut it into bear blanket-sized pieces. (Note: Session 25, Activity 5, Bear Beds also called for felt and blankets. Today, you can have the children decorate the blankets they used in Session 25; these may already be in the bear beds they made.)
- Gather items and supplies to decorate the blankets—cloth scraps, ribbons, buttons, bows, and bits of lace; and glue. Set these on trays for children to share.
- Make sure you have extra stuffed animals and extra boxes for bear beds (e.g., shoeboxes) for children who do not have their own.

- Optional: If your congregation has a Prayer Shawl Ministry or Blanket Ministry, invite a participant to join the children for this activity and talk about how they make or provide warm, comforting wraps for people who are sick.

Description of Activity

Children create a blanket for their "sick" teddy bear.

Invite the children to bring the bears in their beds to the activity table. Say, in these words or your own:

Let's pretend that our teddy bear friends are sick. We've already put them in bed. Now let's make a nice, soft blanket for our bears. This will help our teddy bears feel warm and loved. Maybe they'll start to feel better!

Show them the materials available. Invite them to decorate a blanket for their bear. As the children work on their blankets, engage them in a conversation about feeling sick. Ask, for example:

- What are some things that make you feel better when you're sick?
- Do you like to be in your own bed when you're sick, or somewhere else?
- Do you have a special blanket that makes you feel better when you're sick?

Optional: Show them a shawl or blanket from your congregation's Prayer Shawl or Blanket Ministry. Have someone from that group talk briefly with the children about what they do, or, describe the group yourself, as people who knit shawls or blankets for folks in your congregation who are sick or sad or otherwise having a hard time. Say that a gift of a warm blanket can be a good way to let a sick person know you are their friend.

Invite the children to tuck their finished blankets around their teddy bears.

Optional: Photograph the children with their bears, beds, and blankets.

Engage the children to help clean up. They can sort and put away the supplies or wipe glue from the table with moistened paper towels.

Including All Participants

If any children have fine motor challenges, suggest that children work in pairs and help each other glue.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Box of adhesive bandages
- Optional: Teddy Grahams

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor, with the teddy bears.

Play the games and sing the songs. Encourage the children to teach the bears the Chalice Children songs and games. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle

while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend:

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

End the Circle Games with this traditional chant, which children can do with their teddy bears. Start by standing in a circle, and lead the children in the actions noted after each line:

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around. [children and bears swirl around]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground. [children and bears touch the floor]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, show your shoe. [children and bears show their shoes]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, I love you! [children and bears run around, then return to the circle]

Repeat the chant faster and faster, until all are tired.

Ask if anyone would like to put a bandage on their bear to help the bear get better. Distribute the adhesive bandages and help children unwrap them. Have them return the bears to their beds for a nap. Optional: Serve a snack of Teddy Grahams while the bears sleep.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position. If you plan to serve a snack and any children in the group have wheat allergies, find a gluten-free alternative to the Teddy Grahams.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice

- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we care for one another when we feel sick.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

*Will you be there for me, comfort me tenderly?
 — from "When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in
 Singing the Journey*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "Caring for one another when we feel sick." Teddy Bear Month uses a third party—teddy bears—to introduce some potentially scary situations in a nonthreatening way. Please have your child bring a teddy bear or other favorite stuffed animal to each of the remaining sessions in Teddy Bear Month: [dates].

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested in this session:

- *Corduroy* by Don Freeman, 1976. A slightly dusty teddy bear is fixed up and finds a new home.
- *Teddybears and the Cold Cure* by Susanna Gretz and Alison Sage, 1998. When William's cold lingers too long and his demands for attention increase, the other teddy bears work a miraculous cure.
- *The Best-Loved Bear* by Diana Noonan, illustrated by Elizabeth Fuller, 1994. All the children in Tim's class are taking their teddy bears to school to find out which one is the best loved. Tim feels embarrassed. What will everybody think of his poor old battered teddy?
- *Bear Feels Sick* by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman, 2007. Autumn has come to the woods, and Bear doesn't feel well. He snuffles and sneezes. He cannot sleep. He aches all over. Worst of all, he's feeling too poorly to play with his friends.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. What everyone in the family can do to help, when a parent or caregiver is sick? Engage children to list of ways to help and discuss what it means to care for others. Draw pictures of ways that children can care for a family member or a friend who is sick.

A Family Discovery. [Learn more](#) about Prayer Shawl Ministry and Blanket Ministry. If your congregation does not have an activity like this, perhaps another community organization or service agency near you does. See what you can find out. Perhaps there is a way for you and your child to participate or observe.

A Family Ritual. Invite the teddy bear to join you as you light a chalice together. Say chalice-lighting words, such as, "We light this chalice for the warmth of love and friendship, the light of truth, and the energy of action."

FIND OUT MORE

Learn about the origins of [Prayer Shawl Ministry](#), which was created in 1998 by Janet Severi Bristow and Victoria Galo, two graduates of the 1997 Women's Leadership Institute at The Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. This ministry combines the love of knitting or crocheting and a spiritual practice of reaching out to those in need of comfort and solace, as well as in celebration and joy. Blessings are prayed into every stitch.

Read two other stories of Shawl Ministry, one from the [Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor](#), Maine, and one about [Peace Shawls for Iraqi women](#), created by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Southern Maryland.

SESSION 27: TEDDY BEAR MONTH — LOST!

INTRODUCTION

When I am frightened, will you reassure me? — from "When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in Singing the Journey

The theme of this session is "Sharing our fears with friends makes us feel less afraid." Activities and stories demonstrate that fear is a normal, natural feeling everyone shares. Using a third party—teddy bears—helps the children talk in a nonthreatening way about how it feels to be lost and scared.

Remember that preschool children vary greatly in their social development. The youngest children may still engage in parallel play; four year olds may be learning to express their feelings; kindergarteners may be more willing to conform to the goals and norms established by parents, teachers, church leaders, and society.

Note: Before this session, ask families to have their children bring a favorite stuffed bear or another animal to each session in this unit. See Session 25, Leader Resource 1, Teddy Bear Month Invitation.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn behaviors they can use to make the Chalice Children group a caring place
- Know that the Chalice Children group and the larger congregation is a safe place to share their fears
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience comfort as they share with the group their fears of and feelings about being lost
- Understand that fear is a feeling everyone shares and that it helps to talk about it.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
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Activity 1: Free Play	15
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Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
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Activity 3: Circle Time	5
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Activity 4: Story	5
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Activity 5: Bear Hide and Seek	15
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Activity 6: Circle Games	10
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Closing	5
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SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Being lost is a scary feeling, whether you are physically lost or you feel emotionally lost. How have you felt lost in your life?

Despair is my private pain . . . — from "The Legacy of Caring," Reading 666, by Thandeka, in *Singing the Living Tradition*

Fear is a feeling we all share. Yet, Unitarian Universalists may not engage with feelings of suffering or being lost as much as we may need to. How would our community be different if we acknowledged over and over that each of us is brokenhearted? Would we be gentler with one another? More forgiving?

Bring to mind the faces of your community and imagine each person's private pain. Hold them in your heart and wish them peace. Bring that awareness to your session with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Items for an activity relating to Teddy Bear Month

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting, and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add a free play activity relating to Teddy Bear Month, such as a special tea party table for visiting bears, or a basket of doll clothes for bears to play dress-up.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You can change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and

turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Extra stuffed animals for those who did not bring one
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Before this session, send a reminder to families for children to bring their bear (refer to Session 25, Leader Resource 1).
- Gather some stuffed animals to have on hand for any child who doesn't bring one.
- Today's topic is likely to remind children of their fear of being lost or left alone. Using the bears gives children a safe way to express these fears. It also allows them to comfort the bear in ways they would like to be comforted. Prepare for this activity by planning to use a calm voice, to hold the children's hands, and to keep your expressions (verbal and nonverbal) calm, supportive, and loving. Prepare to reinforce the fact that we all have fears and that sharing our fears with our friends can help us feel less afraid.
- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to get their teddy bear or to select one from the collection of extras. Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Ask the children to introduce (or re-introduce) their teddy bears. Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Let's pretend that our bears got lost. Put your bear behind you. Oh, no! Bear is lost! Where is Bear? We look here [look to the left], we look there [look to the right], we look all over, but we can't find Bear anywhere. Wait! Bear is right here! [Have children "find" their bears behind them] Uh-oh. Bear looks scared. What are some things we could we do for Bear? [Elicit ideas from the children] We could hold Bear's hand so Bear isn't scared any more, we could give Bear a hug and tell Bear it's all right now, we could say that it's so good to see Bear again! Later we are going to play a hiding game with our bears, but first let's read a story about being lost.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *This Is the Bear and the Scary Night* by Sarah Hayes, illustrated by Helen Craig, 1992. The story of a stuffed bear who is accidentally left behind at the park, told in simple cumulative verse.
 - *Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers, 2011. What is a boy to do when a lost penguin shows up at his door?
 - *I Want My Hat Back* by Jon Klassen, 2011. The bear's hat is gone, and he wants it

back. Patiently and politely, he asks the animals he comes across, one by one, whether they have seen it.

- *The Bear's Song* by Benjamin Chaud, 2013. Papa Bear is searching for Little Bear, who has escaped the den. Little Bear is following a bee, because where there are bees, there is honey!
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: BEAR HIDE AND SEEK (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Extra stuffed animals for children who do not bring one
- Large blanket or cardboard box, big enough to cover or contain all the children
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Choose an open area with enough potential places to hide all of the children's bears.

Description of Activity

Children play hide and seek by looking for their teddy bears.

Invite the children to the area you've chosen for hide and seek. Have the children hide under the blanket or in the box while you and your co-leader hide the bears around the room. When the bears are all hidden, have the children look for the bears. If the children seem to have trouble finding a bear, you can offer hints, such as "Warmer!" or "Colder!" to indicate if they're getting closer to a bear or moving farther away from one, respectively.

When all the bears are found, invite children to return the bears to their owners.

After playing the game a few times, have the children put their bears in the box or under the blanket and then hide somewhere in the room. Have the bears then "look" for the children with as much improvised drama as possible!

Optional: Engage the children to talk about how they felt during the game:

- When you couldn't find your bear, how did that make you feel?
- What do you think the bears were feeling as they waited to be found?
- Did it help to know that your friends couldn't find their bears either? You might say:

Sometimes when we're worried or scared about something, it can help to share our feelings with our friends. Knowing that our friends are here to help us makes us feel that we are not alone.

Invite the children to help clean up by straightening areas that got messed up during the game, folding the blanket, or pushing the box into a corner. You could post a sign on the door or the box asking someone to take the box home for play or recycling.

Including All Participants

If any children have mobility issues, make sure that they can fit in the box or under the blanket and that there are accessible places for them to hide with the other children.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Teddy Grahams

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- If you're not familiar with "Going on a Bear Hunt," the chant introduced below, see [this video](#) on YouTube.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor, with the teddy bears.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places.
Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in
turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Going on a Bear Hunt!

Have the children repeat each line after you. Keep the beat by slapping alternate hands on your thighs. Chant and do the motions as dramatically as possible:

Going on a bear hunt. [slap hands rhythmically on thighs]
I'm not afraid. [point thumb at your chest]
Got my friends— [point to the whole circle]
What's that over there? [shade eyes, look around]
It's a tall, tall tree. [look up the tree]
Guess we'd better climb it. [put palms out, shrug shoulders]
Climb, climb, climb. [make climbing motions]
What do you see? [shade eyes, look around]
It's some tall, tall grass. [raise hand to show how tall]
Guess we better go see. [put palms out, shrug shoulders]
Climb, climb, climb. [make climbing down motions]
Walk over to it. [make the sound of walking by slapping hands on thighs]
Here's the tall, tall grass. [raise hand to show how tall]

Gotta go through it! [put palms out, shrug shoulders]
Swish, swish, swish. [make gesture of parting grass]
Going on a bear hunt. [slap hands rhythmically on thighs]
I'm not afraid. [point thumb at your chest]
Got my friends— [point to the whole circle]
What's that over there? [shade eyes, look around]
It's some ishy, squishy mud. [grimace and wiggle fingers]
Gotta go through it! [put palms out, shrug shoulders]
Squish, squish, squish. [grimace and wiggle fingers]
Going on a bear hunt. [slap hands rhythmically on thighs]
I'm not afraid. [point thumb at chest]
Got my friends— [point to the whole circle]
What's that over there? [shade eyes, look around]
It's a deep, deep river. [make snaking motion with hands]
Gotta swim across it! [put palms out, shrug shoulders]
Chh, chh, chh. [make swimming motions]
Going on a bear hunt. [slap hands rhythmically on thighs]
What's that over there? [shade eyes, look around]
It's a deep, dark cave. [make big eyes, hang head]
Should we go in? [put palms out, shrug shoulders]
I'm not afraid. [point thumb to chest]
Got my friends. [point to the whole circle]
Let's creep on in. [make crawling motions]
Can't see anything. [shade eyes with hand]
What do I feel? [hold out hand in front of you]
Soft and furry . . . [keep feeling]
Two round ears . . . [feel the ears]
And a cold, wet nose . . . [feel the nose]
And sharp, pointy teeth? [feel a tooth]
"GRRRRR!!!" [growl!]
It's a bear! [scream!]

Perform the next lines quickly:

Run out of the cave. [slap thighs]
Swim across the river. [make snake motion with hands]
Here comes the mud! [grimace and wiggle fingers]
Run some more, [slap thighs]
Through the tall grass. [part grass with your hands]
Run home and lock the door! [twist the lock]

Perform the next lines slowly:

Went on a bear hunt. [slap thighs]
I wasn't afraid. [point thumb to chest]
Had my friends. [point to the whole circle]
Now, time for a rest! [sigh deeply and drop to the floor]

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

End the Circle Games with this traditional chant. Invite children to pair up with their teddy bears. Start by standing in a circle. Lead the children in the actions noted after each line:

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around. [Children and bears swirl around]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground. [Children and bears touch the floor]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, show your shoe. [Children and bears show their shoes]
Teddy bear, teddy bear, I love you! [Children and bears run around, then return to the circle]

Repeat the change faster and faster, until all are tired out.

Optional: Serve Teddy Grahams as a snack for the children and their bears.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position. If you plan to serve the snack and there are children in the group with wheat allergies, find a gluten-free alternative to the Teddy Grahams.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: [Name of congregation] is a place where we can share our fears and help one another.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

*When I am frightened, will you reassure me? —
from "When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in
Singing the Journey*

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . The session theme is "Sharing our fears with friends makes us feel less afraid." Using a third party—teddy bears—helps the children talk about some potentially scary situations (being lost, being sick) in a nonthreatening way. Please have your child bring their teddy bear or other favorite stuffed animal to the next session, [date], when we celebrate our last day of Teddy Bear Month with a party!

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested in this session:

- *This Is the Bear and the Scary Night* by Sarah Hayes, illustrated by Helen Craig, 1992. The story of a stuffed bear who is accidentally left behind at a park, told in simple cumulative verse.
- *Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers, 2011. What is a boy to do when a lost penguin shows up at his door?
- *I Want My Hat Back* by Jon Klassen, 2011. The bear's hat is gone, and he wants it back. Patiently and politely, he asks the animals he comes across, one by one, whether they have seen it.
- *The Bear's Song* by Benjamin Chaud, 2013. Papa Bear is searching for Little Bear, who has escaped the den. Little Bear is following a bee, because where there are bees, there is honey!

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . playing a losing and finding game with the bear. Say, "Let's pretend that Bear got lost." Hide the bear behind you. Say, "Oh, no! Bear is lost! Where is Bear? We look to the left, we look to the right, we look up, we look down, we look all over, but we can't find Bear anywhere!" Pantomime looking for the bear, then reach behind you. Say, "Wait! Bear is right here!" Retrieve the bear. Say, "Uh-oh. Bear looks scared. What should we do for Bear? Would you hold Bear's hand so Bear isn't scared anymore? Would you give Bear a hug and tell Bear that everything is all right? It's so good to see you again, Bear!"

A Family Discovery. Watch the YouTube video "[Teigan Gets Lost](#)" for gentle suggestions on what children should do if they get lost. Part I shows six-year-old Teigan getting separated from her mum in a grocery store. Part II shows a police officer talking with children about "safer strangers" and "safer buildings."

Parents, visit "[Helping Your Child](#)" on the Kid's Health website for suggestions on how to deal with some typical fears that children have.

A Family Game. Play "Going on a Bear Hunt" ([this YouTube video](#)). Or play [Hide-and-Seek with Clifford the Big Red Dog](#) on the PBS Kids Website.

A Family Ritual. Invite the teddy bear to join you as you light a chalice together before dinnertime. Say chalice-lighting words, such as, "We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action."

FIND OUT MORE

Watch the YouTube video "[Teigan Gets Lost](#)" for gentle (child-appropriate) suggestions on what children should do if they get lost. Part I shows six-year-old Teigan getting separated from her mother in a grocery store. Part II shows a female police officer talking with children about "safer strangers" and "safer buildings." Produced by [Child's Eye Media](#).

Visit "[Helping Your Child](#)" on the Kid's Health website for suggestions on how to deal with children's typical fears.

For a different perspective on being lost, check out the video, [Amazing Grace](#), in which several Christians (real people, not actors) insert words about their personal struggles and victories into the lyrics of "Amazing Grace." This beautiful video was inspired by an ad produced for the Salvation Army.

