

# **GATHER THE SPIRIT**

## **A Multigenerational Tapestry of Faith Program**



**BY RICHARD S. (RICK) KIMBALL AND CHRISTINE T. RAFAL, ED.D.**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This program echoes the words of Jim Scott, widely known Unitarian Universalist composer and musician. His composition, "Gather the Spirit," is Hymn 347 in the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*. Thank you, Jim, for this poetic call to feeling and action, and permission to reference your poetry in these workshops.

Christine Rafal expresses her gratitude for the benefit of Rick Kimball's expertise throughout the writing of this program, her first project in multigenerational religious education curriculum development.

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## THE PROGRAM

*The world's religions provide a variety of examples of how water has been regarded as part of a sacred life process, not simply another product for consumption. At the same time, our increased comprehension of the story of evolution as understood by science gives us a renewed appreciation for the role of water in sustaining life. To see water as a source of life, not merely a resource, is the challenge of a new synthesis of science and religion in our times. — Mary Evelyn Tucker, co-founder and co-director of the Forum on Religion and Ecology, in a talk at the 2001 annual meeting of the Geological Society of America*

Gather the Spirit is an eight-session, multigenerational program that teaches stewardship with a focus on water. Stewardship can take many forms: donating money to our congregations and to causes we care about; volunteering to teach, to lead or to physically maintain our congregations; helping to meet the needs of others and protecting our shared resources in our local and global communities. Perhaps, today, there is no more compelling focus for our stewardship than the clean, drinkable water all life on Earth requires. Through a lens both scientific and religious, using activities a wide range of ages can do together, this program addresses the importance of water, the inequity of access to clean water, and actions we can take as Unitarian Universalist stewards. It asks: Can water sources be owned? Why is clean water scarce in parts of the world? If clean water is abundant where I live, what difference does it make if I conserve it? What can I do to promote global water equity?

Participants learn that stewardship of Earth's water resources is not just critical, but possible. They learn how to link with other progressive, caring forces to promote protection and fair sharing of Earth's clean water.

## GOALS

This program will:

- Cultivate gratitude for the access to clean drinking water available to many of us, most of the time
- Highlight the importance and scarcity of clean water and explore why its distribution is not equitable
- Nurture stewardship of the Earth and its resources as an expression of Unitarian Universalist faith and values

- Promote just sharing of the planet's clean water
- Build multigenerational community
- Affirm the seven Unitarian Universalist Principles, particularly the inherent dignity and worth of each individual and respect for the interdependent web of all life.

## LEADERS

This program can be led by either lay leaders or religious professionals with group leadership skills and the time and energy to prepare workshops. Experience leading multigenerational programs is, of course, a plus. However, we all have to start somewhere. Most professional religious educators will be able to help new leaders. And many resources are suggested in the Resources section below.

Since Gather the Spirit contains more activities and ideas than most groups will use, choose only those that seem most appropriate for the group.

It is recommended that two (or more) committed adults lead the program. Multigenerational programs are also an excellent opportunity to engage youth co-leaders in the leadership team. If you are leading this as a children's or youth program, safe congregation practice requires at least two adults to be present. What characteristics should you seek in leaders? The ability to plan tight and present loose (see Leader Guidelines, below) is important. Comfort with and respect for people of all ages is essential. Experience with the Internet is helpful. Compatibility among co-leaders is significant. A sense of humor can add a lot. Most of all look for somebody with enthusiasm, commitment and the time and energy required for the job.

## PARTICIPANTS

Stewardship of water is a crucial, timely topic relevant to people of all ages, and Gather the Spirit is a multigenerational program, with information and activities designed for multi-age groups. The program might serve children as young as seven and adults as old as anybody in your congregation. In publicizing the program, be clear that people of all ages are welcome — indeed, needed — including singles and families of any configuration. Too often, multigenerational events are interpreted as "for families with children at home."

This program is an opportunity for congregations to build multigenerational community by engaging adults, youth and children fully as Unitarian Universalists heeding the call to action in service to Earth.

## INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

As Unitarian Universalists, we seek to be an inclusive religion, and Gather the Spirit is designed to be an inclusive curriculum. Nobody should be excluded from the program or its activities by real or perceived physical or other limitations.

Inclusiveness sometimes requires adaptation. Some activities suggest specific adaptations, in an Including All Participants section which follows activity descriptions. Some suggestions are very simple, such as providing varied work surfaces so people can work while standing or seated.

The most essential tool in the process of inclusion is awareness that adaptation may be needed. Anticipating the small child who simply must move in order to remain engaged or the older person who must be near the speaker in order to hear can help you create an inclusive program.

## FAMILIES

Gather the Spirit offers simplicity and depth simultaneously, with varied participants in mind. Workshop activities speak in a voice the young will understand but which still engages and challenges the more mature. Individual adults or youth can participate in various activities either independently or together with family groups. If you mix family clusters with individuals who are on their own, make sure individuals and families engage each other often and well. Communication and shared experiences are essential to making your multigenerational Gather the Spirit group a cohesive, caring community.

The Taking It Home section for each workshop suggests a range of ways participants can extend their involvement with Gather the Spirit ideas and values. A Taking It Home blog can help you continue the engagement beyond the Gather the Spirit program; see Before You Start, below.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Gather the Spirit includes eight 60-minute workshops. They may be used in order or independently. Within the workshops, it is suggested that you use the core activities in the suggested sequence; however, most activities can be used out of sequence.

Gather the Spirit is very flexible. You can offer a complete, sequential eight-session program or present one-time workshops based on any of the workshops. You can pursue one or more Faith in Action water stewardship projects; you might focus on one throughout the entire program or take on different, smaller projects at each workshop. The program suggests participants make a River Scene mural, starting in workshop 1 and

continuing in each subsequent workshop. The mural can be as large as space allows.

Each workshop has the same structure: a workshop introduction, goals and learning objectives, a workshop-at-a-glance chart and a guided spiritual preparation for leaders to use before the workshop, followed by a full, detailed workshop plan.

Each workshop begins with an Opening—a chalice lighting, a moment of meditation, optional music, and an introduction to the workshop. And each workshop ends with a Closing—summarizing and reflecting on the workshop. Between the Opening and Closing is a series of activities and a Faith in Action activity. The workshop then presents a Taking It Home section, Alternate Activities to supplement or replace activities in the core 60-minute workshop, and all the stories, handouts and leader resource you will need to lead the workshop.

### Opening and Closing

It is recommended that you use the same Opening and Closing rituals throughout Gather the Spirit. The program provides an Opening and Closing based on a water-pouring ritual, rather than a traditional chalice-lighting. Of course, you may open and close in a manner familiar to participants or in any way you choose.

### Activities

The activities for each workshop appeal to a variety of learning styles, and mix reflection and action. In each workshop, one activity uses a central story to illuminate workshop themes; you will find leader prompts to help participants process the story. Each workshop offers at least one Alternate Activity you may use to enhance or replace a core activity, or to extend the workshop.

Every activity provides lists of the materials and preparations required, followed by step-by-step guidance for leading the activity. Some activities suggest specific adaptations to fully include participants with particular limitations or challenges in "Including All Participants."

### River Scene

The River Scene is a mural to which participants add new elements in each workshop. What materials will participants use to create it? What size will it be? Where can you display a mural throughout the program and perhaps afterward? Review all the River Scene activities and adapt them to fit your program.

### Faith in Action

Faiths in Action activities challenge participants to apply their Unitarian Universalist faith through stewardship of Earth's water resources. Although Faith in Action activities are critical to Gather the Spirit, the time for them is not included in the 60-minute core workshop. Consider how you will implement Faith in Action. Some

groups will make this segment a relatively brief part of each workshop. Others will make it central, streamlining other activities to accommodate it. Some may extend the meeting time to include a Faith in Action project, while others may schedule additional meetings to focus on a Faith in Action project. These all are viable strategies to achieve the goals of Gather the Spirit. Note that Faith in Action, by design, often engages the wider congregational community and/or outside guests, and may need a different meeting time or place than your regular workshops.

### **Taking It Home**

The Taking It Home section of each workshop helps participants extend the content and purposes of the workshop into the home with concrete ideas for families and friends to do together. It summarizes the workshop, then suggests a variety of engaging and creative activities. Download and adapt it to fit your workshop. Share it with participants either as hardcopies or as emails to participants and/or their parents. Or, set up a blog that allows families to access the activities and discuss their experiences online. Free, easy-to-use blogging services are available through Google Blogger or at 360.Yahoo.com. Once you set up the blog, participants need only register to use it. Blogs help participants see one another's ideas without clogging everyone's email box or disappearing into a spam filter. A blog also allows you to keep in touch with Gather the Spirit participants after the program has ended.

However you use Taking It Home, help participants recognize that families are the primary source of religious education. Religious education can begin and advance in a religious education program, but it will thrive best if continued beyond the program, especially at home.

## **LEADER GUIDELINES**

Gather the Spirit is highly flexible and rich in possibilities. So make choices: Do not try to do everything. Then plan and prepare, plan and prepare, then plan some more. Make use of the ideas offered below under Before You Start.

Plan tight, so you can present loose. Planning tight means knowing exactly what you will do in each moment of each workshop, and obtaining and setting up the supplies needed to do it. Presenting loose means that once you are set to go, with everything necessary at hand, you can relax and adjust to events as they occur. One activity has totally engaged your group and threatens to eat up more time than you have allowed? Fine. You are achieving exactly what you hoped to achieve. Another activity is a bomb despite all that time you gave to finding just the right supplies? Sigh, and let it go. Move on to something else. Save the supplies for another day. Plan tight, present loose and don't worry.

As the workshops proceed and you know your group better, your predictions of participant appeal will become increasingly accurate.

A well planned and engaging program will not only keep participants interested, it will also greatly increase the chances of appropriate group behavior. In a multigenerational group, you may get leadership support and good behavior modeling from other adults. But do not hesitate to offer firm leadership. Too many side conversations? Use a talking stick or other implement, saying that only the person holding it may speak at any one time. Too much energy in the room? Call for a quick stretch break. Too many opinions on what to do, when? Remind participants of time limitations and gently move the group forward. Posting a written workshop plan can be helpful in that regard.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The options for scheduling Gather the Spirit are many. It can be used on Sunday mornings as a multigenerational program sandwiched between larger segments of the congregation's religious education year. It can be used on Saturday afternoons or in early weekend evenings, perhaps combined with potluck meals. It can be adapted for use primarily with youngsters of mixed ages. It can be part of or central to a congregational summer program. It can be part of a weekend retreat. Consult with your religious educator and religious education committee to schedule Gather the Spirit.

Examine this program. After reading this Introduction, look at the workshops. Decide which seem most promising for the times you have available.

Decide how you want to use music. In the Opening, participants use percussion and voice to make the sounds of rain. Some workshops suggest group singing. You may wish to play instrumental music or songs with water-themed lyrics while participants work on the River Scene mural or during other quiet activities. In Workshop 8, you may wish to play folk music about water stewardship and sharing global resources, especially the music of Pete Seeger who is a focus of the workshop. Find a list of suggested music in the Before You Start section, below.

Most Unitarian Universalists wish to provide stewardship to the world, and most are concerned about the Earth and its water resources. But prospective participants will only know about Gather the Spirit if you tell them. Schedule your program when they are most likely to be free and let them know well in advance of its purposes and merits. But they need help fitting these vital causes into their schedules. Once you get their attention, many will be pleased to hear of this promising, positive use of individual and family energy.

## BEFORE YOU START

Establish a registration system for Gather the Spirit with your director of religious education. You will need to know how many participants to expect at your first workshop, their ages, their allergies and their special needs.

Publicize the program in congregational newsletters, website, worship announcements, religious education brochures and bulletin boards. Share the program description and the ages of participants you seek, along with scheduled meeting places and times and registration information. Clearly communicate that Gather the Spirit is a multigenerational program. Make sure announcements are inclusive, particularly of single adults and families without young children.

Meet early with co-leaders to decide what to do, when to do it and what additional help you will need. Agree how you will communicate during the program and set a planning schedule. Will you touch base before every workshop?

Shape your Gather the Spirit program, considering in particular how you will present the River Scene, what you will do as Faith in Action, how you will extend Gather the Spirit and connect the participants between workshops and how you will incorporate music into the program. Closely review the workshops and activities you intend to use. Make supply lists and preparation plans early. For the first workshop, obtain more supplies than you think you will need.

Check your meeting space to see how well it fits your plans. Adjust the space or the plans as necessary. Set up your meeting space early. Take advantage of the Spiritual Preparation offered for each workshop; if possible, engage in a moment of centering immediately before leading the workshop.

### Music Suggestions

You may wish to play recorded instrumental music or songs with water-themed lyrics while participants work on the River Scene mural or during other quiet activities.

Song suggestions include:

"[Gather the Spirit](#)," by Jim Scott, available online and in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993)

"Follow the Drinking Gourd," Hymn 152 in *Singing the Living Tradition*; recorded by Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir on *Brown Girl in the Ring: A World Music Collection* (Music for Little People, 2001)

"All I Really Need" on *Raffi in Concert* (Rounder, 1996) or a version by the Wilkinsons on *Country Goes Raffi* (Rounder, 2001)

"The Water Is Wide" and other songs with water themes on *Pete*, a CD by Pete Seeger and Friends (Earth Music Productions, 1996)

"Big Beautiful Planet" and "Clean Rain" on the Raffi CD *Evergreen Everblue* (Shoreline Records, 1990).

Instrumental suggestions include:

George Frideric Handel, "Water Music," available in many recordings

Bedrich Smetana "Moldau," available in many recordings

Claude Debussy, "La Mer," available in many recordings

Alan Hovhaness, *And God Created Great Whales*, CD (Crystal Records, 1993)

Chuck Plaisance and Suzanne Doucette, *Desert Oasis*, CD (Only New Age Music, 2005)

R. Carlos Nakai, *Canyon Trilogy: Native American Flute Music*, CD (Canyon Records, 1993)

James Galway, *Meditations*, CD (BMG, 1996)

Cesar Fornes Berlanga, "Prelude and Lullaby for an Old Tree" and "A Corner in the Wood" on *Music for Relaxation*, CD (Relaxation, 2002).

## PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES

### Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

There are seven [Principles](#) which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

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

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

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

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

## RESOURCES

### Unitarian Universalist Religious Education Resources

[\*Welcoming Children with Special Needs: A Guidebook for Faith Communities\*](#) by Sally Patton (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004) provides a thoughtful perspective and specific approaches for inclusion in religious education. Ideas pertain to multiple special needs and are applicable to adults as well as children.

[\*Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook\*](#) Tracey L. Hurd (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005). Find a detailed map of

developmental traits one can expect to see in children and youth in a faith education setting, and strategies for engaging different ages.

[\*The Gift of Faith: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children\*](#) by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar (Boston: Skinner House Books, second edition 2003).

Tapestry of Faith offers two multi-chapter guidance resources online:

[\*Spirituality and the Arts in Children's Programming\*](#) is by Dr. Nita Penfold, creator of the Spirit Play program. [\*Making Music Live\*](#), by Nick Page, provides guidance for incorporating music into religious education, including how to teach songs even if you are not a musician.

### Environmental Stewardship

*Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* by Richard Louv (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2006) highlights the value of encouraging children's first-hand experiences in the outdoors.

*The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book* by Bob Greyson (Torrance, CA: Frank Schaffer Publications, Inc., 2001) includes more than 100 group projects, games and activities. These include activities for multiple intelligences and a variety of learning styles. All games are easy to play, require little or no preparation, are adaptable to a variety of situations and skill levels, and provide step-by-step instructions.

## **FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM**

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

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

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

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

Your name:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM**

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

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Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

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

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

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

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

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

# WORKSHOP 1: GATHER THE SPIRIT

## INTRODUCTION

There's a river of my people and its flow is swift and strong. — Pete Seeger, Unitarian Universalist folk singer and activist

This workshop introduces stewardship and water as critical at every level of being, from self to universe. It sets the stage for the Gather the Spirit program, presenting water as a great gift and highlighting that human beings are charged with its care. The workshop offers optional, water-based ways to decorate the Gather the Spirit meeting space and introduces two ongoing activities: group work on a shared River Scene mural and a water scavenger hunt to try at home.

Gather the Spirit is intended for use by multigenerational groups, and its activities are designed to include and engage participants of diverse ages and abilities. You will benefit from learning in advance who will be in the group, so you can tailor the Gather the Spirit program to participants' specific interests and needs.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Introduce water as a spiritually and physically connecting force, drawing together all beings in the web of existence
- Present stewardship as essential human commitment to the web of all existence
- Explore Unitarian Universalist perspectives on water and its place in our interdependent world
- Demonstrate the energizing force of gathered community, in discussion and action
- Share wisdom from the Sources of transcending mystery, the results of science and Native American tradition.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Become familiar with the rituals of Gather the Spirit

- Experience the power of joined group by making rain and beginning a mural
- Hear a water-based creation story from the Navajo tradition
- Consider big questions concerning human community and water
- Express in art and action the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, respect for the web of all existence
- Explore ways to steward Earth's water resources.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Snail Girl, a Navajo Story	15
Activity 2: River Scene	20
Activity 3: Water Charades	10
Activity 4: Meditation — Watery Me	5
Faith in Action	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: River Poetry	15
Alternate Activity 2: A Round Robin Story — Minnows and Whales	10
Alternate Activity 3: The Wonder of Water, through Science	

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take a moment to think about the role of water in our lives. We cannot live without water. We can survive longer without food than without water. Our potable water supply is finite and in danger from pollutants. How do you view your responsibility as a Unitarian Universalist charged with the caring of the Earth and its water? Think about the ways water sustains you and makes you feel nourished. Think about the gift water is to you, to humankind, to all life on Earth. Take these positive feelings about water into today's workshop.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, the cup of water and the plant together on a table.
- Place chairs for all participants in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose background music for the Opening and other quiet activities in the workshop. The Before You Start section of the program Introduction offers suggestions.
- Optional: If you have set up a blog for Gather the Spirit participants, prepare instructions for accessing the blog. Make a copy for every family and/or plan to email the instructions to participants.

### Description of Activity

In Gather the Spirit, the chalice-lighting involves water, not flame.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to share an opening ritual to help everyone connect with the sounds of water. Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a rain storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.
- Tap your fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects and make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

If you have started a Gather the Spirit blog for the group, invite participants to use it. Explain that, over the course of the program, participants may post comments such as the results of their explorations of Gather the Spirit topics or new ideas relevant to the program; and, they may respond to one another's postings. Distribute instructions for accessing the blog or make sure you have email addresses to send the blog instructions to participants.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Pay attention to accessibility; arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: STORY — SNAIL GIRL, A NAVAJO STORY (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Snail Girl, a Navajo Story](#)" (included in this document)

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story.

## Description of Activity

Gather the group. Tell them that creation myths are stories from different cultures of how the world and life began. Today Unitarian Universalists believe the world and life gradually evolved through many millions of years. Say:

Years ago, people told each other stories about where the Earth came from and how people, animals and plants came to be. Some of these beautiful stories help us connect with the mysteries of the universe. This story about how Snail Girl brought fresh water is from the Navajo Nation, a Native American culture today located in the Southwestern United States.

Read or tell the story.

Help the group process the story with questions such as these:

- How could First Woman and the animals live without fresh water?
- How could we live today without fresh water?
- What do you think First Woman and the animals in the story would say if they saw the world's waters today?
- Why was it important to have different kinds of animals help in the creation of the world?
- How did First Woman reward Snail Girl?
- How are people rewarded today if they help take care of the world's water?
- Do you know of anybody in the world today who would like to have Snail Girl come help find fresh, clean water?
- Can lots of fresh water really grow from a tiny droplet—a seed of water? Why do you think that happens in the story?
- In the story, the People had a "giving thanks ceremony." What do you think that ceremony was like? Do we ever have a "giving thanks" ceremony? Why?
- What message do you get from this story?

Affirm that the story shows that people have always needed fresh water to live, yet only about one third of the world's population today has enough fresh, clean water. The other two thirds could all use the help of a Snail Girl.

The story offers additional messages: Animals, and people, have different strengths. Snail Girl was slow, but she kept on going and saved the day. All of us have different strengths we can use to help care for Earth's water resources.

First Woman finds another message. She says the trail of moisture left by Snail Girl "will be a message to everyone that our pure water is precious and we must take care of it."

Tell the group, in your own words:

Global warming is likely to change the Earth's climate in different ways. Some people who now have enough good water may not have enough in the years to come. Some dry places could become wetter. Whatever happens to our climate, every living thing on Earth will still need fresh water to live.

## ACTIVITY 2: RIVER SCENE (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A length of blue cloth or a large roll of mural paper, and a means to attach it to a wall and/or work tables
- Drawing supplies such as oil pastels; color markers; paints, paintbrushes and cups of water (and newspapers or drop cloth)
- Plain drawing paper, scissors (including left-handed scissors) and glue sticks and tape
- Optional: Additional arts and crafts materials such as rolls of blue crepe paper, pieces of blue art paper and magazines to cut up for pictures of human and other animal river life
- Optional: Music and music player

### Preparation for Activity

- Identify where you can work on and display a mural for the duration of the Gather the Spirit program. Purchase a long swath of blue cloth or a large roll of mural paper. Plan to make the mural as long as the work and display space accommodate. If no wall space is available, plan to roll the mural up and store it between workshops.
- Attach the cloth or paper securely to work tables or wall.
- Have art supplies out and ready for use.
- Optional: Choose music to play while participants work on the River Scene. The Before You Start section of the program Introduction offers suggestions.

### Description of Activity

Participants begin a mural of a River Scene for ongoing work and display throughout Gather the Spirit. Today's goal is to place the river on the wall and engage

participants to add drawings of human life and activities that might be found at a river.