SESSION 28: TEDDY BEAR PARTY

INTRODUCTION

If you will show me compassion, then I may learn to care as you do. —from "When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in Singing the Journey

The theme of this session is "Chalice Children are all different, but we care about one another and celebrate together." Over the preceding three sessions (25, 26, and 27), using a third party—teddy bears—has helped the children talk in a nonthreatening way about their fears and discover strategies for lessening their own fears and helping to take care of others in a scary situation. This session engages children in stories and activities about friendship and caring as Teddy Bear Month concludes with a celebration.

Remember that preschool children vary greatly in their social development. The youngest children may still engage in parallel play; four year olds may be learning to express their feelings; kindergarteners may be more willing to conform to the goals and norms established by parents, teachers, church leaders, and society.

Note: Before this session, ask families to have their children bring a favorite stuffed bear or another animal to each session in this unit. See Session 25, Leader Resource 1, Teddy Bear Month Invitation.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn how to make the Chalice Children group feel like a caring place
- Feel a sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience the sense of community and belonging they have developed in Chalice Children and appreciate their own role in creating it
- Acknowledge the friends they have met
- Feel connected to their UU identity and the congregation.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Teddy Bear Picnic	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Picture the circle of people whom you think of as your closest friends. How diverse is this circle? Consider age, gender, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, disability status, country of origin. We tend to form bonds with those who share our interests, values, and attitudes. Often, we also—consciously or subconsciously—choose friends who "look like" us. To diversify our friendship circle, we sometimes must step outside our comfort zone. Once we do so, we often discover that general rules of friendship and caring still apply.

Bring this awareness of friendship and diversity to your time with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Items for an activity relating to Teddy Bear Month

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting, and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add a free play activity relating to Teddy Bear Month, such as a special tea party table for visiting bears, or a basket of doll clothes for bears to play dress-up.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You can change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and

turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Extra stuffed animals for those who did not bring one
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Before this session, send a reminder to families for children to bring their bear (refer to Session 25, Leader Resource 1).
- Gather some stuffed animals to have on hand for any child who doesn't bring one.
- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Invite the children to get their teddy bear or to select one from the collection of extras. Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying, in these words or your own:

Today is the last day that our teddy bears will come to Chalice Children with us. Let's look at all the bears we have in our circle. Notice how different they are. [have children name some of the differences] They are different just like people are different—different shapes, different colors, different eyes, different hair. But no matter how different they are, we love all the bears the same. Today we will make a special present for our bears and have a Teddy Bear Parade and then a picnic. But before we do that, let's read a story about teddy bears.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Do Super Heroes Have Teddy Bears?* by Carmela LeVigna Coyle, illustrated by Mike Gordon, 2012. Follow along as two ragtag, everyday super heroes don capes to play in the mud, save their stuffed animals from certain peril, conquer the vegetables at dinner, and overcome darkness at night.
 - *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* by Jimmy Kennedy, illustrated by Alexandra Day, 2000. A picture-book version of the classic teddy bear song, with endearing artwork by the popular illustrator of *Good Dog, Carl*.
 - *Patrick in a Teddy Bear's Picnic and Other Stories* by Geoffrey Hayes, 2011. Geisel Award-winning author Geoffrey Hayes delights young readers with these easy-to-read stories about Patrick Brown, a puddle-jumping teddy bear whose biggest challenge is avoiding naptime . . . until he has to contend with Big Bear.
 - *Bear Says Thanks* by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman, 2012. Bear has come up with the perfect way to say thanks—a nice big dinner. There's just one problem: Bear's cupboards are bare! What is he to do?

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: TEDDY BEAR PICNIC (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Printouts of chalice clip art, at least four different images per child
- Scissors
- Construction paper circles, two per child
- Hole punch
- Yarn
- Tape
- Glue sticks, one for each pair of children
- Several bowls of Fruit Loops, Cheerios, or other donut-shaped cereal
- Dress-up clothes and hats for children and bears
- Large blanket, big enough so that all the children can sit on it, and (optional) a waterproof liner
- Snack, e.g., Teddy Grahams (and napkins or paper plates) and juice (and cups)
- Moistened paper towels
- Trash can with liner, and a recycle bin
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone
- Optional: Teddy bear-related music and equipment to play it

Preparation for Activity

- Print a variety of [clip art chalices](#), copy them, and cut them apart into small circles. Provide a variety of chalice images.
- Cut out construction paper in circles larger than the chalice circles, and punch a hole in the top of each circle.
- Cut yarn in 18" lengths, two lengths per child.
- Make "needles" on one end of each yarn string by taping it. This will make it easier to thread the cereal beads.
- Set up the activity area with the chalice and paper circles, glue sticks, yarn, and bowls of cereal.
- Decide on the route of your Teddy Bear Parade, making sure that it's accessible to everyone in your group. If you expect to have time to have the children visit other RE classes, secure permission from the leaders and your religious educator ahead of time.
- Find a spot, outdoors or indoors, to spread the blanket for the picnic. If outdoors, make sure the area is accessible to everyone in your group, and choose a blanket that's appropriate for spreading on the ground (optional: bring a liner to put underneath).
- Have all the supplies ready for your picnic. If you're eating outdoors, you might want to pack them in a picnic basket for easy transport.
- Optional: Choose some bear-related music for your Teddy Bear Parade, such as Anne Murray singing "[The Teddy Bears' Picnic](#)," or "[Bare Necessities](#)" from the movie *The Jungle Book*, and find equipment to play the music as you walk the route of your parade.

Description of Activity

Children make chalice pendants, one as a gift for their bears and one for themselves. They go on a Teddy Bear Parade and then celebrate the end of Teddy Bear Month with a picnic!

Invite children to the activity table to make a chalice pendant for their teddy bears and one for themselves. Point out the supplies that are available. Encourage them to sort through the clip art chalices and find two that the bear might like and two that they like. To make the pendants, have the children:

Glue a piece of chalice clip art to each side of the construction paper circle

Thread some cereal beads on a piece of yarn (using the "needle" end), then the clip art disc, then some more cereal beads

Tie a knot

Have the children place one pendant on their bear and one on themselves.

Optional: Take a picture of the children and bears wearing their chalice pendants.

Encourage the children to dress up—theirself and their teddy bears—for a parade. Lead them on a Teddy Bear Parade via the route you've chosen, around the building and through the halls, visiting other classrooms if possible. Optional: Play music as you parade around the congregation.

Lead the children to the area you've chosen for the picnic. Spread the blanket on the ground, weather permitting, or on the floor of the meeting space. Distribute snack. As the children enjoy their snack, ask them to share one thing they hope their teddy bear remembers about the times it has come to Chalice Children during Teddy Bear Month.

Invite the children to help clean up. They can put away supplies and dress-up clothes, throw away or recycle trash, or wipe glue from the table.

Including All Participants

If any children have a wheat or gluten allergy, serve an alternative to Teddy Grahams.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor, with the teddy bears.

Sing the songs and play the games. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,

We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 How are you this special day?
 We are glad you came to play.
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 So smile when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
 It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
 So laugh when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
 It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
 So laugh when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]

Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we are friends who care for one another and celebrate together.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

If you will show me compassion, then I may learn to care as you do. —from "When I Am Frightened," Hymn 1012 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was, "Chalice Children are all different, but we care about one another and celebrate together." This session concluded Teddy Bear Month by engaging children (and their teddy bears) to celebrate their friendship together.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested in this session:

- *Do Super Heroes Have Teddy Bears?* by Carmela LeVigna Coyle, illustrated by Mike Gordon, 2012. Follow along as two ragtag, everyday super heroes don capes to play in the mud, save their stuffed animals from certain peril, conquer the vegetables at dinner, and overcome darkness at night.
- *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* by Jimmy Kennedy, illustrated by Alexandra Day, 2000. A picture-book version of the classic teddy bear song, with endearing pictures by the popular illustrator of *Good Dog, Carl*.
- *Patrick in a Teddy Bear's Picnic and Other Stories* by Geoffrey Hayes, 2011. Geisel Award-winning author Geoffrey Hayes delights young readers with these easy-to-read stories about Patrick Brown, a puddle-jumping teddy bear whose biggest challenge is avoiding naptime . . . until he has to contend with Big Bear.

- *Bear Says Thanks* by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman, 2012. Bear has come up with the perfect way to say thanks—a nice big dinner! There's just one problem: Bear's cupboards are bare! What is he to do?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . . before your family leaves for home today, invite your child to show you where the Chalice Children held their Teddy Bear Parade. What did they see there? What did they find out?

A Family Adventure. Host your own Teddy Bear Picnic outdoors, weather permitting, or indoors on a blanket. Teddy bears seem to like Teddy Grahams!

A Family Discovery. Your child and their teddy bear may both be wearing chalice necklaces when you pick them up today. Explore the [many images of chalices](#) available as clip art at the UUA website. Which are your favorites?

A Family Game. Listen and dance to Anne Murray singing "[The Teddy Bears' Picnic](#)," or to "[Bare Necessities](#)" from the movie *The Jungle Book*, on YouTube.

A Family Ritual. Extinguish a dinner-time chalice using the words and movements used to close each session of Chalice Children. An adult can say each line, then repeat it with the children:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands near the flame, then gather them to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands near the flame and then gather them to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands near the flame and then gather them to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the flame]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at home, we care for one another.

FIND OUT MORE

Read about [Operation Teddy Bear](#), a stuffed animal drive conducted by the humanitarian group [Border Angels](#) that collected stuffed animals for immigrant children coming to San Diego, CA, from Central America.

Look over some of the tender and beautiful photos from the book [Much Loved: Portraits of Beloved Childhood Teddies](#) by Dublin-based photographer Mark Nixon—"a moving portrait gallery of people's beloved bears and the occasional rabbit, monkey, or giraffe, many hugged and kissed down to bare threads to emerge as affection-ravaged amputees and bittersweet survivors of the immortal combat of growing up."

SESSION 29: CLOSING SUNDAY

INTRODUCTION

When our heart is in a holy place, we are blessed with love and amazing grace . . . — from "When Our Heart Is In a Holy Place," Hymn 1008 in Singing the Journey

The theme of this session is "Saying goodbye to friends." It's time to celebrate this group of friends in the Chalice Children group while children experience the transition that comes with the program's ending. Children create an "Everybody Picture" they can each keep at home, to help them remember all the friends they have made.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Celebrate this group of friends
- Feel a sense of closure
- Feel a sense of belonging to and identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Feel gratitude for friends they have made in Chalice Children
- Remember some of the stories and activities they experienced during this program
- Think of themselves as part of this Unitarian Universalist congregation.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1: Free Play	15
Activity 2: Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Everybody Pictures	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Goodbye Party	15
Alternate Activity 2: Chalice in a Bag	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Saying goodbye to friends can be hard. How do you react to goodbyes? Do you feel impatient or embarrassed, unwilling to engage with the poignancy of the moment? Do you breathe deeply and hold the moment in your head and heart? Are you overwhelmed by tears?

Transitions can also be difficult. How do you react to transitions in your life? Do you feel a sense of anticipation, a sense of dread, or a combination of both? Do you wish things to stay the same, or do you relish change and the excitement it brings?

There is no one right way to say goodbye or to respond to transitions. For many of us, our feelings can be complex. That very complexity can make it difficult to stay emotionally present for endings or transitions, which in turn can make it hard to achieve a satisfying closure.

Reflect on your own reaction to changes and the reactions of other people in your life or whom you have known. Embrace the diversity of reactions to and the inevitability of change. Bring that awareness to your work with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Items for an activity relating to the end of this program

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting, and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include the Memory Match Game (Session 5), Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).

- Add an activity relating to the completion of the program. For example, display the children's favorite books from previous sessions.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room and help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair, with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time you meet will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children to put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and the children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,

Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

You can invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You can change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Although preschoolers' memories are not highly developed, with a little help most children will readily remember some of the special times they have had in the Chalice Children group. Be prepared to prompt them by mentioning activities and sessions they seemed to find especially engaging.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Say your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, in these words or your own:

Today we celebrate our last day of Chalice Children. What are some things you remember about the time we've spent together, the good times everybody has had, and the friends we've made?

Ask:

- What are some things that happen at church [our congregation]? [weddings, child dedications, memorials, friends, fun, holidays, our Chalice Children group, Teddy Bear Month, etc.]
- What is our favorite symbol for our church [congregation]? [Hold up the chalice]

Say, in these words or your own:

That's right—it's a chalice! Our group is called Chalice Children, because the chalice is so important to us as Unitarian Universalists. Chalice Children come to [name of congregation] to make friends and learn about our church [congregation].

Point out the ways that the children have learned about the congregation by naming some of the activities you have done together—for example, tours of the inside and outside of your congregation, the flower ceremony (or other ceremonies), and playing the Memory Match Game.

Invite the children to join you in a responsive reading; as you read, indicate with words and motions which words

and motions you wish them to repeat, and lead them (in a softer voice) when it is their turn to repeat:

Leader: We work and play together and make friends. Community is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Community is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We want to grow in love and understanding. Love is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Love is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We ask questions and wonder. Wonder is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Wonder is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We look for answers inside of us. Our spirits are all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Our spirits are all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We share with one another. Our friends are all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Our friends are all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We want each person to be themselves. Our differences are all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Our differences are all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We are connected to everything. All is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: All is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Conclude by saying, in these words or your own:

Today we are going to celebrate our time together by making an Everybody Picture so we can remember our Chalice Children group. But first, let's read one last story together.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *You Be You* by Linda Kranz, 2011. A companion book to the bestselling *Only One*

You, Kranz once again uses her famous "rockfish" to express the themes of diversity, individuality, and acceptance for children.

- *The Red Book* by Barbara Lehman, 2004. In this wordless Caldecott Honor Book, a magical red book crosses oceans and continents to deliver one girl into a new world of possibility, where a friend she's never met is waiting. And as with the best of books, at the conclusion of the story, the journey is not over.
- *Inside All* by Margaret H. Mason, 2008. With a few well-chosen words and rich, suggestive illustrations, the reader is taken from the outer edges of the universe to a planet, a village, a home, and a room, into the heart of a warm, sleepy child, and finally to an awareness of love that somehow encompasses it all.
- *Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy* by Jacky Davis, illustrated by David Soman, 2009. As Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy, Lulu and Sam save the playground from hairy monsters and big mean robots, and have their very own parade on the bouncy dinosaurs. They figure out that when they work together, they can create fun games that they both like to play.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help the children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: EVERYBODY PICTURES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Blank Canvas for Everybody Pictures](#) (included in this document) , and white copy paper
- Color construction paper, approximately 11x17 inches
- Glue stick and permanent marker
- Color markers and crayons for children to share
- "Goodbye" music and equipment that allows you to pause
- Optional: Sticky foam shapes or a variety of stickers

Preparation for Activity

- Follow directions on Leader Resource 1 to design the blank canvas for the Everybody Pictures. Copy your design. Make enough copies for all the children who may attend, plus a few extra.
- Glue each "Goodbye, Chalice Children!" page onto the center of a piece of construction paper.
- Choose music with a "goodbye" theme, such as "[You've Got a Friend in Me](#)" from the movie *Toy Story*, or "[So Long, Farewell](#)" from the movie *The Sound of Music*, and arrange a way to play it so that you can easily start and stop repeatedly. Note: If the group is large, you may want to choose a couple of songs to play.

Description of Activity

Children draw "Everybody Pictures" that include a drawing from each child.

Invite the children to the activity table. Give each child a blank "Goodbye, Chalice Children!" sheet. Show them the markers and (optional) stickers or foam shapes. Say, in these words or your own:

Today we're making Everybody Pictures! When the music is playing, you will draw something on the picture in front of you. It could be something you like, or something you'd like to share with a friend, a pretty color, a crazy shape—whatever you want. But keep it simple, because after a minute I'm going to stop the music, which means that it's time to pass the picture to your neighbor—and for you to get a new picture! We will go around until everyone has added something to each picture. You can draw the same thing each time, or something different every time. Use your imagination, and have fun!

Start the music and encourage the children to start drawing. After a minute or so, pause and have the children pass the pictures to the left. Continue drawing, pausing, and passing until each picture has made it all the way around the circle. Say, in these words or your own:

Now everyone has an Everybody Picture to take home with them! This picture will help you remember Chalice Children, everybody who was here together, and all the good times we've had.

Encourage the children to help clean up. They can put away supplies, throw away trash, recycle scrap paper, or wipe marks off the tables. Stack the Everybody Pictures near the door for families to take home.

Including All Participants

If any children have difficulty with drawing, consider having the group glue foam shapes or place stickers on the Everybody Pictures.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs listed in Posters for Chalice Children, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Plan how you will pace the activity so you have time to teach children the two signs for the Goodbye Song and to end with Floating Kisses. You may wish to lead the Welcome, Chalice Children song and then move directly into the new songs and games.
- Watch this [YouTube video](#) from Librarian Lindsey which demonstrates sign language for the Goodbye Song introduced in this activity.
- Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.

Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh,
We'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask each child to choose an action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
 If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
 If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). As the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?
 How are you this special day?
 We are glad you came to play.
 Good morning, [child's first and last name],
 How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic:"

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
 So smile when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variation: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
 So laugh when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
 It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
 So laugh when you're in trouble.
 It will vanish like a bubble,
 If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Goodbye Song

This song includes sign language for "goodbye" and "friends." Before singing the song, teach the children the two signs:

- Goodbye: Bend your arm at the elbow, palm up and facing out, and wave your fingers.
- Friends: Point each index finger up, cross them to make an "X" (inside finger touching inside finger), and then have the index fingers grab each other. Then re-cross them the opposite way, make an "X," and have them grab each other again. You can describe this to the children as "fingers giving each other a hug."

Sing the "Goodbye Song," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

Goodbye, friends. [do the sign for "goodbye," then the sign for "friends"]
 Goodbye, friends. [repeat]
 Goodbye, friends. [repeat]
 It's time [tap wrist]... to say [tap mouth]...
 goodbye! [do the sign for "goodbye"]

Floating Kisses Goodbye

Tell the children that a special way to say goodbye is to send "floating kisses"! Have everyone kiss their hand and then blow the kiss up to the ceiling. Verbalize the progress of the kisses as they reach the ceiling and start back down. Pretend each floating kiss is landing on a different person.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons

- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelope, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

from "When Our Heart Is In a Holy Place," Hymn 1008 in Singing the Journey

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at [name of congregation], we make friends and we care for one other, for our families, and for our church [congregation].

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this curriculum? Why?
- What was the best part of this year? Why?
- What might we change for next year? Why?

TAKING IT HOME

When our heart is in a holy place, we are blessed with love and amazing grace . . . —

IN TODAY'S SESSION . . . the theme was "Saying goodbye to friends." We said goodbye to one another by celebrating this group of friends and the whole Chalice Children program.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER . . . Read some of the books suggested in this session:

- *You Be You* by Linda Kranz, 2011. A companion book to the bestselling *Only One You*, Kranz once again uses her famous "rockfish" to express the themes of diversity, individuality, and acceptance for children.
- *The Red Book* by Barbara Lehman, 2004. In this wordless Caldecott Honor Book, a magical red book crosses oceans and continents to deliver one girl into a new world of possibility, where a friend she's never met is waiting. And as with the best of books, at the conclusion of the story, the journey is not over.
- *Inside All* by Margaret H. Mason, 2008. With a few well-chosen words and rich, suggestive illustrations, the reader is taken from the outer edges of the universe to a planet, a village, a home, and a room, into the heart of a warm, sleepy child, and finally to an awareness of love that somehow encompasses it all.
- *Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy* by Jacky Davis, illustrated by David Soman, 2009. As Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy, Lulu and Sam save the playground from hairy monsters and big mean robots, and have their very own parade on the bouncy dinosaurs. They figure out that when they work together, they can create fun games that they both like to play.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try . . .

remembering events and changes from your family life over the year. What or who did you said goodbye to? What or who did you said hello to?

A Family Adventure. Continue your preschooler's Chalice Children friendships by inviting the other Chalice Children families to join you for a playground playdate.

A Family Discovery. Invite your child to share what they especially remember about coming to your Unitarian Universalist congregation for Chalice Children—the stories they heard, the crafts they made, the friends they played with. Although the children's memories are not highly developed, they will readily remember some special times with a little help. Prompt them by asking, for example:

- What are some things that happen at our . . . ? (You can suggest weddings, dedications,

memorials, friends, fun, holidays, Teddy Bear Month, etc.)

- Do you remember Teddy Bear Month, when you brought your teddy to the congregation?
- What is our favorite symbol for our church [congregation] called? (the chalice)

A Family Game. Sing the Goodbye Song together. This song includes sign language for "goodbye" and "friends." Before singing the song, learn the two signs (see [both signs demonstrated](#), on YouTube):

- Goodbye: Bend your arm at the elbow, palm up and facing out, and wave your fingers.
- Friends: Point each index finger up, cross them to make an "X" (inside finger touching inside finger), and then have the index fingers grab each other. Then re-cross them the opposite way, make an "X," and have them grab each other again. You can describe this to the children as "fingers giving each other a hug."

Sing the "Goodbye Song," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

Goodbye, friends. [do the sign for "goodbye," then the sign for "friends"]
Goodbye, friends. [repeat]
Goodbye, friends. [repeat]
It's time [tap wrist]... to say [tap mouth]...
goodbye! [do the sign for "goodbye"]

Or, sing and dance to "[You've Got a Friend in Me](#)" from the movie *Toy Story*.

A Family Ritual. This evening, offer a chalice lighting and give thanks for the Chalice Children program. Use the responsive reading the children did in today's session

Invite your child to join you and indicate with words and motions the words and motions you wish them to repeat. Read the leader part, then read the "All" part in a softer voice when it is their turn to repeat:

Leader: We work and play together and make friends. Community is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]
All: Community is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]
Leader: We want to grow in love and understanding. Love is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]
All: Love is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]
Leader: We ask questions and wonder. Wonder is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]
All: Wonder is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We look for answers inside of us. Our spirits are all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Our spirits are all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We share with one another. Our friends are all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Our friends are all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We want each person to be themselves. Our differences are all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: Our differences are all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

Leader: We are connected to everything. All is all around. [draw a circle with your hand]

All: All is all around. [everyone draws a circle with their hand]

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: GOODBYE PARTY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Refreshments and decorations for a party
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a festive snack to serve, being sure to accommodate any allergies and food restrictions among the group.
- Decorate the room for a party with items such as matching napkins and plates, special snack, crepe paper steamers, and balloons.

Description of Activity

The children celebrate completion of the Chalice Children program with a goodbye party.

Play the children's favorite circle songs and games. Serve the special snack. As the children eat, remind them of some of the special things they've done in this program and the friendships they have made. Share some of your own special memories of your time with the Chalice Children.

Optional: Take a group picture.

Including All Participants

If any child might find jumping and standing difficult, substitute other actions, such as clapping, stepping, or wiggling, or sing the songs from a seated position.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CHALICE IN A BAG (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- For each child: a two- or three-inch diameter clay flower pot; a three-inch saucer or flower pot base; one battery-operated, LED tea light; a six-inch gift bag with handles; and, a paper plate
- Newsprint or large roll of paper
- Washable tempera paint in a variety of colors, and at least one dish with three paintbrushes for each color
- A permanent marker
- Tissue paper, at least one piece for each child
- Moistened paper towels
- Trash can with liner
- Optional: Paint smocks
- Optional: E6000 craft adhesive (glue)
- Optional: Digital camera or smartphone

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain pots and saucers. Decide if you would like to pre-glue the pot and saucer/base together; they stack well and glue isn't necessary, but if you would like the pots to be in a chalice shape from the start, use [E6000 craft adhesive](#), which takes 48 hours to cure.
- Cover activity tables with newsprint.
- Use the marker to write each child's name on a paper plate and on the inside of a gift bag.
- Squeeze the tempera paint into the dishes. Set out a variety of dishes of paint for every three children to use, with three brushes in each dish.

Description of Activity

Children create a painted pottery chalice to take home in a gift bag.

If you haven't glued the chalice bases to the tops, show the children how to put together a chalice:

- Place a pot upside down and place the saucer right side up, on top of the pot.
- Place a tea light on the saucer.
- Place the chalice in the bag, using tissue paper to cushion the pottery.

Say, in these words or your own:

This is a "Chalice in a Bag." Today we will make our own chalices like this one, to take home.

Invite the children to the activity table. Optional: Help them put on smocks. Show them the variety of paints and brushes. Give each child a flowerpot and a saucer/base and invite them to paint their own chalice.

While the children are painting, write their names on the inside of their pots.

Let each painted chalice dry on the paper plate with the child's name on it.

Encourage the children to help clean up. They can put away the supplies, throw away any trash, and use moistened paper towels to wipe up any spilled paint. Have them wash their hands, and make sure that no one has wet paint on their clothes or shoes.

Place the bags, tissue paper, optional cloths, and tea lights on a table so that children can assemble their Chalice in a Bag immediately after the Closing. Make sure that they wrap their chalice in the tissue paper before they leave.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: BLANK CANVAS FOR EVERYBODY PICTURES

Across the top of a blank 8 1/2 x 11-inch page, write "Goodbye, Chalice Children!" Across the bottom, write the name of your congregation, and the year (optional: and the season or months) of your program.

If you wish, draw thick lines along borders to make a frame for the contents—the drawing or decorating children will add during Activity 5, Everybody Pictures. Keep borders simple so the focus will remain on children's artwork.

FIND OUT MORE

Peruse other [Tapestry of Faith](#) online curricula. The UUA provides four programs for grades K/1: [Creating Home](#) by Christy Olson and Jessica York, [Wonderful Welcome](#) by Aisha Hauser and Susan Lawrence, [Love Surrounds Us](#) by Rev. Lynn Kerr and Christy Olson, and [World of Wonder](#) by Alice Anacheka-Naseman, Pat Kahn, and Julie Simon.

Find reflections on endings and changes in "[Navigating the Transitions of Life](#)" by Rev. Ann Fox, Unitarian Universalist Society of Fairhaven, Connecticut, March 12, 2006.

Laura Grace Weldon has written about transitions and small children's ability to be "in their bodies." Check out her April 20, 2011, blog post, [7 Ways to Access Your Body's Unique "Knowing."](#)

Consider [8 Simple Ways to Make Transitions Easier for Kids](#), a post on the Toddler Approved blog site, August 22, 2012.

SESSION 30: HALLOWEEN

INTRODUCTION

You got to do when the spirit says do! — "When the Spirit Says Do," Hymn 1024 in Singing the Journey

Halloween can be a scary time for preschoolers embedded in magical thinking. Perhaps the child wearing the mask really does transform into a monster! Celebrate the gentler aspects of the holiday and help preschoolers enjoy and understand the traditions while they explore their fears. If your congregation engages in celebrations related to Day of the Dead or All Souls Day, incorporate these into this session.

This session introduces Unit 5, "We celebrate holidays." For a Faith in Action project, use one of the many traditional service projects associated with various holidays or design your own Faith in Action activity based on your congregation's customs and practices. Find suggestions in this session's Faith in Action activity.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn some of the activities and traditions related to Halloween
- Experience the classroom and group as safe and caring
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to their Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience how exploring fears together makes them less scary
- Connect a safe, fun experience of Halloween with their Unitarian Universalist congregation.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Ghosts	15

Activity 6: Circle Games 10

Faith in Action: We Celebrate Holidays

Closing 5

Alternate Activity 1: Popcorn Party 15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. What are your memories of Halloween as a young child? Were there houses you would not approach because they were too scary? Were you attracted, or repelled, by the decor and costumes? Were cherry bombs and screams something to grin at or cry about? How did the older people around you act? Did they push you to participate, or guide your attention to other things? Recall how the older people around you contributed to your fears or soothed them. Bring that reflection to your own work with the children in this session.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Supplies for a free play activity relating to Halloween

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add supplies related to Halloween, for a special free play option. You might add several costumes without masks for children to use in the dramatic play area. A cape is a favorite choice: bring in towels and clothespins.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

Does anyone know what holiday is coming? Halloween! What does that mean? Some people go trick-or-treating in a costume. They dress up and pretend to be something else. What are you going to be for Halloween? What do you like to do at Halloween? How does a mask make you feel? Here's a mask. When I put it on, I look out at you. Why don't we pass

the mask around and each of us try it on. Who's this? It's [child in the group]! And there's [the same child] with a mask on!

Describe each child with their name and mask as they pass the mask around. When everyone is done, ask:

Do you become a different person with the mask on?"

Encourage the children to affirm and reassure each other that they are the same people.

It's fun to pretend, and it's fun to try out the mask. That is part of Halloween, to explore some scary things and know that they are just pretend. Let's read a story about Halloween.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Little Boo* by Stephen Wunderli, 2014. The leaves fall, the wind blows, and one little pumpkin seed tries and tries to be scary. But he doesn't scare anyone . . . not the snowflakes in winter, not the bees in spring, not even the watering can!
 - *The Halloween Kid* by Rhode Motyo, 2010. A story about a masked hero and his trusty steed. Halloween won't be canceled anytime soon, not while the Halloween Kid's around.
 - *Ten Timid Ghosts* by Jennifer O'Connell, 2000. Ten ghosts, a witch, and a haunted house make this Halloween countdown a spooky treat!
 - *Teeny, Tiny Ghost and the Monster* by Kay Winters and Lyn Munsinger, 2011. All of the ghosts in the teeny tiny school are excited about the upcoming Make a Monster contest—except the timid teeny, tiny ghost, who finds the very idea frightening. At the end of the school day, he has not come up with any inspiration for his picture.
- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: GHOSTS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Facial tissues, at least two sheets per ghost
- Rubber bands, one per ghost; small bands work best (so children don't have to double a band to fasten it)
- String or yarn
- Black markers

Preparation for Activity

- Cut string or yarn into 18-inch lengths (one per ghost).
- Make a ghost to show the children.

Description of Activity

What is one way to be in control of something scary?
Put a ghost on a string!

Invite the children to the activity table. Show them the ghost and tell them they will each make a ghost-on-a-string to take home.

Roll one piece of facial tissue into a ball and place it in the center of another tissue. Pull together the four corners of the flat tissue above the ball and hold the corners together. Put a rubber band on the fingers of your other hand and slip the rubber band over the ball to create the head of the ghost. With a black marker, make two small dots on the head for the eyes. Invite the children to add any other features to their ghost.

Attach a length of string to each ghost by tying the string to the rubber band. Invite the children to help one another fly their ghosts-on-a-string around the room.

Variations

Bean Bag Game. Use the ghosts like bean bags. Invite children to try throwing their ghosts into a box or basket.

Ghost Zip Line. Connect a length of string or yarn from a high point, such as a tabletop, down to a lower point, such as the floor. Make sure the string is at a sharp angle. You might tie one end to a door hinge or window rod and the other end to a low chair leg. Fold a small piece of paper over the string to create a trolley for the ghosts. Attach the ghost on a string by clothespin to the paper and let 'er rip!

Including All Participants

If you make a zip line for the ghosts, a child can remain stationary, such as in a wheelchair, and still have their ghost fly.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982):

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Add some Halloween songs.

When the Spirit Says "Do"

Try "When the Spirit Says 'Do,'" Hymn 1025 in *Singing the Journey*. Replace "do" with other words, such as fly, dance, laugh, and shout, and invite children to act out each word with their ghosts.

Hookey Spookey Game

Sing to the tune of "The Hokey Pokey;" from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, 1982:

Put your right hand in, take your right hand out.
Put your right hand in, and you shake it all about.
Do the hookey, spookey and everybody shout,
"That's what it's all about! Boo!"

Gather in a circle. Everyone does the motions for the first two lines. As the third line is sung, each person turns around. As the fourth line is sung, each person slaps their thighs twice, claps their hands twice, and raises their hands above their head. Repeat substituting other parts of the body for "right hand."

Variation: Put your ghost in, take your ghost out...

Including All Participants

If you have a child for whom jumping and standing is difficult, you may consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]

The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [name of congregation] we learn about Halloween.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

FAITH IN ACTION: WE CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS

Description of Activity

The theme of Unit 5 is "We celebrate holidays." Use one of the many traditional service projects associated with various holidays or design your own Faith in Action activity based on the customs and practices of your congregation. Some suggestions include:

Halloween

- This is the traditional time for "Trick or Treat for UNICEF." Arrange for preschoolers to trick-or-treat in the congregation on the Sunday closest to Halloween, perhaps during social hour. Or, obtain UNICEF collection boxes in time to send home with families the Sunday before Halloween and ask families to return them the Sunday after. Visit [UNICEF's website](#) for more ideas and materials.
- In recent years, "[reverse trick or treating](#)" has become popular. Global Exchange, an international human rights organization dedicated to promoting social, economic and environmental justice around the world, provides kits for reverse trick or treating: A treat is given to the person instead of taking candy from them. From Global Exchange: "The inspiration for Reverse Trick-or-Treating rests on the belief that the simple act of one person saying to another "There's a problem. There's a solution. Let's do something" can be very powerful. And if a child says this to an adult, it's doubly powerful. Further, we believe that such acts will demonstrate to the large corporations, and to public officials, that people are paying attention, people care, and they want action." In your

congregation, you might reverse trick-or-treat the congregational staff. Have the children leave a ghost on a string (Session 30, Activity 5) and a piece of candy or fruit at each person's mailbox or desk.

November/December Holidays

- Engage preschoolers and their families to implement the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) "[Guest at Your Table](#)" program. Guest at Your Table fosters understanding and awareness of UUSC's human rights work. "By celebrating Guest at Your Table, you are helping nurture a spirit of gratitude and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations."
- Arrange for the Chalice Children group to sponsor a holiday food collection for a local food bank.
- Holiday Giving Trees are a way to work with a non-profit agency to fulfill specific needs in underserved communities at a traditional gift-giving time of year. The [Family Giving Tree](#) is an organization in California that helps local groups channel gift-giving where there is need.
- Arrange for the preschoolers, perhaps with their families, to visit a senior living center or an Alzheimer's care centers to sing holiday songs and visit with residents.

January/February Holidays

- Include preschoolers and their families in congregational events around Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations. For example, Atlanta-area UU congregations participate in the city's MLK Day march and rally, wearing UU tee-shirts and carrying signs and banners.
- Be inspired by the story "[Valentines for the Governor](#)" from the children's Tapestry of Faith program [Faithful Journeys](#) and host a postcard writing campaign for equal marriage (if your state does not allow it), or another human rights cause.

March/April Holidays

- Celebrate Earth Day and our seventh UU Principle, the interdependent web of all life, using environment justice resources you will find in the Tapestry of Faith programs [Gather the Spirit](#), [Circle of Trees](#), and [World of Wonder](#).
- Explore the UUA [Green Sanctuary program](#) and UU Ministry for Earth [resources](#) online for more ideas.