Tell the group:

People often live near rivers. Let's imagine our river scene shows a popular river with lots of activity in and around it, some activity from people and some from nature. What could we show in our river scene? Today, let's concentrate on how people use a river; we will add animals and other things as Gather the Spirit goes along.

If feasible, have participants draw directly on the mural. Ask them to leave plenty of space between drawings so more images can be interspersed in later workshops. You can also give participants plain paper to draw on and scissors, tape and glue sticks so they can attach their drawings to the River Scene. If the group is large and the mural small, invite participants to work in pairs to avoid filling the mural too quickly.

Tell participants they have about ten minutes to draw, so images should be simple. With about five minutes left, invite participants to finish their drawings, clean up and re-gather as a group.

Use these questions to engage the group with "big question" ideas about the themes of stewardship, community and water. Tailor the questions to the ages represented in the group:

- How do tiny drops become a mighty river?
- How are people similar to water drops? What happens when one or more people gather?
- Would you want to live all alone, like a single drop?
- Why do people always seem to gather together? Are you stronger in a group than you are alone?
- How is water connected to the web of life?
- Why was life created the way it was? What does it mean that we need water and food and clothes and other things just to stay alive?
- What will happen if we and other people fail to take care of Earth's waters?

Invite the group to consider the River Scene they have begun together. Ask what else belongs there. Affirm that participants can add to the River Scene next time they meet.

### **Including All Participants**

Provide a variety of work spaces so that people with varied abilities can work easily and comfortably. If standing and attaching their work to the river scene is challenging for some, let them work with partners who can help display their creations.

Not everyone is comfortable making drawings. You can suggest some participants cut out magazine pictures to attach to the mural or enhance the river with blue paper or crepe paper. Avoid extravagant praise as well as critiques of participant contributions—affirm all who help shape the River Scene.

## **ACTIVITY 3: WATER CHARADES (10 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Index cards

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Optional: Write individual charade assignments on index cards and set the cards aside.

### **Description of Activity**

Playing a game of charades helps participants appreciate water's vast influence and many forms, while also enjoying some movement.

Summarize some amazing facts about water: It seems to be almost everywhere—including inside us (at least 60 percent of our bodies are water; even our bones are one-quarter water). There's much more water on Earth than there is dry land; ocean water covers three quarters of the planet. Water helps control the temperature of the Earth. Water helps keep us alive. Water is wonderful.

Ask the group to prove just how wonderful water can be by playing a special kind of Charades. Form groups of three or four participants, larger if necessary to include a mix of ages in each group. Say that each group will act out water in some kind of action, for the others to guess. Add:

- Presentations will be informal; groups need not use the formal rules of Charades.
- Presenters can make noise, but they cannot talk.
- Presentations should involve all group members, and can be as active as is safe for participants and appropriate for the meeting space.

Allow groups to choose their own kind of water in action to represent. Or, randomly give each group an index card with a Charades assignment you have written. Here are some possibilities: Niagara Falls, Old Faithful, a local water body, a strong rain turning to gentle snow, someone taking ice cubes from a freezer, Noah's Ark, ocean waves, a burbling brook, a dripping faucet, someone skiing, someone surfing.

Separate the groups so they can plan and practice without being heard or seen by others.

When all are ready, bring the groups together. Have each, in turn, present a charade until others guess its meaning. If guessing is difficult, allow observers to ask questions that performers can answer by nodding "yes" or shaking their heads "no."

### **Including All Participants**

Make sure the participants in small groups work together inclusively and find appropriate parts for participants of all ages and abilities in their presentations.

## **ACTIVITY 4: MEDITATION — WATERY ME (5 MINUTES)**

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Read Alternate Activity 1, River Poetry. If you have time, you may wish to add it immediately after this meditation.

### **Description of Activity**

This meditation introduces participants to the water cycle.

Explain meditation if necessary, in words that young participants will understand. You might say:

Meditation is a wonderful, quiet way to connect with yourself and with other people at the same time. It means using your own imagination to be with winds and with waves and with water. It means being here on Earth and, at the same time, part of the whole universe. When you do a meditation, in your imagining mind you can connect with the whole web of life and all its great mystery.

Say that many people like to meditate with their eyes closed while others like to stare at something, such as a flickering chalice or a spot on a wall.

Ask participants to prepare for meditation by making their bodies quiet and comfortable and closing their eyes (or looking at just one thing). Then guide this meditation. Speak slowly and quietly, pausing between sentences:

Imagine that you are very small. You are as small as a drop of water. In fact, you are a single drop of water.

Ten thousand years ago, you were a drop of water being swallowed by a big ape. Today you are a drop of water being swallowed by a woman athlete. You feel yourself bouncing up and down because she is running a long race, a marathon. On she runs, for miles and miles. She keeps drinking more water as she goes harder and faster. And she keeps losing water as she sweats. You feel yourself moving closer and closer to the surface of her skin. Then, you are a drop of sweat on the runner's forehead. But it's a hot day, so soon you dry up. You have evaporated. You are no longer a single drop.

You have turned into vapor. Up you rise, higher and higher, into the sky. The air up there is cold. So cold it condenses the vapor. You come together again. You are a drop. You are part of a cloud. But the air is full. It cannot hold so much water. Precipitation begins. You fall back toward the Earth, a drop of rain. You are over a lake and the lake collects you.

You have been through the water cycle. When the sun comes out bright, you might evaporate and rise up again. But there is no time for that because a minnow swallows you. You are part of this tiny fish. You feel yourself moving around, back and forth. You know you are in the minnow's tail. And you like it here now. You like it so much you think you can keep swimming and swimming, on and on. But you cannot. Because now it is time to come back to your real life. So you leave the minnow and rise up in the water. You float up to the top and soon you are you again, floating around in your bathing suit, then swimming back to us, and back to this group, and here you are again, not water anymore but a human being, in all your regular clothes.

Invite the group to talk about how it felt to be on this journey as a drop of water.

- How did it feel to be a drop of water?
- Did you like the feeling of changing so much?
- Did you realize how much you were needed for survival of both the ape and the person?

Ask participants if they would like to be a drop of water. Tell them that human beings are made of water—about 60 percent of our bodies is water. Say that a whole drop of water would not really stay together through centuries. But each tiny molecule inside a drop of water does continue on through time. So one molecule inside them might once have been inside Mary, Queen of Scotland. Another might have been inside a huge elephant. Or almost anything or anyone else. This is all part of the wonder of life, the great mystery.

### **Including All Participants**

If the group includes young or fidgety participants, adapt the meditation to keep it under one minute.

## **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Adapt the Taking It Home section. Prepare it as a handout and copy for all participants (or, plan to email to all adult participants and parents).
- Re-set the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

## Description of Activity

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop: Today we talked about stewardship of the Earth's water and about people coming together in community. We discovered some of the wonders of water. In Gather the Spirit we will keep finding ways to be good stewards of the world's fresh waters. Today, we will recycle our chalice water by nurturing this plant.

Invite participants to offer a thought about what moved them during this workshop. Say something like:

Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection. Then invite volunteers to answer. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us until we meet again.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants. Set aside the chalice bowl and plant where they will be safe between workshops. Save newsprint with closing words for re-use.

## FAITH IN ACTION: WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM? HOW DO WE KEEP IT CLEAN? (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Information from the [United States Geological Survey](http://water.usgs.gov/) (at [water.usgs.gov/](http://water.usgs.gov/)) (USGS)

### Preparation for Activity

- Visit the [USGS website](http://water.usgs.gov/) (at [water.usgs.gov/](http://water.usgs.gov/)) and research "Water Information By State" to learn where the drinking water in your area comes from and what pollutants and other hazards do or may affect the water available in your area. Print information to share with the group.

- Find out about local or regional water issues. Identify agencies or organizations—including your congregational social action or environmental justice committee—working on these issues. Gather information that might help the group choose an action.
- Optional: Invite a guest who is active in local or regional water resource protection to come speak with the group. Prepare the guest to tell the group about their project and answer participants' questions.

## Description of Activity

Engage participants in learning about their own drinking water and choosing an action to help protect the local or regional water source(s).

Invite the group to brainstorm where they think drinking water for the congregation and their homes comes from. Gather some guesses, then share the information you obtained from the USGS website. Ask what the group thinks might be pollutants or other hazards affecting or threatening the drinking water. Then, tell them about the pollutants and other hazards that do or could affect your local water supply.

You may be in an area with little or no pollution; if that is the case, point out that a lack of concern about local water pollution is a privilege many in the world do not share. However, remind the group that because of global warming and climate change, fresh, clean drinking water may one day become scarce for all life on our planet.

Brainstorm ways the group might advocate for cleaning up pollution or raising awareness of other, impending problems. Or, if you have invited a guest to talk about a local water protection initiative, ask them to tell the group about their project and answer participants' questions. Close by identifying and assigning next steps to move forward on an action plan the group wants to do.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements? How well did the activities include everyone? Were your activities appropriate for the ages of your participants? What should you do differently at the next workshop? Does the group have youngsters who have trouble focusing? Can you find a special role for them next time—maybe helping you?

## TAKING IT HOME

There's a river of my people and its flow is swift and strong. — Pete Seeger, Unitarian Universalist folk singer and activist

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** We talked about stewardship and water. We saw that when people gather in community, they are strong. We heard a Navajo creation myth about Snail Girl finding fresh water. We made rainstorm sounds, built a River Scene and imagined being a drop of water traveling through the water cycle. We talked about how, for Unitarian Universalists, social action and stewardship can be expressions of faith.

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

What kind of stewardship do we offer in our family? In other words, how do we care for each other and by doing so, express our responsibility for the family? What kind of stewardship does our family do for others?

Why do we gather in the community of our congregation? What other communities are we in?

What Unitarian Universalists mean when we say "service is our prayer"?

Where do we have fun with water? What are some of our favorite water places?

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

**Family Construction Fun.** Make a rain stick. If you do, bring it in to show the Gather the Spirit group. The basic idea is simple: Use a heavy cardboard tube. Poke many nails or other sharp sticks so they extend into the center of the tube (and tape them on the outside of the tube so they do not fall out). Seal one end of the tube. Pour in beans, sunflower seeds or other small, hard objects. Seal the other end. Decorate the tube as you wish. Turn the rain stick over and over, and listen to the rain inside. For detailed instructions, search the Internet for "making rain sticks." One source is the [Kinderart](http://www.kinderart.com/sculpture/rain.shtml) (at [www.kinderart.com/sculpture/rain.shtml](http://www.kinderart.com/sculpture/rain.shtml)) website.

### FAMILY MINNOW STORY

Writing a group minnow story is an optional activity suggested for the workshop. If you don't do it with your group, do it at home. Make up a story showing how "the minnow effect" works. That's sort of like "the butterfly effect"—the idea that a butterfly flapping its wings on one continent can affect the weather as far away as another continent. What about a minnow swishing its tail? Might that move the water, so another fish comes close to eat the minnow, but the minnow gets away and moves the water more, and an even larger fish comes after the first fish... and, then what?

### A FAMILY RITUAL

Make your own water-based chalice. Use a special bowl. Fill it with water and float a tea candle in it. Or try a special floating candle you can find at specialty candle stores.

Meditate by sitting quietly together around the chalice, watching the flame and remembering a special watery place.

### FAMILY SCAVENGER HUNT

Find a way to conserve water at home. Figure out how much water you can save if you put a brick in the tank of your toilet. Use the Internet to find more ideas. Try the websites of [Eartheasy](http://eartheasy.com/live_water_saving.htm) (at [eartheasy.com/live\\_water\\_saving.htm](http://eartheasy.com/live_water_saving.htm)), [Green Venture](http://www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation), [Monolake](http://www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation) (at [www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation](http://www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation)) or the United States [Environmental Protection Agency](http://www.epa.gov). Post your idea and your water savings results on the Gather the Spirit blog or tell the group about it at the next meeting.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: RIVER POETRY (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Paper, pencils and (optional) clipboards

### Preparation for Activity

- Distribute paper and pencils to participants.

### Description of Activity

This activity can be done immediately after Activity 4 in this workshop, Watery Me: Meditation. Invite participants to write short poems about water to post around your River Scene. This option may particularly engage participants who do not really like to draw. If participants want more direction, suggest poems about loving water, saving water and helping water.

### Including All Participants

Be inclusive of very young participants. Pair them with a co-leader or an older participant who can engage them to talk about what they like about water, or how we can help protect water, and write down their dictated words. Then the partners can decorate the paper together.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: A ROUND ROBIN STORY — MINNOWS AND WHALES (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Writing paper and a pencil for one participant
- Optional: Chalice bowl (or another shallow bowl, filled with water) and a stone or another small, heavy object

## Description of Activity

Invite the group to explore "the minnow effect"—the Gather the Spirit version of "the butterfly effect," an idea, rooted in chaos theory, that the flapping of a butterfly's wings can influence weather thousands of miles away.

Introduce the activity by telling the group about both the butterfly effect and the ripple effect. You might use your chalice bowl to demonstrate the ripple effect: Drop a small object in and watching the ripples spread.

Then, introduce the minnow effect:

Can the swishing of a minnow's tail change the world? How? Take a moment to think about it. We will go around and ask everyone to create a story together, one sentence at a time. I will begin. Then the next person adds to it until everyone in the room has contributed. At the end we will read the story aloud.

Ask a volunteer to write all the sentences and provide paper and a pencil.

Begin by saying:

The minnow moved its little tail.

Invite the next person to continue; they might say, "A fish feels the water move and says, 'Aha, there's a minnow over there,' and goes after it." Then the third person adds a third sentence, and so on around the group. Eventually the story might involve the movement of a whale, and the whale might cause a wave big enough to move a boat, and the boat might crash to shore and... but that's all up to the group.

When all have contributed (if the group is small, you may wish to go around again), invite the volunteer to read the entire story aloud. You could post the story on the group's River Scene mural.

### Including All Participants

Some people are quicker with verbal creation than others. You can allow people to pass, but it might be better for a co-leader to help out with a gentle suggestion a participant can use as their own. It's fine if the story suddenly veers off in an unlikely direction—that's part of the fun of round-robin story creation.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: THE WONDER OF WATER, THROUGH SCIENCE

### Materials for Activity

- Books on the science of water

## Preparation for Activity

- Peruse books and online resources to ground or refresh your knowledge of water science and gather visual aids to share with the group. Some sources:
  - *Science With Water* by Helen Edom (Usborne Books, revised 2007), for ages 4-8
  - *The Everything Kids' Science Experiments Book: Boil Ice, Float Water, Measure Gravity-Challenge the World Around You!* by Tom Robinson (Adams Media Corporation, 2001) for ages 8-12
  - Water science for kids pages on the website of the [United States Environmental Protection Agency](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/KidsStuff/) (at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/KidsStuff/](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/KidsStuff/))
  - United States Geological Survey's [Water Science for Schools](http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/) (at [ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/](http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/)) website
- Optional: Invite a guest speaker with water science expertise.

## Description of Activity

Share your knowledge of water science in a way that supports the curriculum and activates the interest of scientifically inclined participants. If science is not your strength, find books and other resources to share with participants that explore the science of water.

For a more substantive experience, invite a science teacher, a marine biologist, an environmental engineer or other knowledgeable person to talk with the group. A visitor might bring one or more microscopes so participants can examine the complexity within a drop of water. Or, a visitor might speak about water ecology and stewardship in your area.

To give a knowledgeable visitor plenty of time with the group, consider scheduling a separate event to explore water indoors and out. You might hold the meeting at an outdoor location near fresh water and/or combine it with a casual meal with a fresh water theme (such as watermelon).

## STORY: SNAIL GIRL, A NAVAJO STORY

Snail Girl Brings Water: A Navaho Story (Rising Moon Books, 1998), copyright 1998 by Geri Keams; partial text used by permission of Geri Keams.

Long ago, it is said, there was a mighty flood, and the People left their world, the Fourth World, the Underworld, and came up into the Fifth World, the world we live in today. They found themselves on the shore of a great ocean.

The People broke into groups by clan and went out to find new homes. But at the end of four days, they came back to the place by the ocean.

"There's no fresh water to drink in this world," they said. They stood by the biggest body of water they had ever seen, but it was salty and they couldn't drink it without getting sick. "What are we going to do?" they asked.

First Woman stood in front of the People and spoke. "Someone will have to go back down to the old world below, back through the hole from which we emerged, to find some fresh water. If I could have just a little water, I could sing my water song and make many streams and rivers grow."

First Woman was the first human being ever made. She was tall with strong arms and hands and a gentle, kind face. Her eyes shone with wisdom and strength. She looked at the People, and her eyes fell on the group that was the Water Clan.

"One of you should go," she said. "You should have brought the water with you when we left the old world."

Then First Woman made a beautiful water bottle out of sea shells. She put a stopper made of red coral in the opening and she wove some rainbow into a loop to carry it. When she finished, she held it up in front of her and faced the Water Clan.

"So, who will go?" she asked.

Out of the group came two Animal People, Otter and Beaver. Long, long ago, before the world was finished, they say there were Animal People. Otter and Beaver walked upright on two legs, but they had wide tails like paddles, just like the tails they wear today, and they were great warriors.

Otter said, "We're from the Water Clan. We're the best swimmers, and we should be the ones to go."

First Woman smiled at them proudly. She hung the water bottle around Otter's neck. Together, Otter and Beaver jumped into the water. They went down, down, down until they reached the bottom and walked along the ocean floor.

Soon they came to a valley of water lilies. There were lilies of every color. It was so beautiful that Otter and Beaver decided to stop.

Beaver said, "We should take some of these flowers and plant them in our new world!"

"Good idea," Otter agreed.

So Otter put down the bottle, and soon they were both covered from head to toe in water lilies, roots, and vines. When they had gathered all they could, they journeyed back to the world above.

When they came out of the water, the People waiting on the beach were amazed. Otter and Beaver looked like two trees coming out of the ocean.

"It's us!" Otter yelled.

The people cried, "Otter and Beaver have come back!" Everyone was excited.

"Look what we found!" Beaver said. "We're going to plant these here in our new home!"

First Woman anxiously waited for the water bottle.

Otter pulled and tugged at the roots and vines. "I've got it," he said. "It's here somewhere." But he looked and looked and couldn't find it.

"You have it, cousin Beaver," Otter said. Together they pulled and tugged on the vines and flowers, but they didn't find the bottle.

"Oh, no!" Otter cried. "I think we forgot it... down there..." Otter's voice got smaller as he realized what they had done.

First Woman's eyes narrowed. "This won't do at all. You two go away from here. I don't want to see you for a while."

So Beaver and Otter waddled away, dragging their tails between their legs, to plant their vines and flowers. Today we know that Otter and Beaver still surround themselves with water lilies and roots and vines.

Next, First Woman sent Frog and Turtle to get water. They brought the water bottle back when they returned, but it was filled with salt water. So First Woman sent them away, too.

First Woman was growing weary of the Water Clan's mistakes. She was not used to being this upset. "We still don't have any fresh water," she said.

Someone tugged on her dress. First Woman looked down and saw a thin little girl with long, raven-black hair.

"I am Snail," the child said in a small, squeaky voice. "I'm from the Water Clan, and I'd like to help my people. I want to go get the water."

First Woman looked at the People and the People looked at each other. Everyone knew that Snail was the slowest swimmer of the Water Clan. Nobody thought she would make it, but nobody else wanted to go. First Woman nodded. "You are very brave, Snail," she said. And she tied the bottle to Snail Girl's back. Snail slowly slipped into the great waters. She went down, down, down to the land at the bottom, her long black hair flowing behind her.

Snail Girl went past the valley of water lilies, past the place where Turtle and Frog had gone. Finally, Snail came to a hole in the sand with bubbles coming out of it. She went into the darkness of this hole, deeper and deeper, back to the Fourth World.

There she found some pure water. She tasted it, and it was delicious and fresh. There was just enough to fill up the water bottle. She carefully placed the coral stopper tightly in the bottle. She went back up through the hole and made her journey home.

The full moon was shining when Snail Girl came out of the water. She had been gone for such a long time that no one waited for her at the seashore.

Slowly, Snail Girl walked up the hill where she made her home. She was so tired that she didn't feel the rainbow loop coming loose and the water bottle falling off her back. She was so worn out that she didn't hear the bottle dragging in the dirt and rocks. She was so sleepy that she didn't notice the water trickling out.

Snail Girl went to her home and took the bottle off her back. She looked at it and couldn't believe her eyes. There was a hole in the bottom of the bottle.

"Oh no! It's empty!" she cried.

She was so exhausted that she couldn't even cry. She fell to the ground fast asleep.

First Woman woke up from a dream. "I dreamed Snail has returned!" she whispered. First Woman believed in the power of dreams.

She ran down to the ocean's edge. She followed Snail Girl's trail up the hill. Halfway up she saw something shining at her feet in the moonlight. She stopped and reached down to touch it. It was wet. She tasted it. "Fresh water!" she said, and she breathed a sigh of relief. "Snail did it!"

Long ago, they say, everyone had a magic song. First Woman began to sing her magic song, and the small drops of pure water began to grow. They turned into a trickle at first, then a stream, then a river. The river got longer and wider and deeper and faster, and soon the biggest river anybody had ever seen rushed into the ocean.

First Woman looked at the river and smiled, and then she remembered Snail.

First Woman ran to Snail Girl's home and woke her up. Snail opened her weary eyes and saw it was First Woman, and she said, "All the water is gone. Look at the bottle. There's a hole in it." She began to cry.

But First Woman's eyes lit up. "Come with me, Snail," she said, and they went outside. A beautiful river ran down the hill to the ocean.

"You did it, Snail," First Woman said. "You carried the water all the way back from the old world, and even though a hole wore through the bottle as you walked up the hill, I got here in time to take a seed of water and make it grow." Snail smiled.

Snail Girl and First Woman stood together near the top of the hill and watched the sun rise over the river. As the People awoke and came out of their homes, they were amazed at what they saw. They whooped and hollered with joy and happiness.

The people held a giving thanks ceremony. Everyone sat in a circle and Snail was the Honored One.