- Some congregations replace a traditional Easter Egg hunt with a canned goods hunt. Cans that are found are donated to a community food bank; see the UU Parenting blog post "[What's a UU Family to do on Easter?](#)"

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

You got to do when the spirit says do! — "When the Spirit Says Do," Hymn 1024 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We celebrated the gentler aspects of Halloween and helped the preschoolers enjoy and understand the traditions while they explore their fears.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Read one or more of the books suggested for this session::

- *Little Boo* by Stephen Wunderli, 2014. The leaves fall, the wind blows, and one little pumpkin seed tries and tries to be scary. But he doesn't scare anyone... not the snowflakes in winter, not the bees in spring, not even the watering can!
- *The Halloween Kid* by Rhode Motyo, 2010. A story about a masked hero and his trusty steed. Halloween won't be canceled anytime soon, not while the Halloween Kid's around.
- *Ten Timid Ghosts* by Jennifer O'Connell, 2000. Ten ghosts, a witch, and a haunted house make this Halloween countdown a spooky treat!
- *Teeny, Tiny Ghost and the Monster* by Kay Winters and Lyn Munsinger, 2011. All of the ghosts in the teeny tiny school are excited about the upcoming Make a Monster contest—except the timid teeny tiny ghost, who finds the very idea frightening. At the end of the school day, he has not come up with any inspiration for his picture.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... a Pumpkin Glow Party. Carve your pumpkin with families from your congregation, then light them together and turn out the

lights for the "Glow." It's a good time to sing "This Little Light of Mine!"

A Family Adventure. Host a Halloween "burn" by lighting a commercial fire pit in your driveway. Invite trick-or-treaters to enjoy candy and cider while they warm up by the fire.

A Family Discovery. View this [video](#) of popcorn popping in slow motion. Visit the [website](#) for "October is National Popcorn Popping Month."

A Family Game. Play the Hookey Spookey Game, sung to the tune of "The Hokey Pokey;" from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, 1982. Gather in a circle. Everyone does the motions for the first two lines:

Put your right hand in, take your right hand out.
Put your right hand in, and you shake it all about.

As the third line is sung, each person turns around. As the fourth line is sung, each person slaps their thighs twice, claps their hands twice, and raises their hands above their head:

Do the hookey, spookey and everybody shout,
"That's what it's all about. Boo!"

Repeat, substituting other parts of the body for "right hand."

Variation: "Put your ghost in, take your ghost out... "

A Family Ritual. As you light your pumpkin, sing "This Little Light of Mine" from # 118 in *Singing the Living Tradition* or sing along with Odetta, featured in this [YouTube video](#).

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: POPCORN PARTY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Raw popcorn kernels
- Small paper lunch bags or plain coffee filters
- Popcorn popper
- Oil (unless using an air popper)
- Optional: Salt and butter

Preparation for Activity

- Locate a popcorn popper and decide where to pop the popcorn. If you use an air popper, you can place it on a large, low table in the meeting room; find an electrical outlet and, if needed, obtain an extension cord. If no air popper is available, you will need access to a stove-top, preferably in a kitchen. Plan how you will gather

the children so everyone can watch the popcorn pop, but at a safe distance.

- Ask about allergies and food restrictions! If any children have dairy allergies or a vegan diet, plan to avoid butter. Then, buy supplies. You will need three tablespoons of vegetable oil to pop popcorn in a pot on a stovetop.
- Test the popcorn popper to make sure it works. Note: Air poppers sometimes turn on sensitive heat-activated fire alarms. Ventilate well.
- Set lunch bags or coffee filters near the popcorn-popping area so you can easily hand out individual servings.

Description of Activity

Celebrate Halloween with the sound of the burst of the kernels and the aroma of the cooking, with POPCORN!

Consider popping the popcorn with the lid off (or remove the bowl from under an air popper) so the popcorn flies all over! Maybe just for part of the time, if you prefer less chaos. Popcorn flies up to three feet in the air. Gauge your group. For some preschoolers, hearing the explosive popping may be just enough excitement.

Including All Participants

Children who have sensory issues may become overstimulated. Assess the preschool group's tolerance for this type of activity and adapt as needed.

FIND OUT MORE

October is national popcorn popping month. Read some 17th-century Europeans' observations of popcorn-popping among indigenous Americans, and find many fun popcorn facts, on this [Popcorn website](#).

"Even in its secular and commercial form, Halloween ritualizes our inescapable destination," write *UU World* magazine's editors to introduce the article, "[Festival of the Dead](#)" by Patricia Montley, published online October 31, 2005.

"I remember exactly when I first became afraid of death in a more-than-childish way," writes Doug Muder in the *UU World* magazine article, "[A candy bar for death](#)" published online October 31, 2011.

Darcey Laine's November 1, 2010 sermon at the UU Church of Athens and Sheshequin (PA), "A Spooky Unitarian Universalist Halloween Story," can be found [online](#). She tells about the spiritualist movement of the 1800s and the experiences of 19th-century minister, Rev. John Dods, receiving messages from spirits of the dead.

SESSION 31: THANKSGIVING

INTRODUCTION

Give thanks for the homes that with kindness are blessed... — Hymn 69, "Give Thanks," Singing the Living Tradition

Preschoolers contribute to their family's Thanksgiving with a food they make in this session. They reflect on giving thanks and use the word "gratitude."

If your congregation gathers for a "sharing of breads" during this time of year, you may instead wish to use Session 16, Special Worship Services; it provides a sharing of breads worship service you can do with the preschoolers.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn about Thanksgiving holiday traditions
- Learn about thankfulness and gratitude as part of their experience at the UU congregation
- Feel a growing sense of belonging.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Feel pride in contributing to the family meal
- Hear and use the word "gratitude"
- Share something that they are thankful for.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Something Good for the Table	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Can you remember the first time you cooked something for your family? How did it feel to be on the

giving end of food preparation? To prepare sustenance for loved ones can generate feelings of love and pride. At this season, there are memories and traditions associated with food. What are your family's favorite foods? Do you share the same comments and stories each time the cranberry sauce or the creamed onions are passed around? Have there been new foods to try, new diets to accommodate? How does your family react to changes to the holiday foods?

Reflect on how you and your family express gratitude. Is it through prayer? An extended hug, or a slap on the shoulder? Would you like to try a moment of silence at the family meal or offer a different kind of prayer? Do you have an interfaith family with a variety of traditions? Rest with the idea of gratitude as you contemplate the family meal. Perhaps it is a time already fraught with difficulties. You may wish to concentrate on your own ways to express gratitude and to breathe into calm. Perhaps it is a good time to try something new, and spend a moment together holding hands and expressing thankfulness. As you reflect on your place in the traditions of your family, bring that awareness to your work with the young children who are just starting to learn about the holiday.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add supplies related to Thanksgiving celebration, for a special free play option, such as several small baskets filled with pretend food for children to sort.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant, "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

Does anyone know what holiday it is? Thanksgiving! What happens at Thanksgiving? We often have a special meal, with special people, our family and our friends. What is happening at your house? What are you going to eat? Does anyone say a blessing, or be quiet together for a moment of silence before you

eat? Sometimes people hold hands and say one thing they are thankful for. Let's try it now.

Invite the children to hold hands in their circle in silence for a few moments. Then say:

Now let's think of something we are thankful for... and share it with each other.

Model the sharing, e.g. "I'm thankful for my family [name the people in your family.]

When we share what we are thankful for, that is called gratitude. Can you say "gratitude"? Church [Our congregation] is a good place to share gratitude. Thanksgiving is a time to be grateful and to give thanks. Do you have anything else you are grateful for to share with the group? Now let's read a story together.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Cranberry Thanksgiving* by Wende Devlin and Harry Devlin, 2012. Grandmother certainly didn't want to ask Mr. Whiskers for Thanksgiving dinner! SOMEONE stole her favorite, secret recipe for cranberry bread! Was Mr. Whiskers the thief? (includes the recipe)
 - *Thanksgiving Is* by Gail Gibbons, 2005. Thanksgiving is a time to share with family and friends, and a time to give thanks for many blessings.
 - *Thanks for Thanksgiving* by Julie Markes, 2008. Everyone knows that Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks—the question is, where to begin? From the turkey on the table to warm, cozy cuddles, life is full of small and big pleasures.
 - *The Thankful Book* by Todd Parr, 2012. Todd Parr's bestselling books have taught kids about unconditional love, respecting the earth, facing fears, and more, with his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity.
- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: SOMETHING GOOD FOR THE TABLE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Thanksgiving Recipes](#) (included in this document)
- Ingredients and supplies for the recipe of your choice (see Handout 1)
- Individual plastic bags or storage boxes (one for each child, plus a few extra), masking tape, and a black permanent marker
- Trash bag with liner
- Recycle bin
- Paper towels, moistened
- Optional: Hand sanitizer

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a recipe from Handout 1, Thanksgiving Recipes, taking into account any allergies in the group. Pumpkin Pie in a Cup is individual cups of pumpkin pie pudding with graham cracker crumbs. Pumpkin Fluff Dip is a sweet pumpkin dip, served in a hollowed out pumpkin, for cookies or crackers. Thanksgiving Gorp is a mixture of nuts, dried fruits, candy, and cereal.
- Make sure you have a supply of hand sanitizer or access to a sink where children can wash their hands before and after preparing food.
- Set out supplies and ingredients for children to prepare food.
- Optional: If you have time to cut and peel apples beforehand, consider making applesauce. Here's an [easy, no-sugar recipe](#). If you have access to a food processor, try making an uncooked cranberry-orange relish with [this recipe](#).

- Optional: Before this session, you may wish to ask parents/caregivers to provide a take-home container for their child to fill.

Description of Activity

Children prepare a contribution to the family dinner table for Thanksgiving.

Invite the children to wash their hands and then gather at the activity table. Demonstrate and help them prepare their food. Store each child's food in a plastic bag or a storage box and write their name on it.

Encourage the children to help with clean-up.

Including All Participants

Stirring is a very therapeutic motion and is involved in each of the choices. Check for any food allergies.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made.
- Learn a new song, "I Am Saying Thank You," by UU Montana songwriter Judy Fjell, so you can teach it to the children. Listen to the [free MP3 download](#) on her website.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!

Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

I Am Saying Thank-You

Teach this song by UU Montana songwriter Judy Fjell, if you have prepared it.

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation

Sing "If You're Thankful and You Know It" just like "If You're Happy and You Know It."

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or:

It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If jumping or standing is difficult for any child, consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon
- Optional: Handout 1, [Thanksgiving Recipes](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Taking It Home for each child.
- Bring the "lit" Preschool Chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope and string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, then tie in a loop or a bow.
- Optional: You may wish to send home Handout 1, Thanksgiving Recipes, with the Taking It Home handout after this session. If so, copy it for all the children.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [or name of congregation] we share our gratitude on Thanksgiving and every day.

While waiting for family members to pick up their children, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place the handout in the envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Give thanks for the homes that with kindness are blessed... — Hymn 69, "Give Thanks," Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we gave thanks for something important to us and made a contribution to the family meal.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share together... the suggested books for this session:

- *Cranberry Thanksgiving* by Wende Devlin and Harry Devlin, 2012. Grandmother certainly didn't want to ask Mr. Whiskers for Thanksgiving dinner! SOMEONE stole her favorite, secret recipe for cranberry bread! Was Mr. Whiskers the thief? (includes the recipe)
- *Thanksgiving Is* by Gail Gibbons, 2005. Thanksgiving is a time to share with family and friends, and a time to give thanks for many blessings.
- *Thanks for Thanksgiving* by Julie Markes, 2008. Everyone knows that Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks—the question is, where to begin? From the turkey on the table to warm, cozy cuddles, life is full of small and big pleasures.
- *The Thankful Book* by Todd Parr, 2012. Todd Parr's bestselling books have taught kids about unconditional love, respecting the earth, facing fears, and more, with his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Serve your preschooler's contribution with the family Thanksgiving meal.

A Family Adventure. Take a Gratitude Hike or Thankful Walk together after a family meal. What are you grateful/thankful for? Give everyone time to consider their thoughts while you walk. Then, stop and share them at a turnaround point, an inspiring place, or a peaceful place. Watch the [Thank You Thanksgiving](#) YouTube video about a little girl's walk.

A Family Discovery. Choose a preschooler-friendly recipe from this session's Handout 1, Thanksgiving Recipes, and make it together at home. Or, if you have time to cut and peel apples beforehand, consider making applesauce. Here's an [easy, no-sugar recipe](#). If you have access to a food processor, try making an uncooked cranberry-orange relish with [this recipe](#).

A Family Game. Sing "thank you" songs. Sing "If You're Thankful and You Know It," to the tune of "If You're

Happy and You Know It (Clap Your Hands)." Or learn "I Am Saying Thank You," by UU Montana songwriter Judy Fjell; listen to the [free MP3 download](#) on her website. What other "thank you" songs can you think of?

A Family Ritual. Hold hands at the family meal. Invite each person to share something they are thankful for. Go first, to give others the idea.

HANDOUT 1: THANKSGIVING RECIPES

Pumpkin Pie in a Cup, adapted from the recipe by Vanessa Levin, from her blog [Pre-K Pages](#), used with permission.

[Pumpkin Fluff Dip](#) is a Cool Whip(TM)-based pumpkin dip for cookies and crackers, served in a scooped out pumpkin. Photo and recipe provided courtesy of [Kraft Food & Family](#) magazine. For more information or to sign up for a free subscription, please visit the [website](#).

Pumpkin Pie in a Cup

Yield

This recipe makes enough for about 10 cups if you use the small, 3 oz. cups. Consider the number of your children and decide if they will make several cups or only take one home.

Supplies

2 c. milk

1 package of Pumpkin Spice Jell-O(TM) instant pudding and pie filling

1 container of Cool Whip(TM) (8 oz.)

1 box graham crackers

3 oz. clear plastic cups or similar (at least one per child, so children can take home several)

quart size, self-sealing plastic bags, one for every pair of children

Scissors

Rolling pins or cooking spoons, one for every pair of children

Muffin pans, one for every four children

Mixing bowl, holding 2 c. milk and pudding mix

Stirring spoon

Directions

Prepare Jell-O according to the directions on the box and mix in one container of thawed Cool Whip. Children can take turns stirring the big bowl of Jell-O and milk. Place the Jell-O in the refrigerator to cool quickly, or wait the 5 minutes for it to gel.

While the Jell-O is setting, put graham crackers in a plastic, self-sealing bag for every pair of children. Invite them to take turns crushing them with a rolling pin or spoon. Here's a quick tip for filling the cups: Put them in a muffin pan for every four children to keep them upright. Sprinkle the bottom of each cup with a layer of crushed graham crackers. Spoon the chilled pudding into the cups leaving enough room at the top for the Cool Whip.

Next, take one container of thawed Cool Whip and scoop it into quart size plastic, self-sealing bags (one bag for every pair of children). Squeeze all the Cool Whip toward one of the bottom corners, then snip off the end to create a pastry bag. Squeeze the bag and squirt the Cool Whip on top of each cup. When finished, sprinkle the remaining crushed graham crackers on top of your mini pumpkin pies.

Pumpkin Fluff Dip

Yield

This makes 32 servings; 2 Tbsp. each.

Ingredients

1 can (15 oz.) pumpkin

1 package (3.4 oz.) Jell-O(TM) Vanilla Flavor Instant Pudding

1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice

1 tub (8 oz.) Cool Whip(TM) Whipped Topping, thawed

Directions

- **MIX** pumpkin, dry pudding mix and spice in large bowl with whisk until blended.
- **STIR** in Cool Whip.
- **REFRIGERATE** 1 hour.

Kraft Kitchens' tips

SPECIAL EXTRA: Serve dip in a hollowed-out small fresh pumpkin.

SERVING SUGGESTION: Serve with cinnamon-graham crackers or gingersnap cookies.

Thanksgiving Gorp

Yield

Makes 10 cups of Gorp, approx. 1 cup each for 10 children.

Ingredients

2 c. dried apple pieces, torn into bite-sized pieces

2 c. dried cranberries

2 c. favorite nut, such as almonds

2 c. candy corn or other seasonal small candy pieces

2 c. sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds, shelled

Snack-sized plastic bags, 1 for each child

Large mixing bowl (10 cups of Gorp)

Stirring spoon(s)

Directions

Have everyone wash their hands. Then, invite the children to measure each ingredient and pour it into the mixing bowl. Stir. Spoon into individual bags to take home. Leave a little for everyone to taste!



FIND OUT MORE

On the Poets website, ["At the Common Table: Poems for Thanksgiving"](#) discusses several poems including poems by Langston Hughes and Bruce Weigl.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How exhausted do you become at this season? How joyous? How do you find your center? Is it in the simple message of the birth of a baby? Is it spending time with family playing games or sharing some hot cocoa? Are you in a countdown to Christmas? How do you regain your balance after the holiday is over? Reflect on how you find simplicity, hope and peace at this season and bring that awareness to your work with the preschoolers.

SESSION 32: HOW MANY DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS?

INTRODUCTION

Each night a child is born is a holy night: a time for singing, a time for wondering, a time for worshipping. — "For So the Children Come," Hymn 1061 in Singing the Journey

Regardless of our personal theologies, the Christmas season is a very visible part of the North American culture. This session introduces a traditional, Christian Christmas story and unpacks the story with a Unitarian Universalist understanding to help children share in the excitement of the season. Children make a paper chain, a simple activity which helps them stay patient for the arrival of Christmas.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Share family activities and traditions of Christmas
- Understand the Unitarian Universalist message that "each night a child is born is a holy night" (Sophia Fahs)
- Feel a sense of belonging to a larger faith community.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become aware of the story of the birth of Jesus
- Practice how to be patient while waiting for a holiday to unfold.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: How Many Days? Paper Chain	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Supplies for play that relate to Christmas, i.e. crèche figures

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add supplies related to Christmas, for a special free play option.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- A crèche with figurines, or a picture of a crèche

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

What holiday is coming up? Christmas! What happens at Christmas? Do you open presents at your house? Does your house have a Christmas tree?

There is a lovely Christmas story about a new baby being born. It is the story of Jesus. We can

tell the story with a crèche, which is a decoration with all of the parts of the story in it.

Tell the story, moving the figurines or pointing to the appropriate representations in the picture.

Mary and Joseph: First, this is Joseph and his wife Mary. They had to make a trip to a town called Bethlehem.

Donkey: Mary rode a donkey instead of walking, because she was tired. She was expecting a child.

Stable and Animals: There was no place to stay overnight. So, Mary and Joseph had to sleep in a stable. There were animals in the stable.

Baby Jesus: Jesus was born in the stable and Mary laid him in the cow's hay box, called a manger.

Star and Angels: When Jesus was born, a heavenly host of angels came and welcomed him. A star was shining above the stable.

Shepherds and Sheep: The angels told the shepherds to come and visit the baby.

Wise Men and Camels: Three wise men followed the star, riding camels. They brought gifts for the new baby.

Now ask the children:

Who would like to hold one of the figurines [or, who would like to show everything in the picture] and help me tell the story again?

Invite volunteers to help you tell the story. Involve as many of the children as you can. When you are done, say:

Is it hard to wait for Christmas? How many days until Christmas? We will make a way to keep track of the days. First, let's read a story.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility challenges, you could hold your circle activities in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit while wearing leg braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Christmas Makes Me Think* by Tony Medina, 2008. A young narrator anticipates the presents he's wishing for, the big tree he's hoping to get, the cake he'll bake with his grandmother. But he begins to wonder.

What about the people who don't get presents, or don't even have a place to live?

- *Llama, Llama Holiday Drama* by Anna Dewdney, 2010. If there's one thing Llama Llama doesn't like, it's waiting. He and Mama Llama rush around, shopping for presents, baking cookies, and decorating the tree . . . but how long is it until Christmas? "Gifts are nice, but there's another: The true gift is, we have each other."
- *Christmas in the Stable* by Astrid Lindgren, 1998. As a young girl listens to her mother tell the story of the first Christmas, where else would she imagine the miracle taking place but in the stable and fields she knows so well?
- *On Christmas Eve* by M. W. Brown, 1997. Unable to sleep on Christmas Eve, four children creep downstairs to see the tree.

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story.

When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: HOW MANY DAYS? PAPER CHAIN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Construction paper (red and green), cut into strips
- Tape dispensers
- A marker
- Bin for paper recycling

- Optional: Bells or ribbons, one for each paper chain
- Optional: Christmas music, and music player

Preparation for Activity

- Calculate how many strips of paper (links for paper chains) you will need: Count the days, starting with the date of this session and ending on Christmas. Multiply this number by a number slightly bigger than the number of children you expect. That is the number of strips of paper you need to cut.
- Cut construction paper into strips.
- If you plan to play Christmas music, test the music player.
- Optional: Invite older children to join you for this activity. They can help cut paper strips, assist the preschoolers, or make extra paper chains to decorate the meeting space.

Description of Activity

Children create a paper chain with one link for each day until Christmas. They will take home their paper chains with the instruction to remove one link each day. Make sure the chains include a link for today; you will remove the "today" link during the Closing.

Invite the children to the activity table. Demonstrate how to make a paper chain: Loop a strip and tape it closed to make a circle. Slip another strip into the circle and close the new strip; this begins the chain. Add as many circles as there are days until Christmas. Optional: Add a bell or a piece of ribbon on the last circle, the one that represents Christmas.

Write children's names on their paper chains and set the paper chains aside, to use in the Closing. Encourage the children to help with clean-up.

Including All Participants

A child who needs more activity can be invited to make a paper chain to decorate the room.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Bells for children to ring

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.

We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). Each time the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child.

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],

How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.
Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Add some Christmas songs. Variations of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas!" and "Ring Those Bells and Turn Around" are used by permission of [Teach Preschool](#).

We Wish You A Merry Christmas!

We wish you a Merry Christmas!
We wish you a Merry Christmas!
We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!
Let's all do a little clapping [or jumping,
stomping, turning],
Let's all do a little clapping,
Let's all do a little clapping,
To spread Christmas cheer!

Repeat "We wish you a Merry Christmas, we wish you a Merry Christmas... and a Happy New Year." Then add other action verses such as jumping, stomping, or turning, alternating with "We wish you a Merry Christmas."

Ring Those Bells and Turn Around

Sing to the tune of "Jimmy Crack Corn." If you have brought bells, distribute them for the children to ring.

Ring those bells and turn around
Ring those bells and turn around.
Ring those bells and turn around.
For Christmas time is near.

Repeat, changing "turn around" to another action, for example, "Ring those bells and stomp your feet." End with "Ring those bells quietly."

Including All Participants

If you have a child for whom jumping and standing is difficult, you may consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Paper chains (Activity 5)
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Invite children to bring their paper chains into the circle, or distribute their paper chains. Bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at church [or name of congregation] we celebrate peace and hope for Christmas.

Invite the children to remove the first link in their paper chain.

While waiting for family members, invite the children to decorate their Taking It Home handouts. Optional: Place

the handout in an envelope with the ribbon/yarn bow as a gift to the parent(s) or caregiver(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leader:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparation do we need for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Each night a child is born is a holy night: a time for singing, a time for wondering, a time for worshipping. — "For So the Children Come," Hymn 1061 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we heard the story of Jesus' birth and talked about what happens at Christmas. The children made a paper chain they can use at home to count the days until Christmas; this simple activity helps them practice patience as the holiday approaches.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share together... the books suggested or this session:

- *Christmas Makes Me Think* by Tony Medina, 2008. A young narrator anticipates the presents he's wishing for, the big tree he's hoping to get, the cake he'll bake with his grandmother. But he begins to wonder. What about the people who don't get presents, or don't even have a place to live?
- *Llama, Llama Holiday Drama* by Anna Dewdney, 2010. If there's one thing Llama Llama doesn't like, it's waiting. He and Mama Llama rush around, shopping for presents, baking cookies, and decorating the tree . . . but how long is it until Christmas? "Gifts are nice, but there's another: The true gift is, we have each other."
- *Christmas in the Stable* by Astrid Lindgren, 1998. As a young girl listens to her mother tell the story of the first Christmas, where else would she imagine the miracle taking place but in the stable and fields she knows so well?
- *On Christmas Eve* by M. W. Brown, 1997. Unable to sleep on Christmas Eve, four children creep downstairs to see the tree.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. The children made a paper chain to help them count down the days to Christmas. Hang your child's paper chain in a prominent

place so they will be reminded to remove a link each day... until Christmas. Make more paper chains to decorate your home.

A Family Adventure. View Christmas lights in your neighborhood in the evening, while playing and singing Christmas carols together in the car.

A Family Discovery. The book *Unplug the Christmas Machine: A Complete Guide to Putting Love and Joy Back into the Season*, by Jo Robinson and Jean C. Staeheli, guides you to create a joyful, stress-free holiday season. The authors answer the questions they have heard most often in their many years of talking with people about Christmas, such as "How can I reduce the stress of preparing for Christmas?" and "How can I make our celebration more spiritual and less materialistic?"

A Family Game. Sing together! Today, the children sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas!" and "Ring Those Bells and Turn Around." Try these at home; both songs shared with permission of [Teach Preschool](#).

We Wish You a Merry Christmas. This is based on a traditional song which you can hear here.

We wish you a Merry Christmas!
We wish you a Merry Christmas!
We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!
Let's all do a little clapping,
Let's all do a little clapping,
Let's all do a little clapping,
To spread Christmas cheer!

Add other action verses such as "Let's all do a little jumping," "... stomping," or "... turning," alternating with the verse that begins, "We wish you a Merry Christmas!"

Ring Those Bells and Turn Around. Give everyone bells or another item that has a pretty ringing sound. Sing to the tune of "Jimmy Crack Corn."

Ring some jingle bells! [shouted or spoken]

Ring those bells and turn around
Ring those bells and turn around.
Ring those bells and turn around.
For Christmas time is near.

Repeat, changing "turn around" to another action, for example, "Ring those bells and stomp your feet." End with "Ring those bells quietly. / For Christmas time is near."

A Family Ritual. Express your wishes for love, peace and hope for the season at a dinner time chalice lighting. You might start a family practice of lighting a dinner-time chalice each evening as Christmas draws closer. Find seasonal chalice-lighting words by [searching the UUA Worship Web](#), keywords "Christmas Eve."

FIND OUT MORE

[Unplug the Christmas Machine](#): *A Complete Guide to Putting Love and Joy Back into the Season* is a guide to creating a joyful, stress-free holiday season. Authors Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli answer questions such as "How can I reduce the stress of preparing for Christmas?" and "How can I make our celebration more spiritual and less materialistic?"

A blog post by Gail Forsyth-Vail on the UUA's Call and Response blog site discusses the secularization of Christmas in 19th-century America: "[UUs and the Battle for Christmas.](#)"

On the UUA Worship Web, read "[Reimagining the Christmas Story: a Metanoia Moment.](#)" by David A. Miller.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Consider lighting a candle for this reflection. What winter holidays do you celebrate? How are they connected to candlelight? The winter solstice is the basis for many traditions. People in ancient times found the lengthening of the night to be a frightening experience and lit candles and fires to hold the darkness at bay. Now, we still use candles to create a warm, cozy light at our dinnertimes, to create a romantic atmosphere, and to celebrate peace and hope. Do you ever wish for a power outage so that you can share some candlelight together? You may wish to create the magic of candlelight without waiting for the power to go out. Light a candle in the evening and enjoy the glow. Remember the peacefulness and magic of candlelight in your work with the children.

SESSION 33: WINTER LIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

See the blazing Yule before us... — Hymn 235, "Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly," in Singing the Living Tradition

The theme of this session is candlelight for winter holidays. Candlelight is a part of many holidays in the wintertime, bringing magic and warmth. The children will make a candle centerpiece to take home.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Associate candles with congregational worship
- Learn that candles are a part of many winter holidays
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Feel the warmth and magic of candles and light at wintertime
- Experience the accomplishment of creating their own candle centerpiece
- Learn that a lit candle resembles the chalice flame.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Candle Centerpieces	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Hand-rolled Beeswax Candles	15

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a story book, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Supplies for a free play activity relating to holiday candles

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add a free play activity relating to candles. For example, set out a collection of holiday cards with pictures of candles, a large sheet of poster board, and glue sticks.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr
- A variety of holiday candle holders, such as an Advent candleholder (4 candles), Swedish candle chimes, a sun or moon candleholder for winter Solstice, a hanukiah (Jewish menorah for Chanukah), a diya (Hindu clay pot for Diwali)
- Optional: A large candle and a lighter

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Set the holiday candle holders in the circle so you will be able to reach them when you are ready to show them to the children.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

Today we're going to talk about candles. Candles give us hope and warmth and are part of many winter holidays. Candlelight helps make the winter season seem magical. Look at the different candleholders that are part of winter traditions.

Show the children the candleholders you have brought. If you are comfortable, light a large candle in the middle of the circle. Invite the children to enjoy the warm light for a bit, and then gently blow it out. Finish by saying:

We have a candle in the chalice, too. It helps us remember the warmth of love and the light of truth. You will make your own candle and holder to take home. First, let's read a story.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Winter Lights* by Anna Grossnickle Hines, 2005. Poems and quilts illustrate the moon and the *aurora borealis*, the holiday lights of Santa Lucia, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Chinese New Year; the light of one, lone candle, and a hidden flashlight in the deep, dark night.
 - *Winter's Eve: Love and Lights* by Lisa Sferlazza Johnson and Tucker Johnson, 2007. Eve, the fairy, decides to explore the winter festivals that humans celebrate and process discovers that each festival has a special light to offer.
 - *Miki* by Stephen Mackey, 2012. On Midwinter Eve, Miki and her friend Penguin find their wishes come true when they are given a little tree to brighten up their cold, dark home. However, keeping the fairy lights twinkling takes more energy than even the great Polar Bear can muster.
 - *Winter Solstice* by Wendy Pfeffer and Jessie Reisch, 2003. The beginning of winter is marked by the solstice, the shortest day of the year. This book explains the winter solstice and how it has been observed by various cultures throughout history.
- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story.

When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: CANDLE CENTERPIECES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Six-inch candles, one for each child
- Modeling clay, a fist-sized amount for each child
- Evergreen boughs, cut in 3- to 5-inch lengths, and gardening shears
- Tiny pine cones, a handful for each child
- Gold or silver decorations
- Trays, one for every 3 children
- Paper plates, and a marker
- Paper towels, moistened
- A trash bag with liner, recycle bins, and (optional) a compost bag
- Optional: Plastic storage bags for taking elements home

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain materials. A floral shop or a large arts and crafts store will have boughs, tiny pine cones, and gold and silver decorations, such as [floral picks](#), gold or silver doilies you can tear or cut into smaller pieces, or metallic-colored pipe cleaners. Purchase enough decorations so that each child will be able to choose a variety. Cut the boughs into smaller pieces.
- Place the gold and silver decorations and the tiny pine cones in trays. Plan how you will set the trays on activity tables so that three children can share each tray. Then, set the trays aside.

- Keep the candles and trays out of sight and introduce each one after enough time for experimental play with each element.

Description of Activity

Children will first manipulate the clay, then the candle, then the evergreens to create a candle centerpiece.

Invite the children to the activity table. Give each child a ball of clay. Invite them to play with the clay. Then, give each child a candle. Ask:

Can you make the candle stand up in your ball of clay?

Let them experiment with the clay and the candle. For preschool children, the process and feel of the clay, the candle and the evergreens is as important as the finished product.

Finally, bring out the trays and gold pieces, and invite them to create a centerpiece for their table at home. Help children press decorations into the clay. When done, place each centerpiece on a paper plate and label with the child's name. Place them in a spot for picking up later. Encourage the children to help clean up.

Including All Participants

The finished product is not as important as the time a child spends manipulating the clay, candle, and greens. Invite children who do not complete a centerpiece to take home the individual pieces in a plastic bag; encourage them to complete the centerpiece, with help, at home.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made. Prepare to add "I'm a Little Candle" and "Jack, Be Nimble," described below, in honor of candles and candlelight.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in
turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the
group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the
room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your
hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your
hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your
hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). Each time the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child.

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.
Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.
ha.

I'm a Little Candle

Sing "I'm a Little Candle" to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot," and demonstrate the movements:

I'm a little candle dressed in white, [stand (if all are able) and put arms up over head like a hat for the flame]
Wearing a hat of yellow light.
When the night is dark, then you will see [reach arms forward to point outward]
Just how bright this light can be. [stretch arms wide and lift overhead, for a bright light]
I'm a little candle straight and tall, [stand, as able, straight and tall]
Shining my light upon us all.
When the night is dark, then you will see [reach arms forward to point outward]
Just how bright this light can be. [stretch arms wide and lift overhead, for a bright light]

Jack, Be Nimble

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
Jack jump over the candlestick
Jump it lightly, jump it quick
Don't knock over the candlestick.

Teach the children to point an index finger and make it "jump" over the other index finger, or invite the children into a circle and take turns jumping over a real (unlit) candle.

Including All Participants

If jumping and standing will be difficult for any of the children, consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons

- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation] we light candles for special times.

While waiting for family members to pick the children up, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place each handout in an envelope and tie with ribbon, as a gift to the parent(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leaders:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparations do we need to make for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

See the blazing Yule before us... — Hymn 235, "Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly," in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we explored candlelight. Candlelight is shared in many wintertime holidays, bringing a feeling of magic and warmth. The children made a candle centerpiece to take home.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share together... the books suggested for this session:

- *Winter Lights* by Anna Grossnickle Hines, 2005. Poems and quilts illustrate the moon and the *aurora borealis*, the holiday lights of Santa Lucia, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Chinese New Year; the light of one, lone candle, and a hidden flashlight in the deep, dark night.
- *Winter's Eve: Love and Lights* by Lisa Sferlazza Johnson and Tucker Johnson, 2007. Eve, the fairy, decides to explore the winter festivals that humans celebrate and process discovers that each festival has a special light to offer.
- *Miki* by Stephen Mackey, 2012. On Midwinter Eve, Miki and her friend Penguin find their wishes come true when they are given a little tree to brighten up their cold, dark home. However, keeping the fairy lights twinkling takes more energy than even the great Polar Bear can muster.
- *Winter Solstice* by Wendy Pfeffer and Jessie Reisch, 2003. The beginning of winter is marked by the solstice, the shortest day of the year. This book explains the winter solstice and how it has been observed by various cultures throughout history.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Visit a living museum that offers a demonstration of candle-making from olden times.

A Family Adventure. Eat a meal by candlelight only, sharing the magical glow together.

A Family Discovery. You can make hand-rolled beeswax candles at home. Find instructions on the [Playful Learning website](#) and watch the [DIY Candle](#) YouTube video. Listen to "[There's a Candle Burning](#)" by Briant Oden.