First Woman spoke. "Snail, you are very brave, and we thank you. From this day on, you will carry the water bottle on your back as a symbol of your great journey. You will leave a trail of moisture behind you every place you travel. This will be a message to everyone that our pure water is precious and we must take care of it."

And so it was from that day on.

## FIND OUT MORE

### Earth-centered Traditions and Water

Find another Navajo story about water in *The Precious Gift: A Navaho Creation Myth* by Ellen Jackson (New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1996).

### Making Musical Instruments

Rain sticks: See the [Kinderart](http://www.kinderart.com/sculpture/rain.shtml) (at [www.kinderart.com/sculpture/rain.shtml](http://www.kinderart.com/sculpture/rain.shtml)) website.

Water-based music chimes: See the [Creative Kids at Home](http://www.creativekidsathome.com/activities/activity_6.html) (at [www.creativekidsathome.com/activities/activity\\_6.html](http://www.creativekidsathome.com/activities/activity_6.html)) website.

### Unitarian Universalist Resources for Environmental Stewardship

The Church of the Larger Fellowship offers an activity to help [young children learn about stewardship](http://www.uua.org/clf/betweensundays/earlychildhood/helpworld1.html) (at [www.uua.org/clf/betweensundays/earlychildhood/helpworld1.html](http://www.uua.org/clf/betweensundays/earlychildhood/helpworld1.html)) and explore ways they can express it.

Read the UUA's 1997 General Resolution with regard to environmental justice, "[Earth, Air, Water, and Fire.](http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14239.shtml)" (at [www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14239.shtml](http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/14239.shtml))

Learn about the [UUA green sanctuary program](http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/greensanctuary/index.shtml) (at [www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/greensanctuary/index.shtml](http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/greensanctuary/index.shtml)), founded by the [Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth](http://www.uuministryforearth.org/) (at [www.uuministryforearth.org/](http://www.uuministryforearth.org/)), which supports congregations and members to actively pursue environmental justice and stewardship of the Earth.

# WORKSHOP 2: GATHER IN SYMPATHY

## INTRODUCTION

*Anyone who can solve the problem of water will be worthy of two Nobel prizes—one for peace and one for science. — John F. Kennedy*

The Earth is our home, the place where waters flow and life thrives. Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to stewardship of the Earth, recognizing that without our stewardship, humanity and all other life may not survive.

Many users of Gather the Spirit live in areas with plentiful water resources. In this workshop, participants consider what it would be like to live where there is limited access to clean drinking water. The first activity engages participants to confront "polluted" water directly. Then they explore the impact people have on each other and on Earth's resources. They consider their responsibilities to all their neighbors on Earth, near or far.

Empowering participants with information about our Earth, its resources and how we use or misuse them is a critical goal of Gather the Spirit. Problems related to water may seem overwhelming to some. Yet, participants will learn they can express, through stewardship, a Unitarian Universalist faith in humanity's power to protect Earth's gifts and share them equitably.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore themes of stewardship and water
- Present a large view of Earth's water resources and humankind's role in preserving them
- Introduce a large view of "Who is my neighbor?" and the concept of reciprocal stewardship
- Explore how and why as Unitarian Universalists, we can commit to stewardship of Earth's water resources
- Draw wisdom from Unitarian Universalist Sources, particularly science, humanism and world religions.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience wanting to drink water when no clean water is available

- Understand the human role in water pollution and human potential to clean and protect our shared waters
- Consider who their neighbor is and what their responsibilities are
- Understand that upriver acts have downriver consequences
- Hear a story from the Masai people of Kenya
- See water as central to the full web of life
- Explore Unitarian Universalist stewardship of water resources.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Experiential Water Meditation	15
Activity 2: Story — The Teachings of the Rain God	10
Activity 3: River Scene — Downriver Critters	25
Faith in Action: Water Steward's Pledge	15
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Acting out the Story	10
Alternate Activity 2: The Costs of Water Fun	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Experience the community and commitment of your own congregation. At a busy time on a Sunday or other day, drift away from the group and observe it. Reflect on its purpose, power and commitment. Know you are one of many who can and must make a positive difference, by guiding the young, by nurturing the commitment of families and by joining others in dedicated work. Feel the strength of the concept that "service is our prayer". Then, with a fresh sense of renewal, rejoin the group.

Before this workshop begins, with all your preparations complete, find a quiet spot to remember your moment of observation. Take several deep, relaxing breaths. Understand that leading this workshop is well worth the time and energy it takes. It can affect participants and the world beyond them in ways you may sense but never directly know.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, the cup of water and the plant together on a table.
- Place chairs for all participants in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose background music for the Opening and other quiet activities in the workshop. The Before You Start section of the program Introduction offers suggestions.

### Description of Activity

The Opening for Gather the Spirit has a symbolic chalice lighting; the chalice is "lit" by pouring a cup of water into a clear bowl.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to share an opening ritual to help everyone connect with the sounds of water. Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.

- Tap your fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects and make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

Ask participants to briefly report on their Gather the Spirit activities. Who tried a Taking It Home activity from the previous workshop? If they did the scavenger hunt suggested in Taking It Home for Workshop 3, what did they decide? Does anyone have a new idea to briefly share about stewardship or water?

If the group has a Gather the Spirit blog, share comments you have seen posted. Invite volunteers to respond to others' blog posts or offer suggestions for the blog.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Pay attention to accessibility; arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations or who use a wheelchair.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: EXPERIENTIAL WATER MEDITATION (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Two pitchers, filled with water
- Small cups (recyclable, if possible) for all participants plus some extra
- Dirt, food coloring, vinegar and other items to make water undrinkable
- A copy of Handout 1, [Sad Statistics](#) (included in this document)

## Preparation for Activity

- Add dirt, food coloring and vinegar to the water in one pitcher so it looks, smells and is undrinkable. Set the other pitcher of water aside.
- Review the handout. Make note of any facts about the global water situation that you want to share with the group.

## Description of Activity

This experiential exercise can powerfully illustrate the real scarcity of water for many people in the world.

Gather the group and invite all to sit comfortably for a meditation. Distribute an empty cup to each participant.

Ask participants to remain seated and to close their eyes or focus on something physical—perhaps their empty cup—while you take their thoughts on a journey. Use words like these. Speak slowly, and pause between sentences:

Imagine that you are far away from here. You are on a large, hot desert. All you can see in every direction is sand, hot desert sand. You must cross to the other side, but you are hot, very hot, too hot. And you are thirsty. You realize you have drunk all your water. You will get more only when you finish crossing the desert. So you move on, slowly, one step at a time, feeling hotter, and drier, hotter, and drier. Until finally, finally, you reach the other side. You know there is water nearby. You are so thirsty. Now slowly, slowly, open your eyes and return to the group, and we'll see about getting some water.

Bring the pitcher of polluted water to participants. Allow participants to smell the contents of the pitcher and begin to pour some into each cup. You will not have to pour many cups before participants notice the water is undrinkable. Wait for a moment to see what happens. Does anyone request fresh water?

Ask the group what it would feel like if this was the only available water to drink. Then, bring out the pitcher of clean water and new cups for any participants for whom you have poured polluted water. Pour clean water for those who want some, and process the activity using these questions:

- What just happened?
- Did our meeting space become like a place where there isn't enough water?
- Where are places like that?
- Whose fault was it that some of our own water was bad?
- Whose fault is it in poor counties?

- What should people do when they don't have enough fresh water?
- What should people do when they have all the water they want but they know that other people are dying of thirst?

Use some facts you have gleaned from Handout 1, Sad Statistics, to illustrate the global need for water. Help the group understand how human actions have affected Earth's water resources—but, make it clear that human action does not cause all water shortages and destructive storms. The world knew severe drought and other deadly conditions long before industrial pollution began and global warming became a problem.

## Including All Participants

Be sure to make this activity comfortable for people with special needs. Those who might most need drinkable water should receive it quickly.

## ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE TEACHINGS OF THE RAIN GOD (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Teachings of the Rain God](#)" (included in this document) "

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story. If possible, prepare to tell it dramatically. When participants can see a story come alive, they engage more easily.

### Description of Activity

Say that people all over the world have stories they tell about water, and now you will share one called "The Teachings of the Rain God" from the Masai culture of Kenya. Read or tell the story. Then, help the group process the story with these questions, adapting to fit the ages and maturity of participants:

- Who has seen a real tortoise? Do you think this story really explains why the tortoise is flat? (Affirm that how different animals got their widely ranging sizes, shapes and other characteristics is a mystery of life that many people seek hard to explain. Unitarian Universalists believe what science tells us—that a natural process of evolution over many, many generations shaped tortoises and other forms of life, including humans, to look and function as they do today. Over a long, long time, different animals and plants developed different features that would help them to survive. Some are built just right for life in the desert and some for living in the river.)

- The lion caused the supply of fresh water to disappear. The lion's challenge to the Rain God caused problems not just for the lion, but for everybody else. Is that fair? (Affirm that the lion's actions might be compared to human pollution today. Most Unitarian Universalists would agree that, in real life, pollution is largely caused by humans and can only be reduced by humans. People who care to make things fair can act on their beliefs by working to reduce water pollution.)
- What is the lesson of this story? (Affirm that one important lesson comes at the end of the story, when Rain God tells the animals to share water and other property with those who need it. Unitarian Universalists would agree with this idea. Many Unitarian Universalists would say sharing can be a way to act in faith. Unitarian Universalism is a religion that affirms all people and other living things are connected in one interdependent web of all existence.)
- What does Unitarian Universalism say about sharing things like water? How is sharing water a form of Unitarian Universalist faith in action? (Affirm that when we share, we show beliefs that tie Unitarian Universalists together. Our Principles talk about each person's inherent worth and dignity (that every person is important), the importance of justice and fairness and our belonging to an interdependent web of all life.)
- How can sharing water or taking care of water be a spiritual act? (Affirm that our spirit is the part of us that is connected to all of life and any larger force, such as God, we believe exists beyond the life we know. Sharing makes a connection outside of ourselves. When we share out of love, compassion and a sense of justice, we are acting from our spirit.)
- What does it mean to say that you should love your neighbor? And who is your neighbor? (Affirm that our neighbor might be the person who lives next door; in the story, the neighbors were the animals that lived near one another and shared the fresh water supply. But it also can mean someone who lives on the other side of the world, because we are all part of one, interconnected web of life. To love your neighbor means to treat other people the way you hope they will treat you. The better we share Earth's resources—the more we act like neighbors to all who depend on the same water—the better chance we have to share a world of justice and peace.)

## ACTIVITY 3: RIVER SCENE — DOWNRIVER CRITTERS (25 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- River Scene mural (Workshop 1, Activity 2)
- Drawing supplies such as oil pastels; color markers; paints, paintbrushes and cups of water (and newspapers or drop cloth)
- Plain drawing paper, scissors (including left-handed scissors) and glue sticks and tape
- Optional: Music and music player

### Preparation for Activity

- Retrieve the group's River Scene, if it is not already posted where the group can work on it. Set up work areas where participants can create either directly on the River Scene or on drawing paper to attach the mural.
- Optional: If this is the first time the group will work on the River Scene, read Workshop 1, Activity 2. Identify where you can leave the River Scene mural posted or store it between workshops. Obtain the materials and supplies you will need and plan how you will incorporate the start-up into today's activity. You might invite some participants to begin the River Scene (as directed in Workshop 1) and others to add the fish and animals suggested for this workshop.
- Optional: Consider using background music to inhibit extraneous noise and help the group focus. Quiet, instrumental music with a water theme will probably work best. Choose music and set up a music player.

### Description of Activity

Participants continue creating the River Scene, begun in Workshop 1, Activity 2.

Invite participants to add fresh water fish and animals.

Say something like:

We have already made drawings that show human activities on the banks of our river. Now we are going to make fish and other animals that might live in the river or along its banks. You can choose any animals or fish you want. Don't worry about whether those animals would actually live along a nearby river. If you want to add a kangaroo, that is fine. You have about ten minutes.

Begin playing quiet music, if you have brought some.

With a few minutes remaining, invite participants to clean up and share what they have made. Then gather

the group and invite all to look at the River Scene for a minute while you speak. You might say:

Imagine that you live upstream, beside the river. (Indicate which direction you mean to be "upstream".)

If you get into a rowboat or canoe, you can float along. The river will move you past all the wonderful places and people and animals along the banks. You can see fish swimming around in the water. Let's look quietly for a moment, and see if we can feel a real sense of connection, maybe a spiritual connection, with the life in and around the river. (Pause for a moment.)

Now ask yourself: Would you want to hurt any of these people and animals? You would be doing just that, if you threw trash or other bad stuff into any water that connects with this river. All around the world, people have been destroying rivers that way, over and over again. In America, many of our rivers have become polluted, and people are working very hard to clean them up.

There's a Native American saying, "The frog does not drink up the water in which it lives."

That is kind of like not throwing plastic bags into a reservoir or dumping industrial chemicals into a river that holds fresh water which someday a living creature—maybe you—may need to drink.

### Including All Participants

Provide a variety of work spaces so that people with varied abilities can work easily and comfortably. If standing and attaching their work to the river scene is challenging for some, let them work with partners who can help display their creations.

Not everyone is comfortable making drawings. You can suggest some participants cut out magazine pictures to attach to the mural or enhance the river with blue paper or crepe paper. Avoid extravagant praise as well as critiques of participant contributions—affirm all who help shape the River Scene.

## CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Taking It Home handout
- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### Preparation for Activity

- Adapt the Taking It Home section. Prepare it as a handout and copy for all participants (or, email to all adult participants and parents).

- Re-set the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

### Description of Activity

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop: Today we meditated and experienced wanting water and only being offered polluted water. We heard a story about how it is important to share water. As we progress in Gather the Spirit we will find ways to be good stewards of the world's waters. We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing this plant.

Invite participants to offer a thought about what moved them during this workshop. Say something like:

Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection. Then invite volunteers to answer. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the chalice bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us until we meet again.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants. Set aside the chalice bowl and plant where they will be safe between workshops.

## FAITH IN ACTION: WATER STEWARD'S PLEDGE (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Handout 1, [Sad Statistics](#) (included in this document)
- Handout 2, [Water Steward's Pledge](#) (included in this document)
- Pens/pencils

### Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether to hold a large group discussion or form smaller groups of three to five participants. If you will form small groups, make sure each will have strong readers as well as a representation of diverse ages for diversity of perspective.
- Copy Handout 1 for all participants. Or, to save paper, write some of the statistics on sheets of

newsprint and post. Or, print just enough copies for each small group to have one.

- Copy Handout 2 for all participants. Or, if you have time, print out one copy to use as a model. Post newsprint to record the group's ideas for a Water Steward's Pledge.
- Optional: Write discussion questions on newsprint and post. This may be especially helpful if you plan to form multiple small groups.

### **Description of Activity**

Share the statistics from Handout 1; you might read some aloud or invite a few volunteers to read. Guide a discussion about these statistics with the whole group, or, form small groups to talk about the statistics. Use these questions:

- Which sad statistic is most surprising?
- For which can you most easily imagine a way you could help?
- Which most strongly calls you to action?

Re-gather the group. Distribute Handout 2, Water Steward's Pledge, and pens/pencils. Or, use the handout as a model and guide the group to write a pledge together. Record ideas on newsprint. Help the group finalize the wording. Then copy the pledge on a fresh sheet of newsprint and invite everyone to sign it. Or, make copies for participants to sign at a future workshop.

## **LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING**

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements? Are participants growing in their understanding of the need to protect and equitably share the Earth's water resources? How do you know? What should you do differently at the next workshop?

If the group will do more Gather the Spirit workshops, look ahead to assign leadership responsibilities.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

Anyone who can solve the problem of water will be worthy of two Nobel prizes—one for peace and one for science. — John F. Kennedy

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** The group experienced, through a guided meditation, needing a drink of fresh water when none is available. We learned about the Earth's water resources, how these resources have become polluted and what that means for people who lack fresh, clean water. We heard a story about the river

god from the Masai culture of Kenya and added to our River Scene.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** the Native American saying "The frog does not drink up the water in which it lives." Talk about what the saying means. Is everybody in your family always good like a frog? Or do you sometimes use up or mess up things that you need? Can you learn from the frog and stop doing that? Can humans really learn from frogs? From other animals?

Discuss the water needs and problems of your area. Do you need to be very careful how much water you use? If so, what are you doing to conserve?

What if you had to carry water on your head for six miles every day? That's what many women and girls in Africa and Asia must do. Some carry 40 pounds of water at a time. How would doing that change your lives? How would it feel? Experiment (very carefully) with carrying things on your head. Find something that weighs about 40 pounds and think how it would feel to have so much weight on your head for six long miles.

Is your congregation doing enough stewardship of water resources? If not, can you help it do more?

What do you wish to have that you don't have? Is anything on your list as basic as water or food? Or clothing you need just for protection? Do your wants qualify as needs? Or are they all "nice-to-haves"?

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

### **A FAMILY RITUAL**

Visit a natural, fresh water site near your home—a place that is new to you, if possible. Walk around it, or sit near it. Be silent. Feel yourself connected with the water, with its life. Wonder where the water comes from, and where it will go. Talk about this as a spiritual moment. Maybe this place will be a new place to love.

### **FAMILY SCAVENGER HUNT**

Chose a body of water near your home. It can be an old favorite or it can be the new one you chose for your family ritual. Make a drawing or a photograph of the body of water. Or, write the name or description of a plant that grows nearby. Bring your picture or writing to share at our next meeting.

### **FAMILY FISH VISIT**

Go to an aquarium in your area. Spend plenty of time, and think about your connection to the life forms you see there. Don't just walk by the tanks. Stand or sit in front of them and really watch carefully.

### **FAMILY READING**

Try *The Once and Future King* by T. H. White—the story of King Arthur. In chapter 5, Merlin leads the young

Arthur on an adventure to experience what it is like to be a fish.

## **FAMILY COMPETITION**

See who can write down the most water words. Consider working in mixed generation teams. Whose list makes people feel the wettest?

## **FAMILY CONSERVATION EXPERIMENT**

How do you usually get a cold drink of water? Run the water in the sink until it is cold enough to drink. But first—put a stopper in your kitchen sink. When the water is cold enough to drink, measure the water you have collected. Then use it for watering plants. Now fill a container with water and place it in the refrigerator so it will be cold when you wish to drink it. The amount of water you used to water the plants is the amount your refrigerator can help you save every time you want a cold drink.

## **FAMILY RESEARCH**

Do Internet research on seeding clouds to make rain. Start by finding out how it is done in the [State of Texas](http://www.license.state.tx.us/weather/weatherfaq.htm) (at [www.license.state.tx.us/weather/weatherfaq.htm](http://www.license.state.tx.us/weather/weatherfaq.htm)).

## **FAMILY WATER PROJECTS**

Re-use a plastic bottle and look underwater. The Instructables website offers a way to recycle a two-liter plastic bottle as an (at [www.instructables.com/id/E5RL0UEZQBEP2866H3/](http://www.instructables.com/id/E5RL0UEZQBEP2866H3/)) [underwater viewing scope](http://www.instructables.com/id/E5RL0UEZQBEP2866H3/) (at [www.instructables.com/id/E5RL0UEZQBEP2866H3/](http://www.instructables.com/id/E5RL0UEZQBEP2866H3/)). Be careful of sharp edges—you may want to cover them with duct tape.

Try the [Family Fun website](http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/feature/famf78water/) (at [familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/feature/famf78water/](http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/feature/famf78water/)) for more ideas.

## **FAMILY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT**

Join the [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee](http://unitarianuniversalist.org/). Help with its projects to protect water resources.

Lend money to somebody poor in another country. In 2005, Muhammad Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize for microfinance in Bangladesh. It does not take much money to help someone start a small business. Start by visiting the [Kiva website](http://www.kiva.org/) (at [www.kiva.org/](http://www.kiva.org/)) to see how to really help someone in a developing country for \$25. Projects you support might not be directly water related, but they could be important.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: ACTING OUT THE STORY (10 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- A copy of the story "[The Teachings of the Rain God](#) (included in this document) "

- Paper lunch bags or card stock, color markers and (optional) tape or string

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Set out supplies so participants can make masks.

### **Description of Activity**

Ask a small group to act out the Masai story in Activity 2. If there is time, let them use markers on paper bags or card stock to make masks for the elephant, tortoise, rooster, lion and Rain God. To involve more participants, lead the group to think of more roles; lots of different animals could come to drink from the small pond. Invite everyone to make a mask. There are many ways participants might make masks; using simple card stock or small paper bags is probably easiest. A card stock mask can be held in front of the face. A bag mask can be slipped over the hand and held in front of the face or used as a hand puppet.

Leave time for participants to clean up the mask-making supplies and act out the story.

### **Including All Participants**

Encourage and assist participants with motor skills limitations, cognitive limitations or limited mobility to choose characters, make masks and act out their parts as they are able.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: THE COSTS OF WATER FUN (10 MINUTES)**

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Find out about water theme parks in your area; use the [Theme Park City](http://www.themeparkcity.com/USA_index.htm) (at [www.themeparkcity.com/USA\\_index.htm](http://www.themeparkcity.com/USA_index.htm)) website. If possible, find out how much water they use. Ski resorts that make their own snow also use large amounts of water, sometimes drawing from local freshwater resources that communities need.

### **Description of Activity**

Invite participants to think about water theme parks, which use large quantities of water for entertainment.

Say, in your own words:

In some parts of the world, children are dying because they don't have enough water to drink. In other parts of the world, people have plenty to drink, and can go to lakes and rivers and streams to play. Some places even have a water theme park such as (name of local water theme park) where children can spend all day having fun with water and have plenty to drink, too. Is this fair? If it's not, what can we do about it?

Talk about water recreation resources in your area. Which ones are natural, and which are made by people? Tell the group about water theme parks in your area and, if you know, how much water they use.

Point out that you cannot simply take the clean water out of rivers near you and send it to dry countries far away. If all America's water theme parks closed, the water would not go to save lives on other continents.

Suggest that we who have enough water to use some for water theme parks can express our gratitude as generosity, and help in some other way. Maybe theme parks can help, too. Invite some volunteers to check with theme parks near you and report back to the group. How

do the theme parks try to conserve water? Do they recycle water so they don't waste a lot? Do they try to educate people about water?

To continue the discussion, use questions like these:

- Should water theme parks volunteer to help with water stewardship?
- Should they pay taxes so the government can help?
- Should park visitors pay taxes to help? What could the tax money be used for?

Be ready to lead the group to make an action plan.

## STORY: THE TEACHINGS OF THE RAIN GOD

Adapted from a version on the 2003 [International Year of Fresh Water website](#).

One day a long time ago, the elephant acted like a bully. He challenged the Rain God.

"You covered the Earth in green," the elephant said, "and I'll bet you feel pretty good about yourself. But guess what! If I tear up the grass and the trees and the bushes, the green will all be gone. What then?"

"What then?" answered the Rain God. "I'll stop sending rain. No more green will grow, and you won't have anything to drink or eat. That's what!"

But a few words weren't going to stop the elephant. He ripped up all the trees, the bushes, and the grass with his trunk. All the green disappeared from Earth.

That made the Rain God mad. He stopped the rain. Deserts began appearing everywhere.

Soon the elephant was dying of hunger and thirst. He tried digging where the rivers used to be, but he didn't find a drop of water. So the elephant changed his tune. He praised the Rain God and apologized.

"I'm sorry," the elephant said. "I was too proud, and I misbehaved. But now I've learned my lesson. I repent, so please make it rain!"

But the Rain God said nothing. Every day the world dried up more.

The elephant knew the rooster was loud, so he asked the rooster to praise the Rain God.

After looking all over the place, the rooster found the Rain God hidden behind a cloud. The rooster praised the Rain God with such fine words that the Rain God relented. A little rain fell and made a small pool very close to the elephant's home.

The same day, the elephant decided to go into the woods and look for food. He ordered the tortoise to protect the pool.

"Don't let anybody drink here," the elephant said. "Tell them the water is mine and nobody else's."

The tortoise tried to obey, and turned some small animals away. But then the lion came, and the lion wasn't impressed. He growled at the tortoise and drank all he wanted.

When the elephant returned, he grew very angry at the tortoise.

"Sir," said the tortoise, "what could I do? The lion was big and had sharp claws. And all the other animals were mad at me, so I got out of the way."

"I'll show you mad," the elephant said. He raised one foot and stamped on the tortoise to crush her.

The tortoise was very strong, and the elephant did not kill her. But he flattened her out, and the tortoise has remained flat ever since.

Suddenly the Rain God spoke. His loud voice filled the sky, and he warned the animals not to follow the elephant's example.

"If you want more rain, don't be like the elephant," the Rain God said. "Don't challenge powerful gods or anything more powerful than you. Don't wreck the things you need. Don't make weaker animals protect your property, and don't punish animals that are trying to help you. Most of all, don't be too proud and don't try to have everything for yourself. If you are lucky and have a lot, share it with others who need it."

## HANDOUT 1: SAD STATISTICS

Adapted from information on the PBS website for [Bill Moyers' program, NOW](#), accessed July, 2009.

- Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is covered with water. But only 2.5% of that is fresh water.
- Only 1% of the world's freshwater is available for use. A lot of the rest is trapped in icecaps or underground.
- Twenty percent of the world's human population does not have safe drinking water. That is 1.1 billion people.
- More than 2.5 billion people do not have adequate sanitation.
- In 1998, 31 countries had bad water shortages. By the year 2025, unless something changes, there will be 17 more countries on the list.
- In parts of Africa and Asia, young girls and women walk about six miles a day to get water. They often carry more than 40 pounds of water on their heads. When they are getting water, they cannot go to school or work or care for their families.
- Every day, 3,900 children die because of lack of safe water and sanitary conditions.
- About 5% of the world's water supplies are privately controlled. People have to pay to use them. Poor people can't afford the water, so they use whatever they can find in lakes and rivers. Many become ill and die. Early in this century, one cholera epidemic in South Africa made more than 250,000 people sick.
- Ten (about 5%) of the world's countries have 65% of the world's water resources.
- Here is how fresh water is used: 70% for agriculture, 22% for industries, and 8% for direct human purposes.
- Of all the diseases in developing nations, 80% come from unsafe water and sanitation.
- The news is not all bad. In the 1990s, a billion more people got access to safe water.

## **HANDOUT 2: WATER STEWARD'S PLEDGE**

I promise to be a good steward to the Earth's water resources. I will conserve water whenever I can. I will not waste water when I can help it. I will work so more people around the world have the clean, water they need. I will clean up polluted waters whenever I have a chance. I will not make water supplies unsafe or dirty. I will remember that what I do upstream can affect all life downstream. I will honor my spiritual connection to the web of all existence by protecting it.

(signed) \_\_\_\_\_

## FIND OUT MORE

### More Sad Statistics

See a [2008 report on global clean water and sanitation](#), including country-by-statistics, prepared by the Joint Monitoring Programme of UNICEF and the World Health Organization. UNICEF's website offers a [summary of the report](#) (at [www.unicef.org/wash/index\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/wash/index_statistics.html)).

[The Pacific Institute](http://www.pacinst.org/) (at [www.pacinst.org/](http://www.pacinst.org/)) produces an annual report on the world's water.

# WORKSHOP 3: SEPARATE FIRES, KINDLE ONE FLAME

## INTRODUCTION

*The protection of nature depends on more than the organizational strength of stewardship organizations; it also depends on the quality of the relationship between the young and nature—on how, or if, the young attach to nature. — Richard Louv, author, Last Child in the Woods*

This workshop explores interconnections of water, plants and animal life, with a particular focus on plants. Participants learn how in Nature, plants offer care and protection to animal life—for example, by supplying the oxygen we breathe. They learn why and how we care for and protect plant life—and by extension, all life—through stewardship of the environment. They learn that caring for the Earth is ultimately caring for ourselves, spiritually as well as physically.

Getting outdoors is a key part of this workshop. Activity 2, Nature's Hide and Seek, allows 20 minutes for an outdoor investigation. If you cannot walk to a vegetation-rich site from your congregation, try to arrange more time for this activity so the group can visit a complex natural habitat.

Faith in Action suggests initiating or joining a community-based effort to protect and care for your local watershed.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Provide an opportunity to appreciate Nature near the congregation
- Promote care of plant life as stewardship of all life
- Explore the UU principle that nurtures an appreciation of the interdependent web of existence.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore the outdoor area near their meeting with attention to how creatures appear and disappear into the care and holding of their environment
- Explore why caring for plant life is important
- Learn what contributions plants make to the environment.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — One Flower in a Field	10
Activity 2: Nature's Hide and Seek	20
Activity 3: River Scene — Planting the Riverbanks	20
Faith in Action: Adopt Your Watershed	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Care and Protection Collage	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Pause to reflect on the many ways your needs have been met well enough for you to grow to this point in your life. You have survived vulnerable times—as an infant or when sick or injured—as a result of someone else's care. You may want to spend some time outside observing how other animals in Nature receive support in their life and growth and how they give back to the system that supports them, just as you are doing in your congregation right now. Appreciate yourself, too.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, cup of water and plant on a table.
- Place chairs for all participants in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose background music for the Opening and other quiet activities in the workshop. See *Before You Start* in this program's Introduction for suggestions.
- Optional: If you have set up a blog for Gather the Spirit participants, prepare instructions for accessing the blog. Make a copy for every family and/or plan to email the instructions to participants.

### Description of Activity

In *Gather the Spirit*, the chalice-lighting involves water, not flame.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to share an opening ritual to help everyone connect with the sounds of water. Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.
- Tap your fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects and make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

Ask participants to briefly report on their *Gather the Spirit* activities. Who tried a *Taking It Home* activity from the previous workshop? Does anyone have a new idea to briefly share about stewardship or water?

If you have started a *Gather the Spirit* blog for the group, make sure all participants know about it. Explain, as needed, that participants can post results of their explorations of *Gather the Spirit* topics or other comments or ideas relevant to the program; and, they can respond to one another's postings. Hand out blog access instructions to any who need them.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Pay attention to accessibility; arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations or who use a wheelchair.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: STORY — ONE FLOWER IN A FIELD (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[One Flower in a Field](#) (included in this document) "

- Handout 1, [Plant Facts](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story.
- Print out Handout 1 for all participants or write facts on newsprint and post.

### Description of Activity

Gather participants. Read or tell the story. Then, process with these questions:

- Why do you think the hedgehog did not water his flower?
- Did you think it was right for the rabbit to help the flower that needed water?
- How could the rabbit have helped the hedgehog understand that he was not caring for the flower very well?
- Why do you think all the flowers got brighter in the field?
- Have you ever been responsible for a plant?
- Is it sometimes difficult to care for plants? Why or why not?

Distribute Handout 1, Plant Facts, or indicate the plant facts you have posted. Lead a discussion to highlight plants' roles in the interdependent web of life.

Conclude by saying, in your own words:

It makes sense to protect and care for plants. And, we all have the opportunity to learn how to care for plants and gardens. Nurturing plants is not something we automatically know how to do. We can learn by trying it ourselves, with help from other people, books or websites.

## ACTIVITY 2: NATURE'S HIDE AND SEEK (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Appropriate outerwear for the weather
- Small pads of paper
- Color markers or colored pencils

### Preparation for Activity

- If possible, schedule more time for this activity. Scout out a nearby body of water or wetlands, marsh, meadow, woods or other area of relatively dense vegetation which provides natural habitat for animals. Make sure it is accessible for all participants.

- Secure parental permission to take children out of the congregational building and (if needed) to transport them off-site. Make transportation arrangements if needed. Make preparations to safeguard participants with outdoor allergies.

### Description of Activity

Take the group outdoors to notice how nature offers animals places to hide from predators, weather and other dangers. If you have not had time to scout out a site, or you cannot take more than 20 minutes for this activity, simply go on a silent walk outside. Please give this activity very high priority. Effective teaching about the stewardship of nature depends on giving participants opportunities to attach to Nature during the meeting time, rather than hoping they will have outdoor experiences elsewhere.

Tell participants the group will go outside to investigate the ways that nature provides for animals to hide and be protected.

You may want to read aloud this quote from Annie Dillard:

... nature is very much a now-you-see-it, now-you-don't affair. A fish flashes, then dissolves in the water. Deer apparently ascend bodily into heaven; the brightest oriole fades into the leaves. These disappearances stun me into stillness and concentration.

Tell the group where they will be going. Ask them to predict what animals they may find outdoors, and where animals might be hiding when the group approaches. Even if your congregation is in a city, you can probably find birds hiding in bushes or squirrels in the branches of trees. Suggest participants follow clues of sound or smell to determine where animals may be hiding.

Encourage participants to keep as silent as possible so they can hear animals and not scare them away. Distribute pencils and pads, and ask everyone to sketch or write some notes about how animals find protection in nature.

Return with the group indoors. Invite participants to report on how they observed animals interacting with plant life. Prompt:

- What did you first notice?
- Did you see any plant life?
- Could you identify what they were?
- What animals did you see? If yes, where were they?
- If you didn't see any? Why not?
- Why do you think it matters that we have this plant and animal life around us? What would it

be like if we had none of it? Or, just the animals, or just the plants?

Affirm their responses. Mention the spiritual importance of connection, if no one has. Say something like:

It is through our connection to nature that we are made whole. We spend most of our lives in buildings and inside our homes, yet we are still part of Nature. Let us remember to spend time in nature, among trees, in the sunshine, even in rain, so we remember that we are a part of the interdependent web of life.

### **ACTIVITY 3: RIVER SCENE — PLANTING THE RIVERBANKS (20 MINUTES)**

#### **Materials for Activity**

- River Scene mural (Workshop 1, Activity 2)
- Drawing supplies such as oil pastels; color markers; paints, paintbrushes and cups of water (and newspapers or drop cloth)
- Plain drawing paper, (optional) construction paper in greens, browns and other natural colors, scissors (including left-handed scissors) and glue sticks and tape
- Optional: Music and music player

#### **Preparation for Activity**

- Retrieve the group's River Scene if it is not already posted where the group can work on it. Set up work areas where participants can create either directly on the River Scene or on drawing paper to attach the mural.
- Optional: If this is the first time the group will work on the River Scene, read Workshop 1, Activity 2. Plan how you will introduce the River Scene mural into today's workshop. You might invite some participants to begin the River Scene (as directed in Workshop 1) and others to add the fish and animals suggested for this workshop.
- Optional: Play music while participants work on the River Scene. See *Before You Start* in this program's Introduction for suggestions. Or, consider songs that evoke riverbanks, such as "Shenandoah." The band R.E.M. has a song, "Cuyahoga", about the environmentally challenged Ohio River. Many songs have been recorded about the Mississippi River. Instrumentals include Ferde Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite", "Mississippi Suite" and "Hudson River Suite." "Promenade on the Nile" by Soliman Gamil on his 1997 CD *Map of Egypt Before the Sands* is a different option. Johann

Strauss' "Blue Danube Waltz" is an upbeat classical piece.

#### **Description of Activity**

Participants continue creation of the River Scene, begun in Workshop 1, Activity 2, this time adding plant life. Say something like:

We are going to add to our River Scene now. We will add plant life to the banks of the river. You have about ten minutes to make your creations.

Begin playing quiet music if desired.

With a few minutes remaining, invite participants to clean up and share what they have made. Then gather the group and invite all to look at the River Scene for a minute. You might say:

Look at the plant life added to this river. How do plants enhance the riverbank? Who and what will benefit from the plant life? Let's imagine we are walking through the plants on this river. What would we feel and smell, hear and see? Take a moment of silence to be a part of this river scene.

#### **Including All Participants**

Provide a variety of work spaces so that people with varied abilities can work easily and comfortably. If standing and attaching their work to the river scene is challenging for some, let them work with partners who can help display their creations.

Not everyone is comfortable making drawings. You can suggest some participants use construction paper to create plants and attach these to the mural. Avoid extravagant praise as well as critiques of participant contributions—affirm all who help shape the River Scene.

### **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

#### **Materials for Activity**

- Taking It Home handout
- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

#### **Preparation for Activity**

- Adapt Taking It Home for your group. Prepare copies or email to adult participants and parents.
- Place the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.

- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

### Description of Activity

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop:  
 Today we explored plant life. We heard a story and saw for ourselves why we need to take our responsibility to plant life seriously. Plants and flowers can be beautiful. They also provide us and other animals with food to eat and oxygen to breathe. Without water, plants cannot survive. Take a moment to be grateful to water and to plants.

Give participants a moment in silence. Then, invite participants to offer a thought about what moved them during this workshop. Say something like:

Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection. Then invite volunteers to answer. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the chalice bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us until we meet again.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared.

## FAITH IN ACTION: ADOPT YOUR WATERSHED

### Materials for Activity

- Information from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website](http://www.epa.gov/adopt/) (at [www.epa.gov/adopt/](http://www.epa.gov/adopt/)), such as facts about wetlands and/or the [Adopt Your Watershed program](http://www.epa.gov/adopt/pdf/adopt_brochure.pdf) (at [www.epa.gov/adopt/pdf/adopt\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/adopt/pdf/adopt_brochure.pdf)) brochure

### Preparation for Activity

- On the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website, find out which watershed area your congregation is in. Download wetlands facts and Adopt a Watershed materials.
- Identify community groups already involved with Adopt a Wetland or other water stewardship projects. Explore how the group might help.
- With your religious educator and minister, plan ways to include the entire congregation in an Adopt Your Watershed project.

### Description of Activity

Tell the group what you have learned about your local watershed and the local efforts to protect water resources. Invite participants to engage with organizations outside of Unitarian Universalism in the stewardship of shared water. Say in your own words:

The Adopt a Watershed program is a way the government encourages community responsibility for water stewardship. We can join the Environmental Protection Agency and others who are working locally to protect and restore our valuable rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, ground water, and estuaries. Some of the activities we could do are volunteer water-monitoring, stream clean-ups and making storm drains.

Help the group determine how they wish to get involved in local Adopt a Watershed activities. Decide on action steps and identify volunteers to pursue them—for example, inviting a guest speaker from a local water protection organization or arranging for the group to join an already scheduled local water resource clean-up.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements? Are participants growing in their understanding of the need to protect and equitably share the Earth's water resources? Is there a growing commitment to take group action for stewardship? What should you do differently at the next workshop?

If the group will do more Gather the Spirit workshops, look ahead to assign leadership responsibilities.

## TAKING IT HOME

The protection of nature depends on more than the organizational strength of stewardship organizations; it also depends on the quality of the relationship between the young and nature—on how, or if, the young attach to nature. — Richard Louv, author, *Last Child in the Woods*

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** We thought about the protection—or care—available to us and other beings in nature. We considered how we make choices to protect and care for other people, other animals or plants. The workshop drew particularly on the Unitarian Universalist Principle that promotes respect for the interdependent web of life.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** How do members of our family look out for one another? Even if they have never asked, it can reassure a young

family member to know how adults anticipate their needs. Name the protection and care available to each of you. Talk about how it can counterbalance the ways we feel vulnerable.

How do members of our family protect and care for other people, animals or plants?

What kinds of care does our family give to and receive from other people in our communities and congregation?

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

### **FAMILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**

In the book *Seven Spiritual Laws for Success for Parents*, Deepak Chopra designates Mondays as a day to focus on giving; "giving" can be any small kindness, such as a compliment or a smile. You could designate a day to focus on this sort of giving. Plan the giving when you are together in the morning. At the end of the day, gather to report on how each of you gave.

### **FAMILY FUN**

On the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website, find [A Day In the Life of a Drop](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water/drop.htm) (at [www.epa.gov/watersense/water/drop.htm](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water/drop.htm)), a page with worksheets about water and wetlands to do together as a family.

Learn more about the life teeming in [wetlands](http://www.wetland.org/) (at [www.wetland.org/](http://www.wetland.org/)).

Learn more about native plants and natural landscapes and find a variety of environmental education resources on the [Wild Ones website](http://www.for-wild.org/) (at [www.for-wild.org/](http://www.for-wild.org/)). Maybe there is a Wild Ones chapter near you.

### **FAMILY EXPERIMENTS**

Children may be curious about how plants drink. All plants have tubes in them through which water flows by means of capillary action. For a quick demonstration, hold a piece of paper towel—a plant product—just barely above the surface of a container of colored water. Watch the color spread up the paper towel.

For a slower but more nature-based demonstration, drop some red food coloring into a glass of water and set a stalk of celery vertically in the glass. After several hours, the red color should highlight the tubes in the celery—evidence of plant capillary action.

For a beautiful result, set white carnations in a vase of colored water. See what happens to the petals.

### **FAMILY ART EXPEDITION**

The plants in and around a pond are a distinctive feature of Monet's paintings, and working *en pleine aire*, or outdoors, was one of the innovations of the Impressionists. Put some drawing or painting supplies into a backpack and head outdoors! You can share your

art work with kids from around the world by registering on the global [Kidlink website](http://www.kidlink.org/) (at [www.kidlink.org/](http://www.kidlink.org/)).

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: CARE AND PROTECTION COLLAGE (15 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Magazines, with pictures, to cut up
- Poster board, paper-only scissors (including left-handed scissors), plain construction paper, color markers and glue sticks

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Gather magazines.
- Decide whether participants will work individually, in pairs, or in groups; decide how you will form groups so each has a mix of ages and some participants with fine-motor skills for cutting magazine pages.
- Purchase enough colorful poster board to give each group a large sheet.
- Set materials at work tables.
- Identify a place in the congregation to exhibit the finished collages and secure any permission you may need.

### **Description of Activity**

Invite participants to make a collage of different ways that they give and receive care and protection to other people, animals and plants that share our Earth.

Point out that care and protection of our Earth and all life is called "stewardship." Mention that some of us have jobs or chores that involve care and protection. Suggest younger siblings, other relatives, friends, pets or house plants might be some likely care-and-protection recipients. Tell the group they can cut out or draw images to show how care and protection are exchanged. Encourage artists to think of all the ways care is exchanged.

Explain where and with whom participants will work, how much time they have and where you will display the finished collages.

Move around the room and speak with participants as they work. Be ready to crouch down to make comfortable eye contact with someone who is seated, or small. Prompt them to share from their lives; help them identify what they give in their care-and-protection relationships, and what they receive—for example, friendship, the happy greeting of dog's wagging tail, the pleased purring of a cat.

Leave time for clean-up, posting the collages and sharing.

**Including All Participants**

When collecting magazines for this activity, seek out publications that show a diversity of socio-economic

class, ethnicity and lifestyles to ensure all participants can recognize themselves in the images you provide.

## STORY: ONE FLOWER IN A FIELD

Adapted from "One Flower in a Field" by Joshua Searle-White, in *Magic Wanda's Travel Emporium: Tales of Love, Hate and Things in Between* (Boston: Skinner House, 2007).

Once upon a time there was a field. It had dry grass, brambles and thistles, and high places and low places, and rocks scattered around, and a stream that passed alongside. And scattered around, here, there and everywhere, were flowers. Buttercups and tulips, coneflowers and lupines, all kinds of bright, beautiful flowers growing up out of the dry grass.

Now, you may ask, how could these flowers grow when the field was so dry? The answer is that next to each flower was a hole in the ground. And in each hole lived an animal whose job it was to tend that flower.

Most were rabbits, but there were hedgehogs and field mice and even a badger or two. Every morning, each animal would come out of its hole, hop or scurry down to the stream, and use a leaf to scoop up some water. Then they would each carry their leaf back and water their flower.