A Family Game. Today the children's Circle Games included songs about candles and candlelight. At home, sing "I'm a Little Candle" (to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot") using these movements:

I'm a little candle dressed in white, [stand (if all are able) and put arms up over head like a hat for the flame]
Wearing a hat of yellow light.
When the night is dark, then you will see [reach arms forward to point outward]
Just how bright this light can be. [stretch arms wide and lift overhead, for a bright light]

I'm a little candle straight and tall, [stand, as able, straight and tall]
Shining my light upon us all.
When the night is dark, then you will see [reach arms forward to point outward]
Just how bright this light can be. [stretch arms wide and lift overhead, for a bright light]

The poem "Jack, Be Nimble" has a fun finger play:

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
Jack jump over the candlestick
Jump it lightly, jump it quick
Don't knock over the candlestick.

Teach the children to point an index finger and make it "jump" over the other index finger, or take turns with your child as you jump over a real (unlit) candle.

A Family Ritual. Use your child's candle centerpiece for mealtime lighting.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: HAND-ROLLED BEESWAX CANDLES (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Sheets of natural beeswax, 8 inches wide by 16.5 inches long
- 15 ply, 1/8-inch diameter, no wire, flat braid wicking, and scissors
- Scissors
- Optional: Red ribbon, cut in 12-inch lengths, one piece to decorate each candle
- Optional: A hair dryer (to warm wax that is cold or brittle), and an extension cord, if needed

Preparation for Activity

- Watch an [instructional video](#) on YouTube.
- Decide how many candles each child will make. Calculate how much beeswax and what other supplies you need. Each 8 by 16.5 inch sheet of beeswax makes two candles. Note: Do not use regular household string as wicking.
- Purchase the supplies. The Amazon website offers a [beeswax candle kit](#) with supplies to make 20 candles. You can also get supplies at a craft supply store, such as Michael's.
- If you will use a hair dryer, plan where in the meeting space you can safely plug it in and operate it. Obtain an extension cord if you need one.
- Optional: Pre-cut candle wicks.

Description of Activity

Make hand-rolled beeswax candles.

Fold a beeswax sheet in half, press down on the crease and fold it back and forth a few times, then tear the sheet in half. Place the half sheet on a table. Put the torn edge on the inside facing the child. Snip a piece of wicking slightly longer than the sheet. Press the wick into the wax at the torn edge. Fold the edge of the beeswax around the wick, as tightly as possible. If the sheet of beeswax is brittle, lightly blow the hair dryer for two or three seconds over the sheet.

Once you have the wick securely wrapped up in the sheet, keep rolling tightly. Once you have the whole candle sheet rolled, press the wax edge into the candle. Blow some warm air over the candle for a few seconds as needed to fasten the edge securely into the candle. Optional: Tie a ribbon around the candle for gift presentation.

Including All Participants

Consider making 4-inch candles to cut the cost of this activity (beeswax sheets may be expensive), or if rolling the beeswax sheet will be hard for some of the children.

FIND OUT MORE

A [National Geographic article](#) describes how the winter solstice has been celebrated since ancient times.

"Winter solstice and the shaman within; It is we ourselves who must don the shaman's mask," is an [article by Patricia Montley](#) in the Winter, 2011 *UU World* magazine.

Read "[Light a Candle, Curse the Dark,](#)" a sermon given by Douglas Taylor at the UU Congregation of Binghamton, NY, October 8, 2006.

SESSION 34: VALENTINE'S DAY

INTRODUCTION

We are standing on the side of love; hands joined together as hearts beat as one. Emboldened by faith, we dare to proclaim we are standing on the side of love. — Hymn 1014 in Singing the Journey

While love has been a theme throughout Chalice Children, the Valentine's Day session is pure love. The children share their love by making gifts they will give to family and friends. Celebrate that thing called "love!"

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn it is important to share love
- Grow in their sense of belonging in the Chalice Children group
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Demonstrate how they show love
- Learn that Unitarian Universalists "stand on the side of love" and advocate for all people to love whomever they choose.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Cards and Love Beads	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Is Valentine's Day too sentimental for you? Or do you relish the time to express love? Is it problematic at this time in your life? Or is it a celebration? Love

seems so simple and yet it is connected intimately to all of the other emotions, even the negative ones. What is the answer? Love. When there is pain — love, when there is heartbreak — love, when there is despair — love.

"The ultimate source of a happy life is warm-heartedness. This means extending to others the kind of concern we have for ourselves. On a simple level we find that if we have a compassionate heart we naturally have more friends. And scientists today are discovering that while anger and hatred eat into our immune system, warm-heartedness and compassion are good for our health." — [Dalai Lama, Jan. 4, 2013](#)

Try to connect to the simple, pure love of the young children in your life and in your work with them.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Supplies for a free play activity relating to Valentine's Day

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add a free play activity relating to Valentine's Day, e.g. a heart-shaped puzzle or a heart-shaped box with surprises inside.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Guide and invite the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each week will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

Today we celebrate love for Valentine's Day. Church [our congregation] is a place where we learn about love. It is a place where we practice loving kindness. Valentine's Day is a special day for sharing our love. Can you tell me who loves you? How do you show love?

On Valentine's Day, people give cards, gifts, and flowers to those they love.

Say that love can be also expressed by sharing with someone, letting them go first, helping someone, and saying kind words. Then say:

Our church [our congregation] loves love! We have a program called Standing on the Side of Love where we help other people. There's lots of love to go around, especially on Valentine's Day. We are going to make Valentine's cards and Valentine's necklaces. First, let's read a story.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch* by Eileen Spinelli and Paul Yalowitz, 1996. One wintry day, a postman delivers a mysterious package with a big pink bow to a lonely man named Mr. Hatch. [Preview](#) this book on YouTube.
 - *Pete the Cat: Valentine's Day is Cool* by James Dean and Kimberly Dean, 2013. Pete the Cat thinks Valentine's Day isn't cool until he realizes how many special cats there are in his life!
 - *The Ballad of Valentine* (Picture Puffin Books) by Alison Jackson and Tricia Tusa, 2005. Set to the tune of the song "Clementine," Alison Jackson tells the sweet tale of Valentine and her beau.
 - *Love You When* by Linda Kranz, 2012. Popular "rock artist" Linda Kranz reminds us that those we love are always with us. During the course of a day, something sparks a thought or memory, and a loved one comes to mind.
 - *I Love You Book* by Todd Parr, 2013. Todd Parr celebrates the unconditional love between parent and child.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: CARDS AND LOVE BEADS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- For cards: Supplies for making Valentine's Day cards including pink, red, and white construction paper; paper doilies; hearts stickers; color markers; glue sticks, etc.
- For necklaces: Paper hearts (about 2 inches across), one for each child; yarn; colorful drinking straws (10 per child); adult scissors; a single-hole punch; and a roll of clear tape
- Trays to hold supplies at activity tables
- Black, red, or silver markers
- Paper towels, moistened
- Trash bag with liner
- Recycle bin

Preparation for Activity

- Create two stations, one for cards and one for necklaces.
- Prepare the materials to make necklaces and set them on trays two or three children can share: Cut yarn into 25-inch lengths, one for each child. Wrap one end of each length with tape to make a stiff "needle." Punch holes in the paper hearts, top center. Cut the straws into one-inch pieces, to create the love beads.

Description of Activity

The children make two Valentine's Day gifts, a necklace of love beads, and a card.

Arrange children at the two stations. At the necklace station, coach children to string some love beads on their length of yarn, then a paper heart, and finally some more love beads. Children at the card-making table will need help writing a love message on their card. Encourage the children to help with clean-up.

Including All Participants

If stringing the beads is very challenging for, help them tape a paper heart on yarn to make a necklace and leave out the love beads. Or, consider using pre-made leis; help children tape one or more hearts to the lei.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made.
- Plan to add one or more Valentine's Day songs. Learn "[Ten Little Valentines](#)" by Mr. Mike online, or "[My Valentine Heart](#)" with Miss Tracey.

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). Each time the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.
Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If jumping and standing will be difficult for any of the children, consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
 The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
 Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
 Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
 Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
 May we remember: Here at church [or name of congregation] we love LOVE!

While waiting for family members to pick the children up, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place each handout in an envelope and tie with ribbon, as a gift to the parent(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leaders:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparations do we need to make for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

*We are standing on the side of love; hands joined together as hearts beat as one.
 Emboldened by faith, we dare to proclaim we*

are standing on the side of love. — Hymn 1014 in Singing the Journey

IN TODAY'S SESSION... While love has been a theme throughout Chalice Children, the Valentine's Day session was pure love. The preschoolers made gifts for family and friends. Children learned that Unitarian Universalists "stand on the side of love" and advocate for all people to love whomever they choose. Celebrate that thing called "love!"

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share together... the books suggested for this session:

- *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch* by Eileen Spinelli and Paul Yalowitz, 1996. One wintry day, a postman delivers a mysterious package with a big pink bow to a lonely man named Mr. Hatch. [Preview](#) this book on YouTube.
- *Pete the Cat: Valentine's Day is Cool* by James Dean and Kimberly Dean, 2013. Pete the Cat thinks Valentine's Day isn't cool until he realizes how many special cats there are in his life!
- *The Ballad of Valentine* (Picture Puffin Books) by Alison Jackson and Tricia Tusa, 2005. Set to the tune of the song "Clementine," Alison Jackson tells the sweet tale of Valentine and her beau.
- *Love You When* by Linda Kranz, 2012. Popular "rock artist" Linda Kranz reminds us that those we love are always with us. During the course of a day, something sparks a thought or memory, and a loved one comes to mind.
- *I Love You Book* by Todd Parr, 2013. Todd Parr celebrates the unconditional love between parent and child.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... passing a family love heart around your home. Set a love heart on the stairs, tape it to a door knob, place it next to the sink, or leave it in another place for a family member to find it.

A Family Adventure. Make and leave valentines for your neighbors or friends.

Visit a location where you can see "love locks"—evidence of the custom of sweethearts affixing a padlock to a fences, a gate, a bridge or a similar public fixture to symbolize their everlasting love. See a list of [locations around the world](#).

A Family Discovery. Watch the 20-minute [Un-Valentine's movie](#) with Pooh and friends, on YouTube.

Participate in Loveland, Colorado's [Valentine Re-Mailing Program](#) and order a special stamp, a poem or an e-card sent from Loveland.

A Family Game. Sing a Valentine's Day song together. Find videos online to help you learn "[Ten Little Valentines](#)" by Mr. Mike or "[Valentine Heart](#)" sung by Miss Tracey.

A Family Ritual. Say the names of people you love when you have a dinner table chalice-lighting.

FIND OUT MORE

In an inspiring [video](#), Rev. Jason Shelton talks about composing the hymn “Standing on the Side of Love,” Hymn 1014 in *Singing the Journey*.

Visit the website of the UUA's [Standing on the Side of Love](#), an interfaith public advocacy campaign which in 2010 began the tradition of re-imagining Valentine's Day as a social justice holiday. Read stories of many ways UUs and others stand on the side of love and consider sharing your own story. Find an action you can join, yourself, with your family, or as a congregational community.

Read the 2012 sermon "[Love Is Always Tough](#)" by Rev. David Pyle. Here is an excerpt:

Love is not just this high ideal of humanity at our best...
it is also the pain of humanity at our worst.
You can never be hurt worse than when you love.
And yet it is this ideal of love
that calls us to come back to it,
to continue to risk ourselves
knowing that we are going to be hurt,
on the belief that it is worth it...
that the benefits of love, in all of its forms,
are worth the pain and the risk that love always entails.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Has spring arrived in your area? What signs of rebirth have you or will you see? Is this rebirth important in your celebration of Easter? Do you include the story of Jesus? What are your feelings surrounding the traditional crucifixion and resurrection story of Jesus Christ? It is a sad story and reminds us how cruel we can be to each other. It adds a bittersweet remembrance to the teachings of Jesus as a beloved teacher. Do you remember the cruelty of the killing of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as well? These men also were beloved leaders. Ponder the existence of both facets—the cruelty and the hope for a better world. Move toward the hope and joy, once more, again, as spring arrives and brings with it another chance, another rebirth. When we hold both facets in our hearts, we hold a mature, deep, and abiding love, despite cruelty, which was the essence of Jesus' teaching. While we do not share the crucifixion and resurrection story with young children, hold this deep abiding love in your heart as you work with them.

SESSION 35: EASTER

INTRODUCTION

Lo, the Eastertide is here, Alleluia! — from "Lo, the Day of Days Is Here," Hymn 269 in Singing the Living Tradition

Celebrate Easter and spring with eggs and baskets! The significance of Easter for our young children is its joy and hope, the returning of new life in the springtime. They will hear a story about Jesus as a beloved teacher. While the Christian theme of the resurrection of Jesus is problematic for young children, Easter can be introduced with the theme of hope and the renewal of spring.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn that Easter is a holiday related to the story of Jesus, as well as spring
- Grow in their sense of belonging to the Chalice Children group
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Connect the holiday of Easter with the renewal of spring
- Understand Easter's connection to Jesus through a simplified story of Jesus as a beloved teacher.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Baskets	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add a free play activity relating to Easter, i.e. a sorting table with egg cartons and plastic Easter eggs of various colors.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time you meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Gently encourage and help the children to put away the items they have been using.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child who is using a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- If *Meet Jesus* is not the story book you will share in Activity 4, Story, prepare to tell the children the short story about Jesus that concludes Circle Time. If you will read *Meet Jesus* aloud in Activity 4, skip the short story.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

Today we celebrate Easter. What do you do at Easter?

Invite their responses about an Easter egg hunt, Easter lilies, a special meal, new clothes, Easter baskets, a springtime family walk, or visits by friends or family. Affirm everyone's contributions.

If you are planning to share a story book other than *Meet Jesus* after Circle Time, conclude Circle Time by sharing the short story of Jesus below. Ask:

Does anyone know about a teacher named Jesus? His story is part of Easter. Jesus was a very special teacher. Jesus died at this time of year, on a cross. People were sad that Jesus died. They remembered him, and remembered his stories, what he said and what he did. They remembered him so well that it was as if he were right there with them again. We like to remember Jesus on Easter because of the good things that he did and taught. His stories remind us to love one another. They remind us at Easter that there is hope for a better world. We also enjoy Easter eggs and Easter baskets. We will make a basket and play with some eggs, but first, let's read a story.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility limitations, consider forming a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit down in braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *The Easter Egg* by Jan Brett, 2010. If Hoppi can make the best Easter egg, he will get to help the Easter Rabbit deliver the eggs on Easter morning. But it is not so easy.
 - *Happy Easter, Corduroy!* by Don Freeman and Lisa McCue, 2010. After Corduroy decorates eggs, he invites his friends over for an Easter egg hunt. Then they all have a picnic- and even get to pet some baby lambs. A board book.
 - [*Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher*](#) by Lyn Tuttle Gunney and Jane Conteh-Morgan, 2008. This picture book written by a Unitarian Universalist introduces young children (ages 4-8) to Jesus and his lessons of love, kindness, forgiveness, and peace.
 - *How Many Jelly Beans?* by Andrea Menotti and Yancey Labat, 2012. Count and pretend to eat them!
- Review *How to Read a Story Book*, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: BASKETS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Baskets, one for each child
- Basket decorations such as ribbon, pipe cleaners, strips of foam, markers, fake flowers
- Artificial grass ("Easter grass")
- Masking tape, adult scissors, and a black marker
- Paper towels, moistened; a trash bag with liner; and a recycle bin
- Optional: White paper lunch bags, color markers, and stickers

Preparation for Activity

- Obtain strawberry boxes or purchase inexpensive baskets from a thrift store or dollar store. You can give each child a white paper lunch bag instead of a basket.
- Purchase artificial grass ("Easter grass") and decorations.
- Set decorations on trays for two or three children to share, and place trays on activity tables.

Description of Activity

Children decorate a basket to use with Easter egg games in Activity 6, Circle Games.

Invite the children to the activity table. Encourage them to decorate a basket that they will use later to play games. Demonstrate how they might weave foam strips or ribbon into the basket or create shapes with pipe cleaners to attach to their basket.

Give each child a fistful of Easter grass to put in their basket when they are done decorating. Place a tag of masking tape on the finished basket and write the child's name on it. Encourage the children to help with clean-up.

Including All Participants

If the group includes children who have difficulty with fine motor manipulation, invite children to work in pairs to decorate two baskets.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Children's baskets (Activity 5, Baskets)
- Colorful, plastic Easter eggs, at least 3 per child

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs, with the addition of eggs and baskets. Find the melody for "A Tisket, A Tasket" [online](#).

Description of Activity

Play the games and sing the songs the children have enjoyed before, this time adding variations that use the baskets and eggs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo."

Variation for Easter: When the children clap or jump into the circle, give each child a plastic egg to put in their basket. You will need one plastic egg, per child, per verse. At the end of the song, have children return their eggs to you, to make room to receive more eggs.

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!

Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all put our eggs back!
Let's all put our eggs back,
Drop, drop, drop!

Optional verses:

We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. For Easter, add this step: The teacher gives each child an egg for their basket.

The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line. For Easter, add this step: Give each child a plastic egg and invite them to hold one half in each hand and clap the two halves together:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). Each time the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic:" For Easter, give everyone a plastic Easter egg as a prop. When the word "smile" is sung, hold the halves of your egg to your two cheeks, and smile:

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.
Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.
ha.

A Tisket, A Tasket

Children sit in a circle with their baskets and eggs. One child skips around the circle and drops their basket behind another child. That child stands up and becomes the skipper, while the original child picks up their basket and sits down in the vacated place.

A tisket, a tasket,
a green and yellow basket
I wrote a letter to my friend
and on the way I dropped it.
I dropped it, I dropped it,
on the way I dropped it,
A little child
they picked it up
and put it in their pocket.