In a little gully in this field, next to a tall sunflower, lived a rabbit. Every day she would go down to the stream and get some water for her sunflower. She loved that flower. It was tall and bright, strong and healthy, and she took very good care of it.

One afternoon, the rabbit decided to hop up to the top of a little hill alongside her gully. When she got to the top, she saw something she had never seen before. Down a ways, she saw a flower. It might have been a daisy, but it was hard to tell. This flower looked in bad shape.

Now, why had she never seen that flower before? It's not that big a mystery. She had just never climbed that particular little hill to look in that direction. Of course, she knew the field was full of flowers. She may have heard some were not doing quite as well as her sunflower. But she'd never actually seen one that looked as bad as this.

She hopped down the hill to take a closer look, and then, she began to understand. This flower needed water. Its stem was bent. Its petals were wilting in the heat. The ground around it was parched and dry. The rabbit felt bad that a flower could be so neglected. And then she did.... nothing.

Even though the flower looked terrible, it was just one flower in a field, after all. The field had plenty of other flowers that were doing fine. The rabbit had enough work to do, watering her own flower. So she went home and got on with her business, getting up every morning,

going to the stream, watering her sunflower and hopping around all afternoon.

But the other flower didn't go away. At least once a day, the rabbit couldn't help but hop up to the top of the hill and take a quick look. Every day, the other flower looked a little worse.

It started to get to her. The rabbit thought about that flower at night while she was trying to sleep. She thought about it in the morning when she hopped to the stream for water. She couldn't even enjoy her own flower so much, knowing the other flower was wilting more and more every day.

Now, you may wonder: Why didn't that rabbit didn't just go over and water the flower? After all, it was not far away, just on the other side of the hill. The stream had plenty of water. And the rabbit had plenty of time.

Well, that's a good question. The rabbit thought about it all the time. She'd think about making an extra trip to the stream, to get some water for that flower. But then she'd think, "Well, you don't just march into someone's front yard and water their flower without asking, do you? What if that flower is someone else's to water? They might yell at me or something." Or she'd think, "What if the flower likes being dried-up and droopy? That's possible, isn't it?" Or she'd think, "Aren't there animals who are supposed to go around and help out flowers whose animals don't water them? I should leave it to them... Right?"

With all these questions swirling in her head, the rabbit went about her business, taking care of her sunflower every day and trying not to think about the other flower. But it kept bothering her, especially at night. It was kind of irritating, actually. Sometimes she wished the flower would just get better by itself, or die. But every time she sneaked a peek, there it was, looking more dry, more wilted and more droopy.

Finally, the rabbit could stand it no longer. One morning, hopping from the stream with a leaf full of water for her sunflower, she suddenly thought, "It's just not right. Flowers are not supposed to wilt like that. Flowers should be healthy and colorful and bright and beautiful." And she found herself hopping over the hill toward the other flower, taking the water there instead.

At the top of the hill, the rabbit got a bit nervous. Her nose twitched as she sniffed the air. It might be dangerous over there. She shouldn't be watering other animals' flowers. But then she said, "It's just not right," and kept going, over the hill and down the other side.

The rabbit hopped close to the dry flower, closer than she had been before. Suddenly, a hedgehog suddenly popped out of a hole in the ground. The hedgehog yelled, "Hey! What are you doing?"

"I'm going to water this flower," the rabbit said. "It's too dry, and if I don't water it, it will die!"

The hedgehog said, "What business is it of yours whether this flower dies? This is my flower. I'll take care of it how I want. Go home and take care of your own flower!"

But the rabbit answered, "I'm sorry, but I tried that. Flowers are supposed to be bright and beautiful, not wilting and droopy. So I'm going to water this flower." She watered that dry, wilted, drooping daisy, right in front of the hedgehog, though he fussed and mumbled and gave her mean looks. And she turned around and hopped back over the hill.

The next day, she came back with a leaf full of water, and watered it again.

And the day after that, she watered it again.

And then another day, and another, and another. The hedgehog continued to fuss and mumble and give the

rabbit mean looks. But the flower started to look better. First the petals perked up. Then the stem began to stand up a little straighter. Then its leaves started to fill out and get bigger. The flower even grew a little taller.

Strangely enough, as this flower got brighter and healthier and taller and more beautiful, so did the rabbit's own flower. And so did every other flower, all the flowers in the field, even ones she never watered—flowers she had never even noticed before. The whole field began to brighten as the colors of every flower became more vivid and the flowers stretched taller. It was almost as if there was more water everywhere.

How could that be? Were other rabbits and hedgehogs and field mice and even badgers sneaking around and watering other animals' flowers, too? Or was it because when someone waters a wilting flower somewhere, all flowers everywhere grow a little brighter?

Who knows? Maybe we'll just have to try it and see.

# HANDOUT 1: PLANT FACTS

Adapted from the [Blue Planet Biomes](#) website.

## The Importance of Plants

- Plants play the most important part in the cycle of nature. Without plants, there could be no life on Earth. They are the primary producers that sustain all other life forms. This is so because plants are the only organisms that can make their own food. Animals, incapable of making their own food, depend directly or indirectly on plants for their supply of food. All animals and the foods they eat can be traced back to plants.
- The oxygen we breathe comes from plants.
- Leaves are the main food-making part of most plants. They capture energy from sunlight, and turn water and carbon dioxide into sugar and starch. This sugar and starch becomes the food that provides plants with energy to grow, to produce flowers and seeds, and carry on their other life processes.
- Plants provide many useful drugs. Some of these plants have been used as medicines for hundreds of years.
- The bark of the cinchona tree was used 400 years ago to reduce fever. It is still used to make quinine, a drug used to treat malaria and other diseases.
- Another drug, called digitalis, is used in treating heart disease. It is made from the dried leaves of the purple foxglove plant.
- The roots of the Mexican yam are used in producing cortisone, a drug useful in treating arthritis and a number of other diseases.

## FIND OUT MORE

Learn more about the life teeming in [wetlands](http://www.wetland.org/) (at [www.wetland.org/](http://www.wetland.org/)).

Learn more about native plants and natural landscapes and find a variety of environmental education resources on the [Wild Ones website](http://www.for-wild.org/) (at [www.for-wild.org/](http://www.for-wild.org/)). Maybe there is a Wild Ones chapter near you.

# WORKSHOP 4: CONSCIENCE REFINED

## INTRODUCTION

*There is a silent holocaust occurring around the world caused by lack of water and sanitation. People are dying because the international aid community and national governments are not listening to the poor or looking at the overwhelming evidence. — Barbara Frost, chief executive of WaterAid*

This workshop focuses on the scarcity of clean water on our planet and the importance of sanitation to protect our water supplies. Participants ask themselves not only, "Why is protecting water the right thing to do?" but also, "Why is it good for me when I do the right thing?" They consider how their own stewardship can matter to others, perhaps far across the world, who lack the sanitation to ensure clean water. They learn we should conserve the water we use in our own homes and communities, even though it may be abundant—not only out of respect for the interconnected web of life, but also because as we consume less of the world's resources for ourselves, they can be more equitably shared.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore themes of stewardship and water
- Demonstrate relationships among sanitation, clean water and health
- Reinforce the idea of water as a common resource that does or should belong to all life that shares the interdependent web.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Reflect on abundance and lack of clean water in two meditations
- Understand the global scarcity of clean, drinkable water

- Learn that sanitation is a critical factor in community health and how toilets ensure clean, healthy water
- Discover water conservation at home and fundraising for communities which lack clean water abroad as two strategies we can use to promote for global sanitation and clean water equity.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Guided Meditation	10
Activity 2: 100 Drops of Water	10
Activity 3: Story — Why Toilets Are Important	10
Activity 4: Game — Turdlywinks	10
Activity 5: River Scene — Signs to Bathrooms	10
Faith in Action: World Toilet Day — Toilet Tax	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: 100 Drops of Real Water	15
Alternate Activity 2: Painting with Raindrops	20

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Have you ever considered the role of sanitation in securing your health, comfort and ability to enjoy daily life? One way to begin is to reflect on how and when you use the bathroom each day. While all ages may find humor in bathroom jokes, this workshop presents sanitation as a key to protecting water resources, a serious matter that affects everyone in the world.

How you will respond to participants' giggling at this workshop's game, Turdlywinks? Give yourself, and the participants, permission to have a few laughs as part of the group's engagement with this important topic.

Take a deep breath to center yourself. Say a prayer of gratitude for the blessings in your life and prepare to start the workshop.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, cup of water and plant on a table.
- Place chairs for all participants in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose background music for the Opening and other quiet activities in the workshop. See Before You Start in this program's Introduction for suggestions.
- Optional: If you have set up a blog for Gather the Spirit participants, prepare instructions for accessing the blog. Make a copy for every family and/or plan to email the instructions to participants.

### Description of Activity

The Opening for Gather the Spirit has a symbolic chalice lighting; the chalice is "lit" by pouring a cup of water into a clear bowl.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to connect with the sounds of water.

Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.
- Tap your fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects to make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

Ask participants to briefly report on their Gather the Spirit activities. Who tried a Taking It Home activity from the previous workshop? If they did the scavenger hunt suggested in Taking It Home for Workshop 3, what did they decide? Does anyone have a new idea to share about stewardship or water?

If you have started a Gather the Spirit blog for the group, make sure all participants know about it. Explain, as needed, that participants can post results of their explorations of Gather the Spirit topics or other comments or ideas relevant to the program; and, they can respond to one another's postings. Hand out blog access instructions to any who need them.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations or who use a wheelchair.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: GUIDED MEDITATION (10 MINUTES)

### Preparation for Activity

- Read the two-part meditation and prepare to present it to the group.
- Arrange the meeting space so participants can sit comfortably, without touching others, during the meditation.

### Description of Activity

Ask participants to find a comfortable position. Invite them to close their eyes and listen:

Think about this morning. You woke up and went to the bathroom. After you flushed, you washed your hands and brushed your teeth. Did you notice the water? It was clean and fresh and ready to use, right out of the tap. Now you are ready for breakfast. Did you have something to drink? If you are an adult, perhaps you had tea or coffee. If you don't drink tea or coffee, maybe you had juice or water to drink with breakfast.

Ask the group to take a moment and reflect about how easy it was to get all the water they needed. Pause.

Then say:

Please close your eyes again. Now, imagine you don't live here. You live in a country village. You wake up and have to go outside and find a private place to go to the bathroom. Maybe you decide to wait until you go to the river. You and your friends are using the banks of the river as a bathroom, since there is no other choice. You don't have running water in your village. You have to go to the river to get water to drink. You carry a large empty bucket with you as you walk to the river. After you are done, you wash your hands in the river, as do your friends. Now you fill up the bucket, with the same river water you just washed in. You carry the bucket of water home for your family to use it for cooking, drinking and washing, this morning.

Invite the group to share their responses: When you were asked to imagine being in a village...

- What did you see?
- How did you feel?
- What would it be like to have only one source of water to use, and re-use, for washing and drinking?
- How did it feel to have to go outside to go to the bathroom, wash yourself and get drinking water?

### Including All Participants

The term "guided meditation" may mean little to younger participants. Use words like "let's pretend" or "let's use our imaginations" to draw them in.

## ACTIVITY 2: 100 DROPS OF WATER (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Water Drops Sheet](#) (included in this document)
- Color pencils or markers

### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants, plus an extra.
- Optional: If the group is large, plan to have participants work in small groups of four or five; make a copy of the handout for each small group.

### Description of Activity

This activity illustrates the scarcity of clean water.

Distribute handouts. Say:

The drops on this sheet represent all the water on the Earth. How much of these 100 drops do you think are fresh, clean water we could safely drink?

Let participants guess (or, invite the groups to confer). Distribute pencils or markers and ask them to mark their guess by coloring in the number of drops.

Ask participants to share their guesses by holding up their water drops sheets. Tell them the correct answer is one drop. On your own sheet, color in one drop and show it to the group. Say:

This one drop is all we have for drinking. The rest of Earth's water is salt water or dirty water that is unsafe to drink.

Engage the group to react:

- What do you think about how much clean, safe drinking water is available to drink?
- Can we afford to waste water?
- Why is it important that we keep all water clean and free of pollution?

Conclude by saying that clean sanitation in every part of the world is important for clean water everywhere.

## ACTIVITY 3: STORY — WHY TOILETS ARE IMPORTANT (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Why Toilets Are Important](#) (included in this document) "

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story.
- Be ready for some giggles from participants, even adults. People are not used to talking openly about toilets or sanitation, especially in a congregational setting.

### Description of Activity

Read the story to the group. Then, process with these questions:

- What did you learn that most surprised you?
- Have you ever before thought about how important it is to have toilets?
- Why is it important to us as Unitarian Universalists to pay attention to sanitation all around the world?
- Who has heard the saying "If it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown flush it down?" The saying means you do not need to flush every time you go to the bathroom. That is a way to save water.

Conclude by saying when we save water, we also conserve the plumbing, gasoline, electricity and other resources needed to bring the clean water to us. Saving water also connects us with all the world's people and all life that shares Earth's water with us.

## ACTIVITY 4: TURDLYWINKS (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Turdlywinks Game Board](#) (included in this document)
- Plastic, colored disks for a traditional game of tiddlywinks

### Preparation for Activity

- Using Leader Resource 1, make enough game boards so everyone can play the game in a group of four or five.
- Obtain enough tiddlywinks disks for all participants.
- Plan how you will form small groups to play the game. Each group will need at least one strong reader.

- Optional: Make sure your game is up-to-date. Visit the [WaterAid U.K. website](#) (at [www.wateraid.org/uk/learn\\_zone/](http://www.wateraid.org/uk/learn_zone/)); if a new version of the Turdlywinks game board has been posted with updated water facts, consider downloading it to make the game boards. Or, add the most [recent worldwide water statistics](#) (at [www.wateraid.org/uk/what\\_we\\_do/statistics/default.asp](http://www.wateraid.org/uk/what_we_do/statistics/default.asp)) to your version of Turdlywinks.

### Description of Activity

WaterAid, an organization that funds sanitation to protect water supplies in locations around the world, developed the Turdlywinks game to build public awareness. Distribute game boards and discs. Tell the group:

The object of the game is to get everyone's discs into the toilet at the top of the sheet. You know what the discs represent.

When a player's disc does not make it into the toilet, they or another player reads aloud one of the facts "splattered" on the game sheet.

This game may seem gross to some people. Remind the group this is a fun and humorous way to talk about how toilets and sanitation help communities and keep our precious water sources clean.

## ACTIVITY 5: RIVER SCENE — SIGNS TO BATHROOMS (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- River Scene mural (Workshop 1, Activity 2)
- Drawing supplies such as oil pastels; color markers; paints, paintbrushes and cups of water (and newspapers or drop cloth)
- Plain drawing paper, scissors (including left-handed scissors) and glue sticks and tape
- Optional: Music and music player

### Preparation for Activity

- Retrieve the group's River Scene, if it is not already posted where the group can work on it. Set up work areas where participants can create either directly on the River Scene or on drawing paper to attach the mural.
- Optional: If this is the first time the group will work on the River Scene, read Workshop 1, Activity 2. Identify where you can leave the River Scene mural posted or store it between workshops. Obtain the materials and supplies you will need and plan how you will incorporate the start-up into today's activity. You might ask some participants to begin the River Scene and

invite others to add the bathroom signs suggested for this workshop.

- Optional: Choose quiet, instrumental music or songs with a water theme (see Music Suggestions in Find Out More). Set up a music player.

### **Description of Activity**

Participants continue creation of the River Scene, begun in Workshop 1, Activity 2.

Invite participants to add signs to the River Scene directing people to bathrooms. Say something like:

We're going to add to our River Scene now. We made drawings to show human activities on the banks of the river. We have added fish, reptiles and land animals. After learning today how important it is to not pollute water sources, we will make signs to bathrooms. Where should the bathroom signs point? To the river or away from the river? (Affirm: Away from the river.) You have about ten minutes to make your creation.

Playing quiet music during this activity may help participants focus. With a few minutes remaining, invite participants to clean up. Then gather the group and ask volunteers to show what they have made.

Invite all to look at the River Scene for a minute while you offer ideas like these:

Imagine you live upstream beside this river. If you get into a rowboat or canoe you can float along and see all the wonderful places and people and animals along the banks. You can see fish swimming around in the water. You can see the signs asking you to use the bathrooms available instead of polluting the river with human waste. Let's stand or sit quietly for a moment, and see if we can feel a real sense of connection, maybe a spiritual connection, with the life in and around the river.

### **Including All Participants**

Provide a variety of work spaces so that people with varied abilities can work easily and comfortably. If standing and attaching their work to the river scene is challenging for some, let them work with partners who can help display their creations.

Not everyone is comfortable making drawings. You can suggest some participants cut out magazine pictures to attach to the mural or enhance the river with blue paper or crepe paper. Avoid extravagant praise as well as critiques of participant contributions—affirm all who help shape the River Scene.

## **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Taking It Home handout
- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Adapt the Taking It Home section. Prepare it as a handout and copy for all participants (or, email to all adult participants and parents).
- Re-set the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

### **Description of Activity**

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop: Today we talked about having access to clean water. Not everyone in the world has the same access to clean water that many of us have in the United States. We talked about clean sanitation, having the proper place to go to the bathroom. We learned that some people have no choice but to go near their clean water sources. We will commit to preserving clean water here and support efforts around the world for clean sanitation.

Invite participants to offer a thought about what moved them during this workshop. Say something like: Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection. Then invite volunteers to answer. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the chalice bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us until we meet again.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants. Set aside the chalice bowl and plant where they will be safe between workshops.

# FAITH IN ACTION: WORLD TOILET DAY — TOILET TAX

## Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [World Toilet Day](#) (included in this document)
- Poster board (enough to post signs outside each bathroom in the congregational building), color markers, scissors (including left-handed scissors), tape and glue sticks and masking tape
- Money collection jars and (optional) sticky labels and permanent markers
- Optional: Laptop with Internet access; computer printer

## Preparation for Activity

- Online, learn about [WaterAid](#) (at [www.wateraid.org/](http://www.wateraid.org/)), an international organization that funds and implements local water and sanitation projects in developing nations. Familiarize yourself with WaterAid's mission, programs and case studies. You may wish to identify a specific project to receive the Toilet Tax proceeds. Print out material for participants to include on their Toilet Tax posters.
- Talk with your religious educator, minister and/or congregational leaders such as social justice and building and grounds committee members about how the group can implement a Toilet Tax project in your congregation. Make a plan for announcing the Toilet Tax in worship services and/or the congregational newsletter and/or website.
- Download, adapt and print out Leader Resource 2. Make as many copies as you will have posters, plus a few extra.
- Optional: See the Find Out More section for an annotated guide to WaterAid's multiple websites and links to other organizations that work on international clean water and sanitation issues.
- Optional: Bring a laptop with Internet access, and a printer, so the group can explore WaterAid's websites and choose their own materials for their posters.

## Description of Activity

Engage the group to work for equitable distribution of clean water across the interconnected web of life by helping an organization that implements community water and sanitation projects in developing nations.

Tell the group about WaterAid. Explain some of the projects the organization does, and how the projects benefit communities. For example:

- Tapping underground water source and installing a water pump in a rural village—brings clean, safe water for drinking, washing and cooking; saves women and children hours of time spent carrying water from a river or lake to their homes (so the children can return to school)
- Providing pay latrines in overcrowded urban areas that lack running water—reduces unsanitary disposal of human waste; provides income for people who otherwise do not have jobs

Suggest the group act on what they have learned about the connection between sanitation (toilets) and clean water. Provide a brief explanation about World Toilet Day. Explain that raising money through a Toilet Tax in the congregation is a way to make the congregational community aware of the clean water and sanitation we may take for granted while supporting WaterAid to bring clean water to places in the world where people need it.

Distribute poster board, markers, scissors, tape and glue sticks and Leader Resource 2. You may wish to form small groups to work on each poster. Invite participants to cut and paste the text from the leader resource on their poster or to write the words decoratively. If you have printed out images or text from the WaterAid website, make these available; if you have a laptop and printer in the meeting space, invite participants to find additional materials to use. You might engage some participants to make Toilet Tax labels for the money collection jars. When posters are done, display one at the entrance to each bathroom in the congregational building along with a Toilet Tax collection jar, perhaps placed on a small table.

Announce to the congregation before the service begins that there will be the collection boxes next to the bathrooms. In your announcement, mention the need for clean sanitation around the world and the connection between clean water and clean sanitation.

Collect the money and send a donation to WaterAid or another organization that works for equal distribution of sanitation and clean water.

## Including All Participants

Find appropriate tasks for all participants in a multi-age group. Young children can be part of an announcement to the congregation. People who prefer to work alone can label collection jars. Active people may like to find tables for the collection jars or walk through the building counting the bathrooms and, later, hanging the Toilet Tax posters.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements? Are participants growing in their understanding of the need to protect and equitably share the Earth's water resources? How do you know? What should you do differently at the next workshop?

If the group will do more Gather the Spirit workshops, look ahead to assign leadership responsibilities.

## TAKING IT HOME

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** We talked about how sanitation protects the water people drink, and learned that in many places, a simple lack of toilets reduces the supply of clean, fresh water. We talked about conserving the water we use. When we conserve water, we honor our place in an interconnected web of life. And, we use less electricity and gasoline, which leaves more resources for all life to share.

We played Turdlywinks, aiming to deposit a disk in the toilet or risk contaminating the water. The game taught us facts about sanitation and why communities need a clean way to dispose of human waste in order to preserve their clean water. We imagined not having direct access to clean water. Concepts in this workshop relate to the Unitarian Universalist Principles of the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relationships; and, the interdependent web of existence.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** the resources needed to bring you fresh, clean water for drinking, washing and cooking. Some are gasoline to fuel pumping stations and sewage plants, construction equipment to build water and sewage pipelines, and workers to design, build and maintain all this infrastructure. Can you think of other ways your water supply uses more resources besides water?

Even if water is abundant in your area, talk about how you can help share water across the interdependent web if you do conserve. How can conservation be a way of sharing?

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

### A FAMILY ADVENTURE

Find out where the water and waste go after you flush your toilet. See if your town or city water department has a printed or electronic map you can see of the pipes that carry water and sewage in your neighborhood. You might like to tour the route your used toilet water travels to a sewage treatment plant. Where does it go from there?

## FAMILY BRAINSTORMING

Even if water is abundant in your community, conserving water at home can help free up a variety of clean water- and sanitation-related resources such as gasoline, water transportation infrastructure and sanitation equipment to be shared more equitably with communities elsewhere in the world. Talk about ways you can conserve; find ideas on the [Green Venture](#) website. If you can, measure your water use before and after starting the conservation. Then, talk about how the resources you've saved can help bring clean water and sanitation to people who need it in a community far away.

### A FAMILY RITUAL

**Thanks for water.** Saying grace at mealtime is a common spiritual practice. If you give thanks for your food before you eat, do you also give thanks for water? If the group leader has set up a Gather the Spirit blog, post the water blessing your family uses.

**Monitoring your family's water use.** If your home has its own water meter, check it this weekend and again a week later. How much water does your family use in one week? If you live in a multifamily building without separate water meters, the building owner can probably tell you how much water the building uses in a week. The following week, make a special effort to reduce your water use by cutting down on showers, flushing only solid waste and taking care to shut water faucets off when not in use. Check your meter again.

### FAMILY SCAVENGER HUNT

Does your water come from a well? A nearby lake? Or a human-made reservoir far away from your home? Call your local water authority to find out where your water comes from. Try to trace it back all the way to its natural source.

### FAMILY GAME

If you purchase [Water: An Environmental Quiz Deck of Knowledge Cards](#) (Pomegranate Communications, Inc.), a portion of your money goes to the Sierra Club. You can play the electronic version of [Turdlywinks](#) on the WaterAid U.K. website.

### FAMILY BLOGGING

If your group leader has set up a Gather the Spirit blog, log in and see what other participants are doing and post your own results.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: 100 DROPS OF REAL WATER (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Graph paper, 100-square grids for each participant

- Waxed paper
- New (sterile) eyedroppers for all participants
- Bowls of water for each work area
- Clean cloth towels or paper towels

#### **Preparation for Activity**

- Cover each grid completely with a sheet of waxed paper.
- Set bowls of water in the center of each work area for easy access by all participants.
- Lay out towels near the work areas.

#### **Description of Activity**

Invite participants to place 100 drops of water on their waxed paper grids. Tell them to put one drop in each square to make counting easy.

As they work, ask participants:

If your 100 drops represent all of Earth's water, how many drops do you think would be drinkable?

Tell them the answer is one drop. Ninety-nine percent of the world's water is salt water or contaminated fresh water. If the eyedroppers were new or cleaned when you started, invite participants to drop one drop into their mouths. How satisfying do they find that?

If you have time, ask participants to experiment with moving their 100 drops into one very large drop. How far can away can they set a drop and still have it merge into the one next to it? The attractive force between water molecules (or drops) is called cohesion. Cohesion helps explain why water gathers together from rivulets to streams to rivers, mentioned in Workshop 1.

#### **Including All Participants**

Participants with fine-motor difficulties can be allowed to try as they wish; they will still absorb the message by watching.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: PAINTING WITH RAIN DROPS (20 MINUTES)**

#### **Materials for Activity**

- Watercolor paper or another absorbent drawing/painting paper, such as construction paper

- Watercolor paints and paintbrushes
- Natural rain or a water sprinkler
- Appropriate outerwear for participants
- Optional: Music and music player

#### **Preparation for Activity**

- Obtain a water sprinkler or a watering can with tiny water holes to use in case of no rain.
- Optional: Choose background music.

#### **Description of Activity**

Participants make watercolor paintings and then see how raindrops or droplets from a sprinkler change them. Participants gain an experience of co-creating with nature and are invited to accept and even appreciate forces they cannot control.

This activity will work best on a drizzly day, although a hose with a sprinkler attachment or a watering can serve the purpose. Invite participants to use the paints to draw on a piece of paper. Advise them that water will be involved later and the paintings will change; they need not make a painting of any particular thing and pleasing colors in beautiful shapes or designs will work just as well.

You may wish to play instrumental music while participants paint. Invite participants to clean their work areas and rinse brushes when they finish. Suggest they walk around quietly to observe one another's paintings.

When everyone is ready, invite the group to don outerwear as appropriate and bring their paintings outside for a brief exposure to the rain (or a quick run through the sprinkler or under a pouring watering can).

Bring the group back inside. Allow participants time to look at how the various paintings changed. You may ask "Can you tell how the artist was holding the picture when the water touched it?" Set the pictures aside to dry.

#### **Including All Participants**

Some participants may absolutely refuse to let rain change their painting; most will go along if they know the plan in advance. It's okay to let some just watch what the rain or sprinkler does to the artwork of other painters.

## STORY: WHY TOILETS ARE IMPORTANT

By Janeen K. Grohsmeyer

When you go camping, what do you miss most? Electricity? Or toilets?

Only a hundred years or so ago, people didn't have either one. There were no microwave ovens or toasters. There were no light bulbs. You couldn't just flip a switch or push a button to make things happen. For thousands and thousands of years, whenever people wanted heat they had to make a fire. Whenever people wanted light, they had to burn a wax candle or an oil lamp or just wait for the sun to rise.

And for thousands and thousands of years, there were no sinks with hot and cold running water or flush toilets in houses. You couldn't just turn on a faucet or hold down a handle to make water move. Whenever people needed water, they had to get a wooden bucket or a heavy clay jar and walk to a river or a spring or a well and then carry the water back home.

And whenever people needed to use the toilet—they couldn't. There was no such thing as a toilet. Instead, they had to dig a hole or find a tree. Some people walked to the river and relieved themselves there. At night, people didn't want to go outside in the dark, so they used a bucket or a pot then emptied it in the morning. And where did they empty it? They dug a hole or found a tree or took it to the river.

People who traveled a lot just dug a small hole whenever they needed one. But people who lived in one place and had a house usually dug a deep hole. They put a seat over it, and sometimes even built a little house around it, to keep the rain off and give people privacy. The little house was called the outhouse.

For thousands and thousands of years, people have been digging holes. And for thousands and thousands of years, there was no such thing as toilet paper. Ancient Romans used scraps of wool or sponges on a stick to clean themselves. In Hawaii, people used fibers from coconut shells. Rich people in France used lace. On farms, people used corncobs and handfuls of hay. In the desert, people used sand. In the summer, people used leaves. In the winter, people used moss and snow.

A few hundred years ago, people learned how to make paper cheaply. Newspapers and almanacs became very popular, and not just for reading. The Sears Roebuck catalog full of large, lightweight pages hung in a place of honor in many an outhouse. Finally, in 1877, toilet paper on a roll with easy tear-off sheets was invented.

People had also been busy inventing toilets that could flush. Queen Elizabeth I of England had an early model

four hundred years ago. About two hundred years ago, Josiah Wedgwood, who made beautiful porcelain dishes, also made beautiful porcelain toilets. They were very pretty, but they were expensive and houses didn't have running water anyway, so almost everyone kept using chamber pots at night and outhouses during the day. Or, they dug a hole or found a tree or went to a river.

About a hundred and fifty years ago, people started putting water pipes in their cities and building sewage treatment plants to make the toilet water clean again.

More and more people started having bathrooms with running water in their houses. This was amazing! They could take a hot bath, just by turning on a faucet. They didn't have to heat water on the stove and carry it in buckets to the tub, and then empty the tub with buckets when they were done.

They could flush the toilet. They didn't have to dig holes or empty chamber pots every day and scrub them clean.

They could use toilet paper from a roll. They didn't have to use corncobs or coconut fibers or rip pages out of an old book.

They could wash their hands in a sink, and not just with cold water. There was hot water, too!

This may not sound so amazing to you. Most of us have grown up living in houses that have bathrooms. We think flushable toilets and soft toilet paper and bathtubs and sinks with clean water where we can wash our hands, and even take a drink, are normal. We think everyone has them.

But everyone doesn't.

Two and a half billion people don't have access to a toilet, not even the port-a-potty kind. That's about one-third of the people on the planet. One-third of us are still digging a hole or finding a tree or going to the river. Or, using plastic bags. One-third of us do not have toilet paper, and are still using leaves or sand or snow.

Of course, for thousands and thousands of years, that's what everyone did. Not having a toilet is not new.

But something is new: the number of people—two and a half billion people. For all those thousands and thousands of years, there weren't very many people. In a country village, there's plenty of room to dig more holes. When your tribe is the only group who uses the river for twenty miles, the river can clean itself. There's plenty of time for everything to decompose back into water and earth. In a great forest, there are plenty of trees. Being used as a bathroom once in a while is not going to hurt too many trees too much.

But in a big city, there are more people than there are trees. There's no room for each person to dig holes,

maybe not even one. The riverbank is crowded and there's no privacy, not even outhouses. But in a big city where people do not have toilets, the river is where the running water can be found. The river becomes the bathroom.

And that is not healthy.

After all, human waste is what our bodies are getting rid of. It's not healthy to put it back into our bodies. We all know we should wash our hands after we go to the bathroom. We all know that toilet water isn't safe to drink. That water has germs in it. That's what sewage treatment does—clean the water before we use it again.

But the two and a half billion people who live without toilets don't have a way to clean the water. Human waste goes into the water, and that's the only water they have. It's the only water they have to wash their hands. It's the only water they have to cook with. And it's the only water they have to drink.

People get sick from that water. People die from that water. Diseases like diarrhea, dysentery and cholera kill

almost two million children every year. Five thousand children die, every single day, because people don't have toilets.

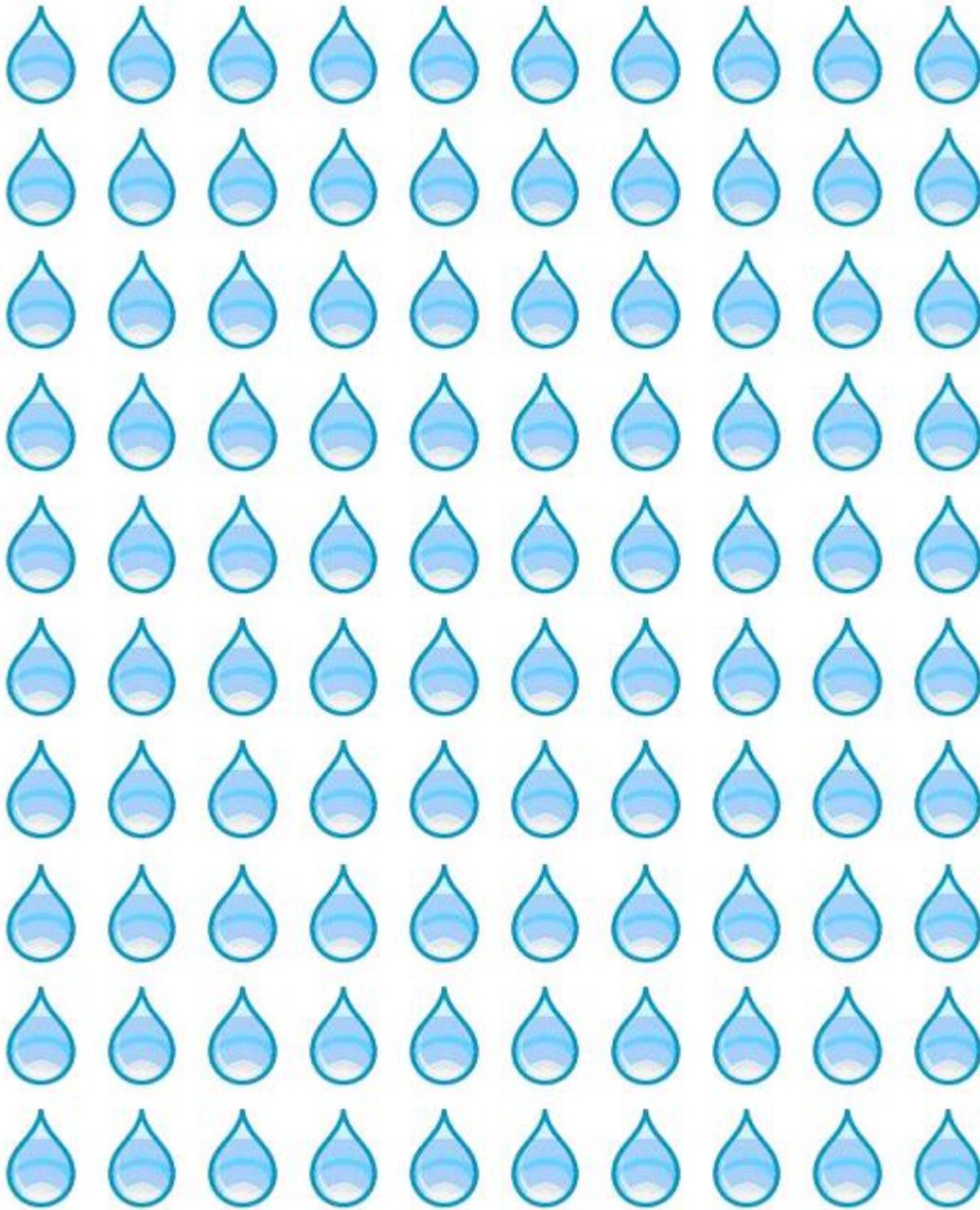
Since 2001, the World Toilet Organization has been working to change that. They want every person to have access to a toilet. They want every person to have water to drink and wash with that isn't full of germs. They want life to be better for everyone.

They've even created World Toilet Day. On November 19th, the World Toilet Organization works to help people all over the world learn how important toilets are.

So the next time you use a bathroom, take a moment to admire the soft toilet paper, the hot and cold running water in the sink and the flushable toilet. Take a moment to think about the two and a half billion people on the planet who don't have toilet paper or sinks or toilets of any kind.

Take a moment to think about what you could do to help change that.

# HANDOUT 1: WATER DROPS SHEET



# LEADER RESOURCE 1: TURDLYWINKS GAME BOARD



WaterAid's campaigns aim to influence governments and public opinion to ensure water and toilets for all.



A child dies every 15 seconds from water-related diseases

One gram of faeces can contain 10,000,000 viruses, 1,000,000 bacteria and 100 parasite eggs

**WaterAid's vision:**  
**100%**  
sanitation coverage

Diseases caused by lack of sanitation keep children out of school

**Ghana**  
**58%**  
sanitation coverage

1.1 billion people live without clean drinking water

2.6 billion people live without toilets

**Uganda**  
**41%**  
sanitation coverage

Washing hands with soap and water can reduce diarrhoeal diseases by over 40%

**Ethiopia**  
**6%**  
sanitation coverage

# turdlywinks

**How to play:** From outside the board try to flick your turdlywink into the latrine. If you miss you'll make a mess.

Registered charity number 288701

## LEADER RESOURCE 2: WORLD TOILET DAY

Statistics from the [WaterAid U.K. website](#).

### Toilet Tax

Please pay what you can before entering the bathroom. This action is to raise awareness about the lack of sanitation and clean water in much of the world and money to help solve the problem. Your Toilet Tax donation will be sent to WaterAid, an international organization that works with communities in developing nations to bring sanitation and clean water.

### Did you know?

- More than 2.5 billion people do not have somewhere safe, private or hygienic to go to the toilet.
- One gram (.03 ounces) of feces can contain 10 million viruses, one million bacteria, 1,000 parasite cysts and 100 parasite eggs.
- The simple act of washing hands with soap and water after going to the toilet can reduce diarrheal diseases by over 40%.
- Safe disposal of children's feces leads to a reduction of nearly 40% in childhood diarrhea.

## FIND OUT MORE

### WaterAid

On the [Water Aid U.S. website](http://www.wateraidamerica.org) (at [www.wateraidamerica.org](http://www.wateraidamerica.org)), learn about the impact of dozens of projects to improve access to clean water in dozens of localities around the world. The website explains WaterAid's [sustainable approach](http://www.wateraidamerica.org/what_we_do/how_we_work/sustainable_technologies/default.aspx) (at [www.wateraidamerica.org/what\\_we\\_do/how\\_we\\_work/sustainable\\_technologies/default.aspx](http://www.wateraidamerica.org/what_we_do/how_we_work/sustainable_technologies/default.aspx)), including the effort to employ local skills and local materials and engage local communities in the planning process. Find extensive, detailed [suggestions for supporting](http://www.wateraidamerica.org/get_involved/default.aspx) (at [www.wateraidamerica.org/get\\_involved/default.aspx](http://www.wateraidamerica.org/get_involved/default.aspx)) global water and sanitation justice and learning tools including a [slide show about children and water](http://www.wateraid.org/international/learn_zone/primary/water_around_the_world/6684.asp) (at [www.wateraid.org/international/learn\\_zone/primary/water\\_around\\_the\\_world/6684.asp](http://www.wateraid.org/international/learn_zone/primary/water_around_the_world/6684.asp)) in rural Ghana and a primary school in India and an animated video, "[The Adventures of Super Toilet](#)," which gives an entertaining explanation of how personal hygiene and public sanitation can protect us from diseases caused by the bacteria carried in fecal matter.

The organization's [U.K. website](#) also provides deep resources, including a [Fundraising](#) page offering ways to learn and help, and an interactive [Turdlywinks](#) game.

### More Organizations for World Sanitation and Clean Water

The website of the [World Toilet Organization](http://www.worldtoilet.org/) (at [www.worldtoilet.org/](http://www.worldtoilet.org/))—originator of November 19 as World Toilet Day—offers an international [timeline of the invention of the toilet](http://www.worldtoilet.org/resources.asp?no=6) (at [www.worldtoilet.org/resources.asp?no=6](http://www.worldtoilet.org/resources.asp?no=6)). Learn about the Singapore-based [World Toilet College](http://www.worldtoilet.org/ourwork3.asp) (at [www.worldtoilet.org/ourwork3.asp](http://www.worldtoilet.org/ourwork3.asp)), other programs to spread sanitation expertise and technology worldwide and [how you can help](http://www.worldtoilet.org/getinvolved.asp) (at [www.worldtoilet.org/getinvolved.asp](http://www.worldtoilet.org/getinvolved.asp)).

A 10-minute video on the [Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor](http://www.wsup.com) (at [www.wsup.com](http://www.wsup.com)) website describes sanitation problems in cities in developing nations and explains the organization's approach by showing its local programs in Kenya.

The World Health Organization (WHO) works to improve water access and sanitation worldwide through its Water, Sanitation and Health division. On the WHO website, find numerous [facts and figures](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/facts2004/en/) (at [www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/publications/facts2004/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/facts2004/en/)) under a quote from the late WHO Director-General Lee Jong-wook:

Water and Sanitation is one of the primary drivers of public health. I often refer to it as "Health 101", which means that once we can secure access to clean water and to adequate sanitation facilities for all people, irrespective of the difference in their living conditions, a huge battle against all kinds of diseases will be won.

U.K.-based [End Water Poverty](http://www.endwaterpoverty.org/) (at [www.endwaterpoverty.org/](http://www.endwaterpoverty.org/)) is an advocacy organization for international water equity.

### Understanding How We Get Our Water

A McGraw-Hill website provides [several short animations](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072402466/student_view0/chapter11/animations_and_movies.html) (at [highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072402466/student\\_view0/chapter11/animations\\_and\\_movies.html](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072402466/student_view0/chapter11/animations_and_movies.html)) that explain groundwater and wells. The animation about a Cone of Depression illustrates how overdrawing groundwater (not sharing well), has the additional effect of making the water more susceptible to contamination.

A very short environmental education animation for children, provided online by Matthew Babcock of the Michigan Tech Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, demonstrates the [relative speed of water flow](http://techalive.mtu.edu/meec/module04/GroundwaterSpeed.htm) (at [techalive.mtu.edu/meec/module04/GroundwaterSpeed.htm](http://techalive.mtu.edu/meec/module04/GroundwaterSpeed.htm)), comparing rivers, lakes and aquifers. The slow speed of aquifer water flow helps make wells feasible.

### Celebrity Action for Water Equity

Older youth may have heard about the hip-hop artist [Jay Z's Water for Life tour](http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1538213/08092006/jay_z.jhtml?headlines=true) (at [www.mtv.com/news/articles/1538213/08092006/jay\\_z.jhtml?headlines=true](http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1538213/08092006/jay_z.jhtml?headlines=true)) which raised money to build wells and water pumps in Africa. The pumps were designed as simple playground carousels, so children can have fun while drawing water to the surface.

# WORKSHOP 5: CHORUS OF LIFE RESOUNDING AS ONE

## INTRODUCTION

*This we know. The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth... All things are connected like the blood which unites one family... Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth... Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. — attributed to Chief Noah Sealh, Reading 550 in Singing the Living Tradition*  
*We name ourselves after the land we live with. Because, not only are we breathing in, we are also drinking from the water that is flavored by that very land. Whatever is deposited in the soil is in that water is in us. So we are all one thing, and we name ourselves after the place that is our nurturing. That sustains our life. — Ramona Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag artist*

This workshop asks "Who owns water?" Participants examine their ideas about what can be owned and our responsibility to promote sharing of the resources all living things on Earth need. They explore how boundaries created by people affect the distribution of nature's resources, especially water.

Activity 4, Boundary Stake-out, involves a walk around your congregational building. Alert participants before this workshop that they will need outerwear.

Alternate Activity 1, Story — Sunny Side Mary, presents an option to use in place of, or in addition to, the Activity 1 guided meditation.