Including All Participants

If the group has any children for whom jumping and standing is difficult, you may consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.

- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation] we light candles for special times.
May we remember: Here at church [or name of congregation] we celebrate Easter.

Optional: Give each child a jelly bean to put in their plastic egg(s) in their basket, to take home.

While waiting for family members to pick the children up, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place each handout in an envelope and tie with ribbon, as a gift to the parent(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leaders:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparations do we need to make for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

Lo, the Eastertide is here, Alleluia! — from "Lo, the Day of Days Is Here," Hymn 269 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we celebrated Easter and spring with eggs and baskets. Easter's significance for our young children is its joy and hope, the arrival of new life in the springtime. The children heard a story about Jesus as a beloved teacher, then made baskets to hold plastic Easter eggs.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share together...

the books suggested for this session:

- *The Easter Egg* by Jan Brett, 2010. If Hoppi can make the best Easter egg, he will get to help the Easter Rabbit deliver the eggs on Easter morning. But it is not so easy.
- *Happy Easter, Corduroy!* by Don Freeman and Lisa McCue, 2010 (board book). After Corduroy decorates eggs, he invites his friends over for an Easter egg hunt. Then they all have a picnic pet some baby lambs.
- [*Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher*](#) by Lyn Tuttle Gunney, illustrated by Jane Conteh-Morgan, 2008. This picture book written by a Unitarian Universalist introduces young children (ages 4-8) to Jesus and his lessons of love, kindness, forgiveness, and peace.
- *How Many Jelly Beans?* by Andrea Menotti and Yancey Labat, 2012. Count and pretend to eat them!

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try... hosting a Can Hunt instead of an Egg Hunt. Hide cans of healthy food for your local food bank and invite the children to find them. The enjoyment is in the seeking! Go together to make your donation.

A Family Adventure. Visit a local Christian church to view Easter decor and illustrated, stained glass windows. An Episcopalian church near you may be decorated with lilies and banners. Call first and ask when you may visit.

A Family Discovery. Read "[Bunnies, eggs, and resurrection](#)" by Michelle Richards, posted on the *UU Parenting* blogsite April 18, 2011.

Try a springtime activity with your child at this time of year. The Nick Jr. website describes how to make [pinwheels](#) and [Peter Rabbit egg holders](#). Illustrator Jan Brett provides directions for making a "[happy spring coloring placemat](#)."

A Family Game. Sing the Chalice Children song "It Isn't Any Trouble" giving everyone a plastic Easter egg as a prop. When the word "smile" is sung, hold the halves of your egg to your two cheeks, and smile. Sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic:"

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

A Family Ritual. Place an egg in your child's basket next to your chalice as a table centerpiece.

FIND OUT MORE

[*Meet Jesus: The Life and Lessons of a Beloved Teacher*](#) by Lynn Tuttle Gunney, illustrated by Jane Conteh-Morgan (Skinner House, 2007). Roberta and Christopher Nelson, authors of Unitarian Universalist parenting curricula including [*Parents as Resident Theologians*](#), commented:

This story opens a door for understanding and having conversations with children about Jesus. Our children are growing up in world of increasing diversity. They hear conflicting ideas and views about Jesus. They need to have information and conversations with trusting adults as they begin to explore the many images and stories they see on TV, read in the media, and hear in the school yard. This book will help parents and leaders engage with the issues. We feel the book fills a real need.

Read Meg Barnhouse's [humorous March 29, 2010 article](#) in *UU World*, "The Honey Springs worship committee plans its Easter service: A minister, a Pagan, a Christian, a Humanist, and an anthropologist set to work, in a congregation not unlike yours."

SESSION 36: EARTH DAY

INTRODUCTION

For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies... — For the Beauty of the Earth, Hymn 21 in Singing the Living Tradition

The children celebrate Earth Day with a walk outside. We call it a treasure hunt, because the children will be prompted to notice animals, plants, and other features of the local outdoor area, including sustainability strategies your congregation has undertaken (e.g., recycle bins, solar panels). They will share what they know about taking care of the earth. If your congregation participates in the UUA's Green Sanctuary program, invite volunteers from that group to join you outdoors.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Learn that Unitarian Universalists work hard to care for the earth
- Grow in their sense of belonging to the Chalice Children group
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the holiday called Earth Day
- Internalize that part of being a Unitarian Universalist is to take care of the earth
- Make the connection between the animals and plants in nature and the efforts their congregation and families make to care for the earth.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5
Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Treasure Hunt Outside	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. How do you celebrate the earth? Are you a mountain climber or would you rather take a quiet walk? Are you a photographer? A poet? How do you appreciate this planet on which we live? Do you hum "Blue Boat Home" to yourself or yodel from a hilltop? Do you wear an Earth Day pin or join a fundraising walk for the earth? Reflect on the diversity of ways that Earth Day is celebrated.

Next, reflect on the ways Earth Day can be shared. Is it to buy more artificial foam craft from a craft store or is it to spend time in nature? What do we really need to do on Earth Day? Is it to add busyness to our lives with one more celebration, or is it to slow down, simplify and contemplate our interdependence with all things on our planet? Bring this reflection to your work with the children.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Supplies for a free play activity relating to children with mothers, fathers, and caregivers

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add free play options relating to Earth Day. You might set a separate activity table with natural items, such as a seashell, a pinecone, a flower, and some fossils or rocks.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time you meet helps the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Gently encourage and help the children to put away the items they have been using.

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

We are celebrating Earth Day! What is Earth Day? A time for celebrating our beautiful earth. We live on the earth. What else is on the earth? Animals, all people, rocks, cities, oceans, and plants. Everything in the whole wide world! We need to take care of the earth. How do we take care of it? Keep it clean, keep it healthy. How do we do that? Pick up litter. Make new soil

with compost. Does anyone have a compost bin? What is it? How does it work? Does anyone recycle? How do you do that?

We also want to reduce the things we use. That means finding simpler things, like simple toys, and simple food. Can you think of other things that happen on Earth Day? Do you hang a flag with a picture of the earth on it? Do you wear a special tee shirt? Do you like to take a walk outdoors in nature? We are going outside for an Earth Day treasure hunt today. First, let's read a story.

Including All Participants

If any child has mobility limitations, consider sharing the story in a circle of chairs to make it easier to include a wheelchair or for a child to sit down in braces.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *The Earth and I* by Frank Asch, 2008. This story celebrates friendship that one child has with the Earth. They play together, listen to each other, and nourish each other. But when the Earth is sad, the child is sad, so he finds a way to make his friend, the Earth, happy.
 - *The Earth Book* by Todd Parr, 2010. With his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity, Todd Parr explores the important, timely subject of environmental protection and conservation in this eco-friendly picture book.
 - *The Curious Garden* by Peter Brown, 2009. One boy's quest for a greener world... one garden at a time. As time passes, the garden spreads throughout the dark, gray city, transforming it into a lush, green world.
 - *I Can Save the Earth: One little monster learns to reduce, reuse and recycle* (Little Green Books) by Alison Inches and Viviana Garofoli, 2008. Little Green Books educate children on ways they can be eco-friendly.
- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.
- Consider taking the group outdoors to read the story. Identify an appropriate spot and make sure you have enough adult supervision to bring the children outdoors.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: TREASURE HUNT OUTSIDE (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Paper and crayons
- Gloves and trash bags (for adults)
- Optional: Stickers representing items in nature (leaves, trees, acorns, squirrels, insects)
- Optional: Cups, pitcher and water

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange to walk around the outside of the congregation (you will need permission from parents/caregivers and you may need more volunteers than you usually have with the group). Take a pre-walk and look for items that show how we care for the earth. Does your congregation have solar panels? Recycle bins? A compost bin? Trees or a garden your community has planted?
- If your congregation participates in the UUA's [Green Sanctuary](#) program, invite knowledgeable volunteers to participate in the hike.
- Optional: Plan to remain outdoors for Activity 6, Circle Games, if the weather is likely to be favorable.
- Optional: Set up a table for drinks of water.

Description of Activity

The children observe and document evidence of the nature around your congregation and the ways your congregation helps take care of the earth.

Tell the group they will go outside to report on what kind of nature surrounds the building. Say that their walk will

be like a treasure hunt and you will help them find nature's treasures outdoors. Tell them they can draw, write, or place stickers on paper to keep track of what they see. Hand out paper, crayons, and (optional) stickers.

As you go ask the group questions about what they see that is part of nature. Encourage them to point out plants and animals. How many trees or birds do they see? What about squirrels? Pigeons? If it has rained recently, are there earthworms? Is there grass? Does dry sand blow in a hot breeze? Are iced-over puddles starting to melt? Tailor your questions to the surroundings of the congregation. Help the children find and place stickers on paper or take notes by writing or drawing.

As you walk, ask if anyone notices anything that didn't belong. Some children may notice litter. This would be a good transition to discussing ways that we care for the earth. Put on gloves and use a trash bag to pick up any litter. Show or tell the children your plan to dispose of it appropriately (recycle or trash).

Next, point out your congregation's solar panels, recycle bins, compost bins, etc. Name each item and tell the children how it helps us care for the earth.

After the walk, have the children wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Invite them to a drinks table and serve water to the children, whether you are still outdoors or have gone inside.

Including All Participants

Be aware of the participants' mobility challenges and make sure the outdoor space you plan to visit is accessible for all. If necessary, modify the outing to ensure each child can have an up-close, outdoor experience.

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Clean recyclable items and a recycle bin

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs and display any posters you have made. Leave time to include the two Earth Day themed songs presented below. Listen to the Cedarment Kids' version of "[Paw-Paw Patch](#)" (the tune you will need for "Picking Up Litter," below).
- Optional: Gather clean recyclables you found during Activity 5, Treasure Hunt Outside or clean recyclable items such as a cardboard egg carton, a rinsed-out plastic container or aluminum can, or a newspaper.

Description of Activity

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend.

I'll find a friend at church.

I'll find a friend at church.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.

We'll skip around the room.

We'll skip around the room.

Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. [stomp-stomp]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" [hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. [clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). Each time the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

How are you this special day?

We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.
Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Picking Up Litter

Sing this song, adapted from the traditional Appalachian song, "The Paw-Paw Patch":

Picking up litter and put it in recycle.
Picking up litter and put it in recycle.
Picking up litter and put it in recycle.
Way down yonder, at the paw, paw patch.

To add movement, distribute the cleaned, recyclable items to children in the circle. Place a recycle bin in the center of the circle. Invite the children to try to throw their litter in the recycle bin while singing the song. If they miss they may try again.

When everyone has given it a try and the song has ended, have them crawl into the center and pick up a different piece of recycling and try it again.

Note: Crumple newspaper or newsprint into a ball to make it easier to throw.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Sing to the tune of "The More We Get Together":

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle,
Recycle, recycle.
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
It's easy to do.
'Cause your trash
And my trash

Make up way
Too much trash!
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
It's easy to do!

Movements: Skip or walk in a circle while singing the tune. Stop after "It's easy to do" and point to another person on "your Trash." Point to yourself on "my trash." Fling arms overhead for "Too much trash." Then, skip or walk in the circle to finish the song.

Variation: If you have some clean recyclable items, set them in the center of the circle before you begin. Have children put them in recycle bins at the conclusion of the song.

Including All Participants

If the group has any children for whom jumping and standing is difficult, you may consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]

Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]

Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]

May we remember: Here at [name of congregation] we light candles for special times.
May we remember: Here at church [or, name of congregation] we celebrate and care for the earth on Earth Day and every day!

While waiting for family members to pick the children up, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place each handout in an envelope and tie with ribbon, as a gift to the parent(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leaders:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparations do we need to make for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies... —For the Beauty of the Earth, Hymn 21 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We celebrated Earth Day with an outdoor treasure hunt and looked for nature's interesting plants, animals, rocks, and more. The children shared what they know about taking care of the earth.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share together... the books suggested for this session:

- *The Earth and I* by Frank Asch, 2008. This story celebrates friendship that one child has with the Earth. They play together, listen to each other, and nourish each other. But when the Earth is sad, the child is sad, so he finds a way to make his friend, the Earth, happy.
- *The Earth Book* by Todd Parr, 2010. With his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity, Todd Parr explores the important, timely subject of environmental protection and conservation in this eco-friendly picture book.
- *The Curious Garden* by Peter Brown, 2009. One boy's quest for a greener world... one garden at a time. As time passes, the garden spreads throughout the dark, gray city, transforming it into a lush, green world.

- *I Can Save the Earth: One little monster learns to reduce, reuse and recycle* (Little Green Books) by Alison Inches and Viviana Garofoli, 2008. Little Green Books educate children on ways they can be eco-friendly.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Plant a tree, a flower, or a garden for Earth Day. Make sure there are tasks for every age and ability to do.

A Family Adventure. Where does your household trash go? Explore by researching online, by calling your municipal public works department, and by touring around. Visit a local waste processing facility and observe the mountains of trash. Ask your family how to choose one or more ways you can reduce, reuse, and recycle.

A Family Discovery. Plan to do an Earth Day Activity together. Check local listings. Get ideas on the Tinker Lab website for "[Fifty Earth Day Activities](#)" and by watching recent, annual Earth Day videos posted by the Disney Corporation on YouTube:

2011 — [Life is Beautiful](#)

2012 — [The Sound of Sunshine](#)

2013 — [Three Million Trees Planted](#)

A Family Game. Learn a motivating song, "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle," and simple movements to turn the song into a game. Sing to the tune of "The More We Get Together":

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle,
Recycle, recycle.
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
It's easy to do.
'Cause your trash
And my trash
Make up way
Too much trash!
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
It's easy to do!

Learn the movements together: Skip or walk in a circle while singing the tune. Stop after "It's easy to do" and point to another person on "your Trash." Point to yourself on "my trash." Fling arms overhead for "Too much trash." Then, skip or walk in the circle to finish the song.

A Family Ritual. Find a blue and green marble to represent the earth and place it in alongside, or in, your mealtime chalice.

FIND OUT MORE

Learn how congregations participate in the UUA's [Green Sanctuary](#) program.

Watch the video "[What Is Earth Day? A History](#)" on YouTube.

Read a sermon by Rev. Tracey Robinson-Harris, "[Earth Day in Urgent Times.](#)" on the UUA Worship Web.

SESSION 37: MOTHER'S/FATHER'S DAY

INTRODUCTION

I who love you shall be near you, all through the night. — from "Sleep, My Child," Hymn 409 in Singing the Living Tradition

This session celebrates mothers, fathers, and others who care for the children. The children show their parents and caregivers love and appreciation with a handmade flower gift. Be sensitive to the fact that not all children live with their parent(s) and remember that there are many different types of families connected by love. A child may be living with grandparents or a foster family; there are families with single parents, step-parents, and same-sex parents, to name just a few of the beautiful diversities called family.

Before the session, inform the children's families about this topic and request information they may wish to share about family relationships, including issues which might call for leaders' extra sensitivity; see Leader Resource 1, Sample Mother's/Father's Day Letter.

GOALS

This session will help preschoolers:

- Express love for the parents and other adults who care for them
- Experience a sense of belonging in the Chalice Children group
- Feel a sense of identity with a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Recognize that love binds a family together
- Understand the diversity of families
- Practice acceptance of all kinds of families and understand that this is what Unitarian Universalists do.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Activity 1. Free Play	15
Activity 2. Circle Rhymes Transition	5
Activity 3: Circle Time	5

Activity 4: Story	5
Activity 5: Flower Gifts	15
Activity 6: Circle Games	10
Closing	5

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take time before the session and find a quiet place for reflection. Do you have a favorite lullaby? Was it sung to you? Have you sung it to children? Bring to mind a tune that you know and love or any beautiful melody which reassures you that all is well. One of the ways we access the spiritual is through music, so, it is no wonder that lullabies are a universal expression of comforting and loving a young child.

We recognize many different kinds of families, and they are all based on love. Bring this love to your work with the children for this session, centered on the love of mothers, fathers, and all those who love and take care of us.

ACTIVITY 1: FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Name tags
- Variety of free play options, such as toys, a puzzle, a storybook, manipulatives, dramatic play props, and markers and paper
- Supplies for a free play activity relating to children with mothers, fathers, and caregivers

Preparation for Activity

- Make name tags for the children you are expecting and set these out with a few extra blank name tags and a marker.
- Display the free play options attractively, ready for the children to use, such as a puzzle with a piece already put in place, a family of ethnically and gender-diverse dolls sitting together in the dramatic play area, a group of trucks near a block garage, or an open picture book. Include, if you have these, the Memory Match Game (Session 5), the Chalice Flannel Board (Session 9), and the Family Jigsaw Puzzle (Session 11).
- Add supplies related to children and their mothers/fathers/caregivers, for example, a variety of family dolls and home settings; if you have these in the dramatic play area, move them to a special activity table.

Description of Activity

Free play time allows children to make individual choices, explore the environment, share time together, and build a sense of belonging and comfort with the group and the meeting room space.

As the children arrive, invite them into the Chalice Children room. Help them get comfortable by pointing out the free play area and noting the options for play that are displayed. Help them say goodbye to their parent(s) or caregiver(s).

Invite and guide the children to play, helping them feel safe and welcomed.

Give a five-minute warning to the children that free play will end and clean-up will begin; follow with a one-minute warning.

Including All Participants

Free play needs to include options for all the children. For example, you might set up a craft project at a table that is tall enough to accommodate a child's wheelchair with chairs or standing room for other children.