Alternate Activity 2 provides a hands-on exploration of how the ground holds water. Participants make their own small, model aquifers. When they add food coloring, they can observe how pollution can contaminate fresh water as it travels underground.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Present the concept that natural resources belong to all in the interdependent web of existence
- Invite participants to reflect on how human-made boundaries affect our ability to equitably share resources, especially water
- Promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part; affirm that

taking care of the environment goes hand-in-hand with taking care of one another.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Imagine the relationship two different children, in different parts of the world, have with the water they use
- Consider what it means to claim ownership of water—a resource all life needs
- Understand how human boundaries and claims of ownership affect equitable sharing of this common global resource.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Guided Meditation	10
Activity 2: Story — Mabouya, Chief of the Well	10
Activity 3: Water Boundary	7
Activity 4: Boundary Stake-out	15
Activity 5: River Scene — Whose Water Is It?	8
Faith in Action: Documentary — Flow	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sunny Side Mary	15
Alternate Activity 2: Make An Aquifer in a Cup	20

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Reflect on the question "Who owns water?" When have you ever thought about this before? What do you know about how Earth's water resources are distributed, who has access to clean water and who does not?

Think about your water. Do you own a well? Does your water come from a town or city water system? Who do you pay for it? To what extent do you feel you own the water you use? How does your feeling of ownership affect your use of water?

Take a few moments to sit with the idea that "your" water does not really belong to you. Feel your gratitude for access to clean drinking water. Take these thoughts and feelings into the workshop with you today.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, cup of water and plant on a table.
- Place chairs for in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose background music for the Opening and other quiet activities. See *Before You Start* in this program's Introduction for suggestions.
- Optional: If you have set up a blog for Gather the Spirit participants, prepare instructions for accessing the blog. Make a copy for every family and/or plan to email the instructions to participants.

### Description of Activity

In Gather the Spirit, the chalice-lighting involves water, not flame.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to share an opening ritual to help everyone connect with the sounds of water. Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.
- Tap you fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects and make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

Ask participants to briefly report on their Gather the Spirit activities. Who tried a Taking It Home activity from the previous workshop? Does anyone have a new idea to briefly share about stewardship or water?

If you have started a Gather the Spirit blog for the group, make sure all participants know about it. Explain, as needed, that participants can post results of their explorations of Gather the Spirit topics or other comments or ideas relevant to the program; and, they can respond to one another's postings. Hand out blog access instructions to any who need them.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Pay attention to accessibility; arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations or who use a wheelchair.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: GUIDED MEDITATION (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Meditation for Two Voices and Optional Drum](#) (included in this document)

- Optional: A hand drum

### Preparation for Activity

Read the meditation. Decide who the two readers will be. If you wish to add the drum, choose another volunteer.

### Description of Activity

The Meditation for Two Voices and Optional Drum offers prayerful thoughts about rain from children in two parts of the world.

Ask participants to find a comfortable position and either close their eyes or gaze quietly at one thing. Tell the group you will lead a meditation featuring the voices of two children as they lie in bed at night waiting for sleep.

Read the meditation quietly. If you are not using a drum, pause for two or three seconds between the sections. If you are using a drum, play a soft, slow, steady three beats between sections.

Allow a moment of silence at the end of the meditation, then ask participants to open their eyes and re-join the group. Process the meditation using questions like these:

- Where do you think each child lives?
- Which one's life seems most like yours?
- Which child has the most important need? Why?
- If the child with plenty of water uses less, will the child with too little have more?
- Is there anything the child with plenty of water can do to help the child with less?
- Is there anything you and I can do to be sure everybody has plenty of water?

## ACTIVITY 2: STORY — MABOUYA, CHIEF OF THE WELL (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[Mabouya, Chief of the Well](#) (included in this document) "

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story.

### Description of Activity

The story illustrates that water is a resource necessarily shared by all because it is critical to the very existence of all life. Many humans, too, take more than they really need.

Gather participants. Read or tell the story. Then, process with these questions:

- What mistake did Mabouya make?

- Have you ever felt greedy? Think about when and why. Sometimes greed is really a fear that we will run out of something we need—a fear that, sometime in the future, we will not have enough. Do you think that is how Mabouya felt?
- What else was going on with Mabouya? If not greed, what caused her to withhold water from the other animals? Did she perhaps think she was special or superior to the others, and therefore deserved more? Did she not believe they were really thirsty?
- Were you surprised that all the animals simply went away thirsty? What might you have done, if you were one of the animals?
- How do you act when you need something? What do you do if someone says you cannot have it?

How is needing something different from wanting something? And how do you feel when you want something you cannot have? (Children especially can want something intensely; you could also ask them to imagine how much worse that feeling is when applied to something they need.)

## ACTIVITY 3: WATER BOUNDARY (7 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A shallow pan, filled with water
- A sheet of plain paper, a marker and a pair of scissors (including left-handed scissors)
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### Preparation for Activity

- Plan how you will form the groups. The groups do not have to be equal in number. If possible, make the number of "landowners" divisible by four.
- Place the pan of water in the middle of a work table.
- On another work table, place the paper, the marker and the scissors.
- Optional: Read the Faith in Action activity. If you do not plan to show the documentary, "[Flow](#)" (at [www.flowthefilm.com/](http://www.flowthefilm.com/)), to participants, write the name of the film and the URL for its related website on newsprint and post.

### Description of Activity

Form two groups. Tell one group they are "water owners" and gather them around the work table that has the pan of water. Tell the other group they are

"landowners" and gather them around the work table that has the paper.

Ask the two groups to divide their resource equally so each owner gets a fair share. Do not give any further instruction.

Give the groups just a few minutes. Then, process the activity with these questions.

- How did the "landowners" divide the land? Was it easy? Why or why not?
- How did the "water owners" divide the water? Was it easy? Why or why not?
- Does everyone need to own land to survive? How about access to land? Why?
- Does everyone need to own water to survive? How about access to water? Why?
- Why do you think people try to own water?

Explain that in many parts of the world, there are struggles happening about this very issue. People do not have free and unrestricted access to the water they need. Part of the problem is that countries or communities direct the flow of fresh water to keep more of it for themselves. Part of the problem is corporations that take water that flows through land they own, and put it in bottles to sell.

Ask:

What if someone owns land and the land has water on it? Does that person own the water? Should that person allow others to come and get that water if they need it?

If you are not going to do the Faith in Action, you may want to recommend the movie "Flow" for participants to watch on their own. It is a documentary that explains the struggles of people who need water being denied access because of large corporations.

## **ACTIVITY 4: BOUNDARY STAKE-OUT (15 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Small notepads and markers

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Make sure participants have appropriate outerwear so the group can go outside regardless of the weather.
- Plan a short walk from your congregation's building that offers participants the chance to notice boundaries such as walls, fences, and gates as well as places where nature crosses those boundaries (for example, a large tree with a canopy that extends well beyond its trunk).

Make sure the route is accessible for all participants.

- Secure parental permission to take children out of the congregational building. Make preparations to safeguard participants with outdoor allergies.

### **Description of Activity**

Tell the group they will take a short, outdoor walk to notice what kinds of things people try to own and what kinds of things we share. Invite participants to put on outerwear, as needed, and walk together.

Optional: Distribute notebooks and pencils, and ask participants to record the boundaries and shared resources they notice. Allow them to write lists, make sketches or simply tally their sightings of fences, walls, other boundaries and boundary crossings. Keeping records can focus participants' attention and aid the post-walk discussion about what everyone saw. Or, you may decide to have participants verbally announce what they see and invite just a few volunteers to make notes.

As you walk, ask participants to name ways people show they own pieces of land. Expect answers about built boundaries such as walls and gates. Ask the group to also look for natural boundaries, such as a hill or a river that separates two parcels of land or two towns.

Invite the group to observe what kinds of life do not adhere to these human boundaries. For example, animals such as birds, squirrels or other animals ignore fences. Plants grow up and over walls. You may see a stream, puddle or other water on the ground that runs across several properties.

Bring the group back to the indoor space. Ask participants to call out the boundaries they saw. Then, give each participant a chance to offer an observation of a boundary-crosser. You might say:

In many places, people try to own parts of the world, especially land, and they often mark this ownership with boundaries, to separate it off from other people. What are some examples that we saw today of animals, plants, land formation or water that do not recognize these boundaries?

Allow participants to share. If no one mentions clouds, air or rain as something that cannot be fenced in, point this out.

Say, in closing:

Just as people cannot own the air that we breathe, water belongs to all of us.

### **Including All Participants**

Tailor the outdoor walk to participants' needs around mobility, vision or attention. Choose an accessible route

that invites all participants to observe evidence of land ownership and boundary crossing.

## **ACTIVITY 5: RIVER SCENE — WHOSE WATER IS IT? (8 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- River Scene mural (Workshop 1, Activity 2)
- Rulers or tape measures
- Yarn or string, masking tape and scissors
- Optional: Step-stools

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Retrieve the group's River Scene if it is not already posted.
- Decide how you will form small groups and how many you will have.
- Cut a length of yarn or string that can cover your River Scene mural top to bottom. Cut additional pieces of the same length—two pieces for each group you will ask to set boundaries. (If you wish to allow groups to use wiggly boundary lines, cut the yarn or string much longer.)
- Measure the length of your River Scene. Divide that number by the number of small groups you will have to calculate how many inches of River Scene you can invite each small group to claim.

### **Description of Activity**

Ask the group if anyone knows who owns the water they use. Say, if no one does, that towns, states and regions that build pipelines and treatment plants to provide clean water to their residents might consider that water "theirs." In fact, participants' families probably pay taxes or other fees to use that water. If a family or a village uses a well to pump water up as it flows by, underground, they might say that water belongs to them.

Now say:

Let's see what ownership of water could mean, using our River Scene.

Form small groups and distribute two lengths of yarn, a ruler and some pieces of masking tape to each group. Tell them how many inches of the River Scene each small group can claim. Say:

What if each group could own part of the river? Use your yarn (or string) to mark off a boundary for the part of the river your group will claim as theirs. Remember these boundaries are temporary—just for today. Be careful not to tape over any artwork on the River Scene.

Invite groups to claim their part of the River Scene by taping their yarn boundaries with masking tape. Then have everyone return to their seats.

Offer these questions for discussion:

- How did it feel to claim parts of the river for your group?
- What did you gain; what did you lose?
- Did this activity create any tension or conflict?
- Does it make sense for people to own a river? Why or why not?

### **Including All Participants**

If the River Scene is posted too high for all participants to reach above it, lower the River Scene on the wall, or place it on a table or the floor.

## **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Taking It Home handout
- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Adapt Taking It Home for your group. Prepare copies or email to adult participants and parents.
- Place the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

### **Description of Activity**

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop: Today we meditated and talked about who owns water. We heard a story about how water belongs to everyone. Together we will find ways to be good stewards of the world's waters. We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing this plant.

Invite participants into a moment in silence. Then, ask participants to offer a thought about what moved them during this workshop. Say something like:

Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection, then sharing of responses. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the chalice bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us until we meet again.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared.

## FAITH IN ACTION: DOCUMENTARY — FLOW

### Materials for Activity

- A DVD of the documentary film "[Flow](http://www.flowthefilm.com/about)" (at [www.flowthefilm.com/about](http://www.flowthefilm.com/about)) and player/monitor
- Information about global water activism opportunities

### Preparation for Activity

- Obtain a copy of the DVD and preview it.
- Schedule a time to show the documentary. Publicize the event via the congregational newsletter, website, flyers, worship service announcements and other channels.
- Visit the website for the film "[Flow](http://www.flowthefilm.com)" (at [www.flowthefilm.com](http://www.flowthefilm.com)). The site's [Take Action](http://www.flowthefilm.com/takeaction) (at [www.flowthefilm.com/takeaction](http://www.flowthefilm.com/takeaction)) page offers many Faith in Action project ideas and links to global water activism partner sites.

### Description of Activity

Invite participants and congregation members to a viewing of the 2008 documentary film, "Flow." Directed by Irena Salina and an official 2008 Sundance selection, the film asks "Can anyone really own water?" It explores the role of corporations in privatizing water to sell in bottles. According to the film, fresh water is a \$400-billion-dollar global industry; the third largest behind electricity and oil. The film offers calls to action—ways viewers can get involved and help change the course of global water usage.

For this gathering, you may wish to use the symbolic (water) chalice lighting which opens and closes Gather the Spirit workshops. Show the film, then guide a discussion. Be ready to present local opportunities for action that the Gather the Spirit group and the congregation can take. You might use these questions:

- What was most surprising to learn?
- Had you thought before about "who owns water"? What new thoughts or feelings about water ownership did the film bring to you?
- What is one change in your life as a result of this film?
- What can this faith community do to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem?

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements? Are participants growing in their understanding of the need to protect and equitably share the Earth's water resources? An understanding of what a fair share might be based on? What should you do differently at the next workshop?

If the group will do more Gather the Spirit workshops, look ahead to assign leadership responsibilities.

## TAKING IT HOME

This we know. The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth... All things are connected like the blood which unites one family... Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth... Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. — attributed to Chief Noah Sealthe, Reading 550 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

We name ourselves after the land we live with. Because, not only are we breathing in, we are also drinking from the water that is flavored by that very land. Whatever is deposited in the soil is in that water is in us. So we are all one thing, and we name ourselves after the place that is our nurturing. That sustains our life. — Ramona Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag artist

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** We considered human ownership and just distribution of natural resources, especially water. We imagined places with different rules about ownership and sharing, and we saw how nature often ignores human boundaries. We discussed how water is a common resource that should belong to all because all life needs water, clean and in sufficient quantity, for its very existence. This workshop affirmed the Unitarian Universalist Principles that promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relationships; and the interdependent web of existence.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** the ownership of water in your area. Do you pay for water? Who do you pay? Does the cost of water make you conserve water more?

What do you know about the quality of your water? Do you receive reports about your municipality's water quality? Do you read them? Have you ever taken any action—written a letter, bought a filter—to improve your water's quality?

## FAMILY GAME

The Internet has many resources and games about global ownership of water issues. On the [Unicef](#) website, view a list of [Water and Sanitation](#) resources.

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

### **FAMILY BRAINSTORMING**

Brainstorm ways to reduce your water use. Select at least one method to implement. Find ideas on the [Green Venture](#) website. Try to measure how much water you save with the method you choose.

### **FAMILY SCAVENGER HUNT**

Does your water come from a well? Where does it come from? Try to trace it back to its natural source. As water travels underground to your home, how many boundaries do you think it crosses? Look at a map to find out.

### **FAMILY RECREATION**

Inspiration to keep the environment clean can come from nature itself. Take time to enjoy a beautiful outdoor setting near you, whether that might mean canoeing a river or lake, hiking a mountain, forest, or desert trail, going on a walk to appreciate the lovely gardens city-dwellers create, or just lying in a patch of grass or a hammock to gaze up at the clouds, tree canopies or stars in the sky.

### **A FAMILY INVESTIGATION**

Clean "green." Research the chemicals in the cleaning products you use, and what happens after you rinse them down the drain. The [EPA](#) (at [www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/pubs/cleaning.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/pubs/cleaning.htm)) has gathered information to help janitorial purchases at federal agencies. View the American Cleaning Institute's [Sustainability Central](#) web page for detailed, industry and product updates.

### **FAMILY VIDEO NIGHT**

Watch the movie "Erin Brockovich" together. Erin Brockovich is a real person. While working in a law office filing papers, she became curious why medical reports belonged in a utility company's file. She engaged in an extensive search for truth about the utility's dumping of chromium which was entering the community's groundwater. It is an empowering story. Brockovich didn't need scientific degrees or impressive credentials to do something important. She needed to notice and care.

The movie can also give your family a chance to talk about work/family balance. How did her employer help her? Could they have been more helpful? Do you know other businesses that work pro bono? Were her efforts worth the time she spent away from her family?

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SUNNY SIDE MARY (15 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- A copy of the story "[Sunny Side Mary](#)" (included in this document)

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Read the story. Decide whether you might use it in addition to, or instead of, Activity 1, Guided Meditation.

### **Description of Activity**

This story examines the role of unfair social rules in unfair distribution of resources.

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

- What did you think of the way everyone accepted the rule of who sat in the sunny and shady sides of the fountain?
- Is there an example in your life of a "rule" that everyone follows, but no one is sure where it started? (One example for school age children, or even adults, could be where everyone sits during lunch at school or work.)
- What did you think of Mary's decision to stand up for what she believed in?

Invite participants to share ways they have helped allocate a resource more fairly by confronting an unfair practice in their own lives.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MAKE AN AQUIFER IN A CUP (20 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Clear plastic cups (about 3 inches deep/3 inches wide), two for each participant
- Modeling clay
- White play sand and several containers and scoops
- Aquarium gravel (natural color), a large colander, and several containers and scoops
- Pitcher(s) of clean water
- Food coloring, blue or red

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Rinse the aquarium gravel in the colander to remove powdery residue which could cloud the water in the cups. Pour aquarium gravel into containers for participants to share. Set containers on work tables.

- Pour play sand into containers and place on work tables.
- Place food coloring and modeling clay on work tables for participants to share.
- Pour cups of water for all participants and set aside (so participants will not drink them).
- Set an empty cup for each participant.
- Make an aquifer to provide a model for participants and to increase your confidence leading this activity.

### **Description of Activity**

Gather participants at work tables. Tell them they will make aquifers and see how the ground holds water. Show the group the aquifer you have made.

Invite participants to take an empty cup and pour white sand on the bottom, about 1/4 inch deep.

Distribute the cups filled with water. Instruct participants to pour enough water into the sand in their aquifer cup to wet the sand completely but leave no standing water on top of the sand.

Let participants see how the water is absorbed. They will notice that the water remains around the grains of sand. Suggest participants gently shake or tap their cup to level its contents.

Now invite participants to make the second layer of their aquifer with modeling clay. Tell them to pinch a small piece of the clay into a thin, flat disc that can cover about half the sand. Ask them to lay the disc on the sand and press one edge of the clay up against the side of the cup to make a tight seal. Check to make sure all participants have a good seal. This clay will represent a "confining layer"—compacted rock and soil that keeps water from passing through. Invite participants to pour a very small amount of water onto the clay. Draw their attention to how water sits on top of the clay.

Now invite participants to form a third layer, using the aquarium pebbles. Place the pebbles over the sand and

clay, covering them completely. Suggest they slope the rocks to form a hill on one side of the cup and a valley on the other.

Explain that the layers in the cup represent some of the many layers of the Earth's surface.

Now invite participants to pour water into their aquifers until the water in the valley is even with top of the hill. Instruct them to watch as the porous aquarium pebbles allow water to flow and sit between them. Soon each cup should contain a small lake as well as ground water. This is a model of how the earth holds water above and within the ground. A well works because it is a hole through which ground water can be pumped to the surface.

Invite participants to use the food coloring to see how garbage, pollution or a chemical spill can affect ground water. Ask them to put a few drops of food coloring on top of their rock hill, as close to the inside wall of the cup as possible. and observe what happens. They should see the color spread through the rocks, then to the surface water and finally through the "ground" water into the white sand at the bottom of their cup.

Help participants understand that pollution or contamination of land and even air can pollute the Earth's water. Adults in the group may remember crises around acid rain, where air pollution from coal burning fell as rain into lakes and killed many fish. Others may be familiar with the story of Erin Brockovich, who uncovered corporate chemical dumping that contaminated ground water and made area residents very ill. Cleaning up our environment helps all of us live healthier lives.

Leave some time for clean-up. You might have participants add their unused clean water to your chalice bowl. Recycle used plastic cups.

### **Including All Participants**

Some participants, such as young children, may lack the fine motor skills to build this aquifer. You could have mixed-skills or -age groups work together.

## STORY: MABOUYA, CHIEF OF THE WELL

Adapted from a Haitian tale.

To whom does the water belong?

There was once a drought in the country. The streams dried up and the wells went dry. God saw there was no place for the animals to drink. God provided a well with the condition that it must be taken care of so all may use it. God said, "You'll have to take good care of my well. One of you will have to be caretaker. The caretaker will stay by the well at all times to see that no one abuses it or makes it dirty."

Mabouya, the lizard spoke up saying, "I will be the caretaker."

God looked at all the animals. He said at last, "Mabouya, the lizard, will be the caretaker. The well is over there in the mango grove."

The other animals went away. Mabouya went directly to the well. When the other animals began to come back for water, Mabouya challenged them. First the cow came to drink. The lizard sang out in a big voice: "Who is it? Who is it? Who is walking in my grove?"

The cow replied: "It is I, the cow, I am coming for water."

Mabouya called back: "Go away! This is God's grove, and the well is dry."

So the cow went away and suffered from thirst.

Then the horse came and Mabouya challenged him, saying: "Who is walking in my grove?"

The horse answered: "I am the horse and, I am coming for water."

And Mabouya called back: "Go away! This is God's grove, and the well is dry."

So the horse went away and he too suffered from thirst.

Other animals came to the well and the lizard challenged all of them in the same way, saying: "Go away! This is God's grove, and the well is dry."

So the animals went away and suffered much because they had no water to drink.

God saw all the suffering going on and said, "I gave the animals a well to drink from, but they are all dying of thirst. What is the matter?" And God went to the well.

When the lizard heard footsteps, she called out: "Who is it? Who is it? Who is walking in my grove?"

God answered: "It is I, Papa God. I am coming for water."

And Mabouya said: "Go away, Papa God. The well is dry."

God was very angry. He said once more: "It is I, Papa God. I am coming for water."

And the lizard called back again: "Go away, Papa God. The well is dry."

God said no more to the lizard. He sent for the animals to come to the well. He said, "You came to me because you were thirsty and I gave you a well. I made Mabouya the caretaker. But she gave no thought to the suffering creatures all around her. If one has a banana tree in their garden, it is theirs. If one has a cotton tree in their garden, it is theirs. But if one has a well in their garden, only the hole in the ground belongs to that one. The water is God's and belongs to all creatures."

And it is a saying among the people:  
"The hole in the ground is yours,  
The water is God's."