ACTIVITY 2: CIRCLE RHYMES TRANSITION (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle Rhymes posters

Preparation for Activity

- Display the Circle Rhymes posters from Session 1.

Description of Activity

Using the same songs and chants each time you meet will help the children transition smoothly and predictably from free play to Circle Time.

Begin singing the first song, "Clean-Up Time," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and gently encourage the children put away the items they have been using, helping them as needed:

Clean, clean, clean up play,
Gently as we go.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
The room is getting clean.

Repeat until clean-up is finished.

When the room is ready and children are standing, begin the next chant "Clap, Clap." Help the children focus on the leader while doing the movements:

Clap, clap,
Stamp, stamp,
Turn around and jump!

Repeat once or twice until all the children are focused and have joined in.

Invite the children into a seated circle by singing "Circle Time" to the tune of "London Bridge":

Circle Time is here again,
Circle Time, here again,
Circle Time is here again,
Now it's time for Circle Time.

When the children are seated and focused, lead the "I Wiggle" chant and perform the movements with the children:

I wiggle my fingers. [wiggle fingers]
I wiggle my toes. [wiggle feet]
I wiggle my shoulders. [wiggle shoulders]
I wiggle my nose. [wiggle nose]
Now no more wiggles are left in me, [leader sits down]
So I'll be as still as still can be.

Including All Participants

Invite a child in a wheelchair to sort and put away puzzle pieces or other manipulatives as part of clean-up. You may wish to change the words of the "Clap, Clap" chant

from "Turn around and jump!" to "Turn around and clap!" and turn the child in their wheelchair yourself or with a helper. Finally, Circle Time can take place in a circle of chairs so that everyone is in a chair.

ACTIVITY 3: CIRCLE TIME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Sample Mother's/Father's Day Letter](#) (included in this document)
- Chalice-lighting words, written on newsprint
- Chalice with tea light flame or other preschool chalice option
- Feelings Chart or *Feelings Flashcards* by Todd Parr

Preparation for Activity

- Before the session, inform families about the topic. Invite parents or caregivers to let you know about each child's family situation or structure so that you can lead sensitively and inclusively; you may wish to adapt Leader Resource 1 and send to parents/caregivers.
- Post the chalice-lighting words on the wall near the Circle Time area.
- Set the holiday candle holders in the circle so you will be able to reach them when you are ready to show them to the children.

Description of Activity

Bring the chalice into the circle, either on the floor or on a small table or stand. Say, in these words or your own:

Welcome to Circle Time! First we light our chalice.

Point out where your chalice-lighting words are displayed. Repeat your chalice-lighting words as you "light" the chalice:

We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.

Say, in these words or your own:

Now we share our names and feelings. How are each of you feeling today? We will go around the circle and each say our name and point to how we're feeling today on the Feelings Chart [or Feelings Flashcard]. If you would rather not share today, you may say, "No, thank you."

Once everyone who wishes to has shared, say, in these words or your own:

For all the feelings that we feel today, we know that we have our friends, our families, and our

church [congregational] family to share them with.

Introduce today's theme, saying something like:

Today, we tell our mothers and fathers and the people who take care of us that we love them. It's Mother's/Father's Day!

Who is in your family? There are many kinds of families! A family is based on love. How do you tell them you love them? There are many ways to tell your parent(s) and the people who take care of you that you love them. Do you say "I love you?" Do you give them a hug? Do you help them with chores?

Today we are going to make a gift for your mothers, your fathers, and the other adults who love you and take care of you. But first, let's read a story.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story book

Preparation for Activity

- Choose a story from the following suggestions:
 - *Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!* by Mem Fox and Marla Frazee, 2000. Harriet doesn't *mean* to be pesky. Sometimes she just is. And her mother doesn't *mean* to lose her temper. Sometimes she just does. But Harriet and her mother know that even when they do things they wish they hadn't, they still love each other very much.
 - *Who's in My Family? All About Our Families* (Let's Talk about You and Me series) by Robie H. Harris and Nadine Bernard Westcott, 2012. Trusted *New York Times* best-selling author Robie H. Harris looks at the many kinds of families that make up our world.
 - *The Family Book* by Todd Parr, 2010. *The Family Book* celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two moms or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, Todd Parr assures readers that no matter what kind of family you have, every family is special in its own unique way.
 - *I Love You* by Todd Parr, 2013. Todd Parr celebrates the unconditional love between parent and child. From the heartfelt ("I love you when you need hugs") to the

lighthearted ("I love you when you hide my keys").

- Review How to Read a Story Book, under Resources in the Introduction.

Description of Activity

Hold up the book and say, in these words or your own:

Here's how I am going to read the story. Does anyone need to move so they can see and hear?

This will help children move if they need to and then get settled before the story is started, so they don't interrupt the reading. It also serves as a reminder that if they stand or sit right in front of the pages, no one else can see. Invite them to find a place to settle so that everyone can see. When all are ready, read the story. When you finish reading, ask if anyone has thoughts about the story that they would like to share.

Including All Participants

Seat a child with hearing or sight difficulties near the reader.

ACTIVITY 5: FLOWER GIFTS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Flowers and green stems or baby's breath
- Florist tape and corsage/boutonniere pins
- Cups or trays of water for children to share, masking tape, and adult scissors markers and crayons
- 8.5x11-inch paper, color markers or crayons, and heart and/or flower stickers
- Paper towels, moistened, trash bag with liner, and recycle bin and/or compost bin

Preparation for Activity

- If you prefer not to use real, cut flowers, consider having the children make flowers of coffee filters (blossoms) and pipe cleaners (stems). The website [DLTK-Growing](#) Together offers a [detailed activity plan](#) for coffee filter flowers that have a watercolor effect. Or, simply have children draw on coffee filters without wetting them. Another alternative is to have each child plant a seedling or cutting in a small clay pot as a gift for mother, father, or another caretaking adult.
- Calculate quantities and obtain supplies for corsages. Anticipate that each child will make one or two corsages; each corsage requires one flower and one or more stems of greenery or

baby's breath. Florist tape (dark green, half-inch wide) and corsage/ boutonniere pins (large pins with a pearl topper) can be purchased at a dollar store, craft store, or flower shop or a grocery store with a floral department; see [florist tape](#) and [corsage/boutonniere pins](#) on Amazon.

- Obtain flowers. It may be cost effective to buy several bouquets to separate into individual stems.
- Snip all the stems to about 5-inch lengths and lay them on the activity table. Set out bowls of water.
- Create a sample corsage/boutonniere: Choose a flower and one or more greenery or baby's breath stems. Dip the stems in water to give them a final drink, and then wrap the stems together with the green, stretchy florist tape. The tape will stick to itself and hold the stems firmly.
- Set the corsage pins, masking tape, and black pen aside for co-leaders to use.
- Cut 12-inch lengths of florist tape and stick them to a table edge or other hard surface for the children to access.
- Set out paper, markers, crayons, stickers, etc. at another (dry) activity table for children who may wish to make cards.

Description of Activity

Children make a corsage or boutonniere for their mother, father, or other adult who loves and takes care of them.

Direct children's attention to the activity table where you have set the flowers. Invite them to look, smell, and gently touch. Say that flowers are like people, all different, all beautiful. Say these words, from a meditation by Buddhist author Thich Nhat Hanh:

You are a flower. You are fresh like a flower

Invite the children to make a flower corsage for a loved one. Show them the sample corsage you have made. Demonstrate how the person who receives their gift can poke a corsage pin through the bundle of florist tape and stems to attach the corsage to clothing.

Have the children choose a flower and a piece (or several) of greenery to make a little bouquet. Help them wrap the stems with the florist tape (which is self-sticking and very forgiving of uneven wrapping). Push the corsage pins into the stems and tape and cover the end with masking tape. Write the child's name on the masking tape on the pin.

Invite children to make another corsage if they have another person in mind, such as a grandparent or neighbor or another person in their family.

Encourage the children to help with clean-up. Give flower stems and remains to a family to compost.

As time allows, children may also wish to create cards for a mother, father, or another adult who loves and takes care of them. Invite children to tell you who their card is for. Offer to write their comments on the card, e.g. "This is for my mommy. I love you!"

ACTIVITY 6: CIRCLE GAMES (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the games and songs. Display any posters you have made. Prepare to add "Happy Loving Day."

Description of Activity

Gather in a circle on the floor.

Play the games and sing the songs. Keep the pace brisk to help the children stay focused.

Welcome, Chalice Children

Ask children to stand, as they are able, in their places. Sing "Welcome, Chalice Children" to the tune of "Little Rabbit Foo-Foo":

Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Unitarians.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
We are Universalists.
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.
Welcome, Chalice Children,
My name is [leaders' and children's names, in turn].
Jump into the circle,
Jump, jump, jump.

Alternate verses:

We are Chalice Children!
Welcome to our circle!
We are Chalice Children!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Unitarians!
We are Universalists!
Welcome to our circle!
Clap, clap, clap!
We are Chalice Children!
Let's all welcome... [name of a child in the group]
Welcome to our circle!

Clap, clap, clap!

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old,
One is silver and the other is gold.
A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I'm going to be your friend.

Happy Loving Day

Sing to the tune of "Happy Birthday to You":

Happy Loving Day to you,
Happy Loving Day to you,
Happy Loving Day, dear mommy/daddy/[name]
Happy Loving Day to you.

Substitute the names of people the children request. Ask them, "Who loves you?"

Because of the strong association with "Happy Birthday," listen for clues that the children want to sing "Happy Birthday" too, and lead it. If anyone's birthday is today, recently, or soon, you can all sing to them.

Find a Friend at Church

"Find a Friend at Church" is sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." Have the children gather in a circle. Have one child walk around the outside of the circle while the first two lines of the song are sung. The child then chooses a friend. The two friends hold hands and skip around the circle while the remainder of the verse is sung. The first child returns to the circle, and the game is repeated with a second child walking outside the circle. Continue until all have had a turn to choose a friend:

I'll find a friend at church.
I'll find a friend at church.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, I'll find a friend at church.
We'll skip around the room.
We'll skip around the room.
Heigh ho, the derry oh, we'll skip around the room.

Variation: Instead of "skip," ask the player to choose the action, such as run, walk, hop, or jump.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," leading the children in the actions noted after each line:

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. [clap-clap]

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.
[stomp-stomp]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!"
[hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]
If you're happy and you know it, then your face
will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, do all three.
[clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!]

Variation: Sing this welcome song to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It" (from *Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons*, copyright 1982). Each time the verse is sung, the leader shakes the child's hand. Repeat with each new child:

Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?
How are you this special day?
We are glad you came to play.
Good morning, [child's first and last name],
How are you?

It Isn't Any Trouble

Sing "It Isn't Any Trouble" to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.
So smile when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to s-m-i-l-e.

Variations: Instead of "s-m-i-l-e," substitute "g-i-giggle-e":

It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
It isn't any trouble just to g-i-giggle-e. [giggle]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to g-i-giggle-e.

Or, substitute "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha":
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
It isn't any trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. [laugh]
So laugh when you're in trouble.
It will vanish like a bubble,
If you only take the trouble just to ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Including All Participants

If you have a child for whom jumping and standing is difficult, you may consider substituting "clapping," "stepping," or "wiggling" as options for the songs.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Markers or crayons
- Preschool chalice
- Optional: Envelopes, hole punch, and yarn or ribbon

Preparation for Activity

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and make a copy for each child.
- Bring the "lit" preschool chalice to the activity table.
- Optional: Punch a hole in the corner of each envelope, string the yarn or ribbon through the envelope, and tie it in a loop or a bow.

Description of Activity

Keep the children in their circle, and bring over the chalice. Offer these closing words while you extinguish the chalice, and invite the children to repeat them after you:

We gather the warmth of love, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart]
The light of truth, [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
And the energy of action [bring hands over "flame" and gather to your heart again]
Into our hearts as we blow out the chalice. [blow out the "flame"]
Back into the world of do and say, [hold world in cupped hands]
Carry it forward into the dawning day. [arms overhead, hands together making the sun]
May we remember: Here at [name of congregation] we light candles for special times.
May we remember: Here at church [or name of congregation] we love and honor those who care for us.

While waiting for family members to pick the children up, invite the children to decorate the handout to take home. Optional: Place each handout in an envelope and tie with ribbon, as a gift to the parent(s).

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on these questions and discuss them with your co-leaders:

- How do we feel about what went on during this session? Why?
- What was the best part of this session? Why?
- What preparations do we need to make for the next session?

TAKING IT HOME

I who love you shall be near you, all through the night. —"Sleep, My Child," Hymn 409 in Singing the Living Tradition

IN TODAY'S SESSION... We celebrated Mothers and Fathers today, as well as all those who care for the children, with flowers. We were sensitive to the fact that not all children live with their parent(s) and there are many different types of families, all based on love (for example, some children may live grandparents, other relatives, or a foster family). We recognized that some families have a single parent, a step-parent, same-sex parents, and more—just to name a few of the beautiful diversities called family. Our message to the children on this day was that there are lots of different kinds of families and they are based on love.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Share together... the books suggested for this session:

- *Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!* by Mem Fox and Marla Frazee, 2000. Harriet doesn't *mean* to be pesky. Sometimes she just is. And her mother doesn't *mean* to lose her temper. Sometimes she just does. But Harriet and her mother know that even when they do things they wish they hadn't, they still love each other very much.
- *Who's in My Family? All About Our Families* (Let's Talk about You and Me series) by Robie H. Harris and Nadine Bernard Westcott, 2012. Trusted *New York Times* best-selling author Robie H. Harris looks at the many kinds of families that make up our world.
- *The Family Book* by Todd Parr, 2010. *The Family Book* celebrates the love we feel for our

families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two moms or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, Todd Parr assures readers that no matter what kind of family you have, every family is special in its own unique way.

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Consider bringing the [Family Diversity Exhibit](#) of photographs to your congregation.

A Family Adventure. Does your congregation promote an event like the "Moms Against the War" Peace Rally? See the [UU World article](#). Attend a "moms rally" or another rally promoting social justice and peace.

A Family Discovery. Learn about Mama's Day. Mother's Day was originally founded as an antiwar rallying cry by Unitarian Julia Ward Howe. Find out on the [UUA website](#) ways to give our contemporary Mother's Day more meaning:

With 'Mamas Day,' we hear a call to honor all those who mother, especially those who bear the brunt of hurtful policies or who are weighed down by stigma in our culture. We celebrate trans mamas, immigrant mamas, single mamas, lesbian mamas, young mamas, poor mamas, and others. It's opportunity to take action to create the conditions so that all families can thrive.

A Family Game. Sing "Happy Loving Day," to the tune of "Happy Birthday":

Happy Loving Day to you,
Happy Loving Day to you,
Happy Loving Day, dear mommy/daddy/[name]
Happy Loving Day to you.

Take turns inserting the names of people you know who love each other.

A Family Ritual. Try a Buddhist meditation for Mother's/Father's Day or another occasion. Find a [flower meditation](#) on the Buddhnet website. Or, use the "[pebble for your pocket meditation](#)" from *Planting Seeds*, by Thich Nhat Hanh. Each person holds four pebbles in a pocket and takes them out, one at a time, saying these words:

[1st pebble] I am fresh like a flower
[2nd pebble] I am solid like a mountain
[3rd pebble] I am still like a lake
[4th pebble] I am free like space around me and inside me.

LEADER RESOURCE 1: SAMPLE MOTHER'S/FATHER'S DAY LETTER

Dear Chalice Children families,

On [day, date], we are offering a Mother's/Father's Day session for the preschool Chalice Children group. We want to be sensitive to the fact that not all children live with their parent(s) and we want to celebrate that there are many different types of families, all based on love. A child may be living with grandparents or a foster family; some families have single parents, step-parents, adoptive parents, and same-sex parents, to name just a few of the beautiful diversities called family. Our message to the children on this day will be that there are lots of different kinds of families and they are based on love.

In order to be inclusive and supportive, it would help us to know if there are family types to which we should pay some attention, or if there are difficulties to which we should be sensitive, such as divorce, incarceration, deportation, custody issues, etc. Of course, we do not wish to invade your privacy; we would just like to help support your little one. So if you feel it is important that we know anything about your family situation, please contact one of us.

Sincerely,

The Chalice Children leaders

[Names with contact information]

[Name of congregation]

FIND OUT MORE

Family Diversity

A panorama of family diversity can be seen, and displayed, in the traveling photographic exhibits offered by the [Family Diversity Project](#).

More resources for family diversity are provided in the UUA's Tapestry of Faith program for youth, Families. You can [browse this curriculum online](#).

Meditations

Consider a Buddhist meditation for Mother's/Father's Day or another occasion. Find a [flower meditation](#) on the Buddhnet website. Or, use the "[pebble for your pocket meditation](#)" from *Planting Seeds* by Thich Nhat Hanh. Each person holds four pebbles in a pocket and takes them out, one at a time, saying these words:

[1st pebble] I am fresh like a flower

[2nd pebble] I am solid like a mountain

[3rd pebble] I am still like a lake

[4th pebble] I am free like space around me and inside me.

Find Pebble Meditation cards that demonstrate the practice [here](#).

The Origins and Meaning of Mother's Day

Read the *UU World* article by Donald E. Skinner, "[Mother's Day for peace, as Julia Ward Howe intended](#)"; Kansas City Unitarian Universalists promote Mother's Day founder Julia Ward Howe's message of peace" (2008).

Read Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Robinson's May 8, 2011 sermon, "[The Next to Perfect Mother's Day Sermon](#)," on the website of All Faiths Unitarian Congregation (Unitarian Universalist), Fort Meyers, FL.