## STORY: SUNNY SIDE MARY

Searle-White, Joshua. "Sunny Side Mary" in [\*Magic Wanda's Travel Emporium: Tales of Love, Hate and Things in Between\*](#). Boston: Skinner House, 2006. Used with permission.

In a medium-sized town not far from here, there was a middle school. It was just like any other middle school, except for two things. First, instead of an auditorium, it had a courtyard, a huge round covered area right in the center of the school. In the middle of the courtyard was a big round pool with fountains and lights. Right in the middle of the pool was a circular stage, connected to one side of the courtyard by a narrow bridge.

The kids who went there liked having the only school with a round stage; it was very cool. But there was one problem. Whenever there was a concert, half of the kids would always have to look at the performers' backs. Plus, that side of the courtyard didn't have very good lights, and it was always a little bit cold. Because of this, everyone called that part the shady side, while the other part of the courtyard was called the sunny side. Now, it wouldn't be too bad to have a sunny side and a shady side, if the kids sometimes got to be on one side and sometimes on the other. But that's not the way it was.

That's the second thing that was different about this school. Some kids in the school came from the North Side of town and some from the South Side. And there was a rule: during concerts in the courtyard, only the North Side kids could sit on the sunny side. The South Side kids had to sit on the shady side.

What would happen if a South Side kid went onto the sunny side? It was always the same. The North Side kids would just pick her up and dump her into the fountain. And if she came back, they'd just keep dumping her into the fountain until she went back to her side. It was pretty awful.

You're probably wondering exactly who made up this crazy rule. Well, no one exactly knows. The North Side kids always said that the principal had made the rules and they were just doing what she said. So besides getting to sit on the sunny side, the North Side kids got to feel important, too, because they said they were doing what the grown-ups wanted. However, if you asked the principal, she would say that it was the kids' choice, and that the South Side kids actually liked to be on the shady side because they were used to it. And what if you talked to the teachers? Well, some of them would say that the North Side kids behaved better than the other kids, and so the North Side kids should be on the sunny side. Besides, they would say, it was natural for kids to divide up like that. There were some other teachers who

would say it probably shouldn't be that way. But none of them did anything to change it.

So the school was a great place to be, if you were from the North Side. But if you were from the South Side, it wasn't so great. It wasn't just that you couldn't really see what was going on during concerts. What was worse? Knowing that you couldn't go over to the other side, because if you did, you'd get thrown in the fountain. It just didn't seem fair.

Things went on like that for a long time, until the day that Mary went wading. A big concert was planned for lunchtime that day, with a band called the Zoot Suit Tooters. Mary had been waiting to see this band for a long time. She was a huge Zoot Suit Tooters fan. She had all the Tooters CDs and tee-shirts, and she had their posters plastered all over the walls of her bedroom. They were her absolutely favorite group. But Mary was a South Side kid so she knew she was going to have to sit on the shady side and not see the front of the band at all. That made her angry.

So Mary decided to do something different. She planned it all out. On the day of the concert, she got to the courtyard early and found a place to sit on the sunny side. Over and over, she said to herself, "I don't care what they do or what they say, I am not moving. The Tooters are my favorite band, and I am going to see them from the front, no matter what."

Well, it came time for the assembly, and the North Side kids started showing up. Of course, the first thing they saw was Mary sitting on their side. And what do you think they did? First they just looked at her like she was crazy. Mary didn't move.

Then they said, "Hey South Sider, get over on your side of the courtyard!"

Mary just pretended not to hear them. They yelled louder. They called her names. They stared at her and told her to move or else. And still Mary ignored them. So what did they do? A bunch of the biggest North Side kids picked her up and threw her in the fountain with a big splash!

Mary did not like that at all. She stood up in the water, dripping. She wasn't hurt, since the pool wasn't that deep—only up to her waist or so—and the water was pretty warm. But she did not like being thrown out of her seat. It made her angry. She glared at the North Side kids. They glared back.

Mary stepped out and went back to where she was sitting. The North Side kids threw her into the fountain again. She got up and went back to her seat. They threw her back in the fountain. She got up again, and as she got out of the fountain, they started to come after her...

so she walked back into the fountain. It was better than getting thrown in, anyway.

Mary sat down in the water and thought, "This is awful! Here I am, soaking wet. If I ask the teachers to help, they'll just say that I should have stayed on my side. If I ask the principal, she'll just say that I should like the shady side better. Nobody's going to help me. What am I going to do?"

Finally, she stood up, feeling totally defeated. She started walking through the fountain back toward the shady side—slosh, slosh, slosh. As she walked, the rhythm of her feet reminded her of a song that her grandmother used to sing. It went like this:

Wade in the water  
Wade in the water, children,  
Wade in the water,  
God's gonna trouble the water.

With that song flowing over and over again in her head, she realized with a giggle that, believe it or not, she actually was wading in the water! She looked at the shady side and all the South Side kids there. She looked at the stage, and she thought about the song. And she thought to herself, "Wait a minute. If wading in the water is good enough for God, it's good enough for me!"

And you know what Mary did? She turned right around and started sloshing back to where she had started.

Wade in the water  
Wade in the water, children,  
Wade in the water,  
God's gonna trouble the water.

As she hummed the song and bounced along with the rhythm, the strangest thing happened. Somehow the other South Side kids must have heard the song. They got up from where they were sitting, and they walked into the fountain, too. Slosh, slosh, slosh, slosh, all together! Mary sloshed back toward the sunny side, and the other South Side kids followed. And wouldn't you know it, just as they all got to the front of the stage, the Zoot Suit Tooters ran across the bridge and onto the

stage, and the concert started. Mary and the other South Side kids were on the sunny side, in the water.

The North Side kids were stunned. They had never seen anything like this! They didn't know what to do. They couldn't throw the South Side kids into the fountain because they were already in the fountain—with the best view of the concert. It was wrong! The North Side kids looked at each other, and then they all rushed into the fountain to get in front of the South Side kids. They had to be first! They were always first! So they pushed, and shoved, and squirmed, and finally they got themselves right up to the front, squished right up next to the stage, where no one could be in front of them. The Zoot Suit Tooters were playing practically right over their heads, and... and... and they looked around and suddenly realized that while they were struggling to get in front of the South Side kids, the South Side kids had all gotten out of the fountain and were now sitting in the seats on the sunny side, drying off!

The North Side kids were stunned again. What could they do? They were in the fountain, and the South Side kids had all the best seats, with Mary right in front. There was no way the North Side kids could throw all the South Side kids in the fountain at once. The teachers and principal were speechless. The Zoot Suit Tooters played, and the South Side kids listened, and there wasn't much else the North Side kids could do. They sloshed over to the shady side to dry off. And that's where they sat to watch the concert.

Things were different in that school from then on. The principal learned that if she made crazy rules, people wouldn't follow them. The teachers learned that the South Side kids didn't want to be behind the stage all the time. The North Side kids learned that if they wanted to get a good seat at an assembly, they had to get there early. The South Side kids learned that if you all stand up together for something that is right, sometimes you can win. And because Mary had helped the South Side kids get a place on the sunny side, all her friends began to call her Sunny Side Mary, the name they call her to this very day.

## LEADER RESOURCE 1: MEDITATION FOR TWO VOICES AND OPTIONAL DRUM

Tomorrow the family will go to the well. Will water be there?

x x x

Tomorrow is the family reunion. It better not rain.

x x x

The well was almost dry last week. And still it has not rained.

x x x

We will play games and maybe swim. And it better not rain.

x x x

Has it rained at the well? Or is it still dry? Oh please, can it rain?

x x x

I hope it's really hot so a swim will feel good. It better not rain.

x x x

There were rain clouds on the hills but they did not come here. Why won't they come here?

x x x

If there is no place to swim, we can at least use a hose.

x x x

I remember playing at the well. We pulled out the water and the kids splashed around and we had a great time. I wish we never wasted that water. We won't play at all tomorrow if the well is dry. We will all be too sad.

x x x

The last reunion was great. Food cooked outside and drinks filled with ice. It better not rain.

x x x

Our food will be cooked with water from the river tonight. The animals use that water and it does not smell good. Oh why can't it rain?

x x x

The year before that was not so good. The drinks ran out and the ice ran out and we had to drink warm water. Yuck. Plain old water. Who needs that?

x x x

Maybe I should pray before I sleep. Shut my eyes and pray that there will soon be rain.

x x x

Maybe I should pray before I sleep. Shut my eyes and pray that there will not be rain.

x x x

Oh let there be rain. Send the clouds and let rain fall.

x x x

No rain, no rain, no rain, no, please, no rain.

x x x

We will run and splash all around the well. We will fall to our knees, our soaking wet knees, and give thanks.

x x x

I will do anything you ask, anything at all, just to have sun and not have rain.

x x x

Oh may it rain. Send us the clouds. Oh may it rain.

x x x

May it not rain. Let there be sun. May it not rain.

x x x

## FIND OUT MORE

Watch this [animation](#) online, from Geodiscoveries, for a better understanding of the water cycle and how groundwater travels and can become contaminated.

# WORKSHOP 6: HOPE, COMPASSION AND STRENGTH

## INTRODUCTION

*If you give (a person) a fish, you feed (them) for a day. If you teach (them) how to fish, you feed (them) for a lifetime. — Chinese proverb*

This workshop highlights reciprocity—loving one's neighbor as oneself—a central message of Unitarian Universalism's Sources. Participants extend their understanding of "neighbor" to the wider communities to which they belong, including the global community of humankind, and learn that one way to participate in the interdependent web of existence is to express our own need to give love and care. They understand why treating others as we would want to be treated means taking the time to discern the perspectives and real needs of others whom they want to help. The story, "The Caican Water Project," shows how organized, communal work can be more effective than the sum of individual efforts and highlights how, for many Unitarian Universalists, service is a spiritual practice.

If you have not used Workshop 5, Alternate Activity 2, Make an Aquifer in a Cup, consider including it in this workshop. It will help participants understand the engineering challenges the Caican community faced to secure clean, flowing water.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Affirm that everyone can bring their gifts and compassion to contribute to the local and global communities to which they belong
- Share a model of "neighbors" across the globe working as respectful partners in environmental stewardship and water equity
- Affirm that projects of the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council are one way our congregations act on the principles of reciprocity, or loving our neighbors as ourselves.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify how their own gifts (time, talent, treasure) can enrich their community and nourish their own need to love and give

- See others as valuable members of their community
- Experience and articulate ways a group is stronger than the sum of its parts
- Learn how respectful partnership between an American Unitarian Universalist congregation and a rural community in the Philippines, combined with respectful collaboration within the Philippine community, solved a serious and complex water problem
- Acknowledge and explore their need to be of use to their community.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: River Scene — Flower Ceremony	15
Activity 2: Story — The Caican Water Project	10
Activity 3: Time and Talent Exploration	15
Activity 4: Tug of Peace	10
Faith in Action: UU Partners in Action	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Body Tracings	20
Alternate Activity 2: Reverse Mural	20
Alternate Activity 3: Making Machines	15

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Today you will help young participants see themselves—perhaps for the first time—as contributors to their communities. Older participants will reflect on their relationship(s) with communities in which they both serve and thrive. Take a few moments to reflect on your congregation. How has your congregation supported you to express your own gifts? When have you listened before helping, to discern others' needs and perspectives? How have you nourished yourself by being useful? Consider the times you felt most useful in community. Take that positive energy with you into the workshop.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, cup of water and plant on a table.
- Place chairs for all participants in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose background music for the Opening and other quiet activities in the workshop. See Before You Start in this program's Introduction for suggestions.
- Optional: If you have set up a blog for Gather the Spirit participants, prepare instructions for accessing the blog. Make a copy for every family and/or plan to email the instructions to participants.

### Description of Activity

In Gather the Spirit, the chalice-lighting involves water, not flame.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to share an opening ritual to help everyone connect with the sounds of water. Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.
- Tap your fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects and make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

Ask participants to briefly report on their Gather the Spirit activities. Who tried a Taking It Home activity from the previous workshop? Does anyone have a new idea to briefly share about stewardship or water?

If you have started a Gather the Spirit blog for the group, make sure all participants know about it. Explain, as needed, that participants can post results of their explorations of Gather the Spirit topics or other comments or ideas relevant to the program; and, they can respond to one another's postings. Hand out blog access instructions to any who need them.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Pay attention to accessibility; arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations or who use a wheelchair.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: RIVER SCENE — FLOWER CEREMONY (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- River Scene mural (Workshop 1, Activity 2)

- One or two large vases
- Tissue paper in assorted colors, chenille stems (pipe cleaners), scissors (including left-handed scissors), a stapler and tape
- Optional: A length of string and a pencil; assorted plastic food container lids of different sizes; or, another way to draw different-size circles

### Preparation for Activity

- Practice making tissue-paper flowers so you can comfortably instruct participants.
  - One way is to cut at least three different-size circles out of different colors of tissue paper. Stack the circles, starting with the largest. Gently fold the stack in half, then in half again. Grasp the sharp folded edge and fasten the sheets together there. Then, open the edges of the circles to shape a blossom. Wrap a chenille stem (pipe cleaner) around the base of the blossom a few times, leaving some length to form the stem. You can also poke the stem through the center of the blossom or tape/staple it to the blossom.
  - Find alternate instructions on the [Kids Creativity Portal](#) website or the [Kansas City Kansas Public Library](#) website.
- Set the materials for flower-making at work tables.
- Post the River Scene if it is not already posted in the meeting space.

### Description of Activity

This ceremony honors individual beauty as well as the greater power of the collective beauty of a bouquet.

Invite participants to make tissue paper flowers to "float" in the river on your mural. Demonstrate how to make the flowers. Invite participants to find their own ways to pinch, crumple, fluff or clip the tissue paper until the circles look like a flower to them. Tell the group:

This activity is a modified version of the Flower Ceremony many Unitarian Universalist congregations enjoy. For today, each individual flower symbolizes how each of us has a unique and needed contribution to give our communities. We will float some of our individual flowers in our river.

And, we will gather some of our flowers together in a vase. That will show how if we want to make a beautiful bouquet, we need lots of different flowers. When our community wants to solve a problem, we use many people's different mental, physical and economic gifts to make all our lives better.

Invite participants to attach individual flowers to the River Scene, so some flowers float along the river.

Gather some flowers to put in a vase. You may want to wrap one end of a chenille stem around the others and let the remainder form a stem; you may need to twist a second chenille stem to make the flower stem tall enough.

Once the bouquet is full and the River Scene has flowers floating on it, gather the group to reflect on their creations. Say something like:

We have made a bouquet of flowers in this vase and added flowers that float on the river. How would this look if only one flower was in this vase and only one flower floated? How does having a group of flowers add to the river and the vase?

Tell the group they will now hear a story that illustrates how partners working together solved a complicated, serious water problem that neither partner could have solved alone.

## ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE CAICAN WATER PROJECT (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Caican Water Project](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 1, [Aquifer](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Model aquifer from Workshop 5, Alternate Activity 2, Make an Aquifer in a Cup

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story.
- Print at least one copy of Leader Resource 1.

### Description of Activity

Gather participants. Show and pass around the leader resource; explain it is a picture of an aquifer, an area of earth and rock that contains or moves water. If the group has done Workshop 5, Alternate Activity 2, Make an Aquifer in a Cup, display a model aquifer and remind the group how water moves and how contamination moves with the water.

Read or tell the story. Then, process with these questions:

- Do you think any of the people in this story believe that each person is important? What did they do that makes you think so?
- Why was it important to ask so many villagers their opinions? Why not just ask the people who attended the meetings?

- Do you think it was wise to take so much time to plan how the village was going to improve the water situation? Wouldn't it have been a better idea for Rev. Mike's congregation to just pay for the new well without any involvement from the villagers? Why/why not?
- What can we learn from the villagers about working together? What do you think the villagers taught others about working as a community?
- What do you think the congregants in Hawaii thought about their contribution of money for the new well?
- How does it feel to give?
- Does this story inspire you to do anything new or different in your life? What?

### ACTIVITY 3: TIME AND TALENT EXPLORATION (15 MINUTES)

#### Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Handout 1, [Time/Talent/Treasure Survey](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Pencils/pens

#### Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants, plus extra for leaders.
- Decide, depending on the group and the time you have, whether to lead the activity as a group discussion or to ask participants to fill out surveys individually and then share. The latter is recommended. Young participants who need help reading or writing/drawing can work with an older partner
- Set pencils/pens on work tables.
- Post newsprint to record participant responses. You may wish to post five sheets—one for each question.

#### Description of Activity

Participants think about what they are good at and what they could enjoy contributing in service to others.

- Distribute the Time/Talent/Treasure Survey. Whether you are leading this activity only as a group discussion or as a written survey followed by group discussion, providing time for reflection gives introverted individuals the time they need to think before responding. Quiet time to write helps everyone find their own answers rather than be influenced by the responses of others.

Distribute the surveys if you are using them, and ask participants to take a few minutes to quietly fill them out before regathering for group sharing.

If the group is staying together for one collective discussion, explain that you will read each question aloud, ask them to reflect silently for a few moments, and invite them to raise their hands when they have a response to share. Record responses on newsprint. When all questions have been addressed, invite participants to consider how their particular gifts might be of use to the communities to which they belong.

### ACTIVITY 4: TUG OF PEACE (10 MINUTES)

#### Materials for Activity

- Length(s) of rope
- Optional: Geometric shapes cut out of paper or drawn on paper

#### Preparation for Activity

- Depending on the group's size, decide whether to do this activity as one large group or several small groups (either simultaneously or taking turns). Cut a length of rope and tie the ends together to make a circle with one knot. Make additional rope circles if needed. The rope circle must be large enough for all participants to grasp it while sitting around it. (You may wish to measure a rope to exactly fit the perimeter of the circle or rug where participants sit for the workshop Opening or Closing.)
- Choose some shapes the group can form with their bodies and a circle of rope; consider the meeting space and the number of people in the group. Optional: Draw or cut out and label the shapes to display so all participants understand what each shape looks like.
- Try this activity with co-leaders and others before leading it.

#### Description of Activity

In this activity, everyone has a role in achieving the group's desired goal, providing a small-scale analogy to the community problem solving in the story "The Caican Water Project."

Gather participants in a seated circle. Hand them the rope, making sure one person holds the knot. With everyone holding the rope with both hands, challenge the group to use the rope to pull everyone up to standing. Repeat for the fun of it. When the group is standing, ask them to adjust their positions so their rope is taut. Then call out different shapes for them to make with their rope. A square or rectangle is an easy place to start. If you wish, add one side at a time (triangle,

square, pentagon...). See if anyone notices when a pentagon, hexagon, heptagon or octagon starts to resemble a circle. (Multiple sides blending into a circle will evoke for some participants the theme of the day: discrete parts/continuous wholes).

You can increase the challenge by asking groups to form letters of the alphabet.

Remind the group to make sure their rope is always taut. Shapes needn't be perfect, but encourage the group to agree that they have satisfactorily achieved the goal shape before trying a new shape.

You can add fun for a high energy group, if you have the space: Ask them to move while still maintaining their rope in the desired shape.

### **Including All Participants**

If a participant uses a wheelchair, encourage the group to consider that person an anchor and to move around them. If any participant cannot take a useful role in helping the group make a shape, do not use this activity.

Take care that everyone in the group knows the goal shape. If participants range widely in age or knowledge of geometry, use cut-outs or drawings of shapes.

## **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Taking It Home handout
- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Adapt Taking It Home for your group. Prepare copies or email to adult participants and parents.
- Place the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint and post.

### **Description of Activity**

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop: Today, we talked about how we all have gifts and talents that we can use to help make our communities and the world a better place. We heard a story about how when people cared and worked together in community, and partners cared and worked with them too, they solved a complex, serious water problem. In Gather the

Spirit, we find ways to be good stewards of the world's waters.

Then say:

Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection. Then invite volunteers to share. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the chalice bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us until we meet again.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared.

## **FAITH IN ACTION: UU PARTNERS IN ACTION**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Information about the Unitarian Universalist partner church program and (optional) your congregation's partner church

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Find out if your congregation is a Unitarian Universalist partner church. Invite a congregational leader to visit and talk with the group about the partnership. Ask your guest to prepare to answer these questions: Where is the partner church? What is the history of the partnership? What have the congregations done together? If our congregation gives service to the partner church, how do we make sure we are honoring our partner church's real needs and perspectives on how to solve their own problems? If anyone in the Gather the Spirit group has experience with your congregation's partner church, invite them to speak to the group, also.
- If your congregation does not have a partner church, find out about the UU partner church program. Bring information to share with the group.

### **Description of Activity**

If your congregation has a partner church, a guest involved in the partnership meets with the group. If anyone in the group has participated in partnership activities, they share their experiences.

If your congregation does not have a partner church, share information about the UU Partner Church Council and its programs. You might talk about why your

congregation is not a partner church, and help the group brainstorm other partnerships with which the group or the wider congregation might engage.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements? Are participants growing in their understanding of the need to protect and equitably share the Earth's water resources? What should you do differently at the next workshop? If the group will do more Gather the Spirit workshops, look ahead to assign leadership responsibilities.

## TAKING IT HOME

If you give (a person) a fish, you feed (them) for a day. If you teach (them) how to fish, you feed (them) for a lifetime. — Chinese proverb

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** We considered how each person is an important member of a community. We explored our talents and thought about how we each can make our community and the world a better place. Today's central story focused on a community that worked together to help themselves and partners who respectfully helped them solve a serious water problem.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** the communities you and your children belong to. Do you have any photographs of their child dedication or similar ceremonies? Do you have photos, videos or any other evidence of your child's participation in or recognition by community groups?

Consider the difference between giving money and fostering self-sufficiency. Are there times when it is better to do one or the other? When is giving money giving someone a fish, and when is giving money teaching them to fish?

In your own family, how do decisions help your children grow more self-sufficient?

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

### FAMILY VOLUNTEERING

Research your congregation's affiliations with organizations that help people acquire new capacities or knowledge. Or, use a website such as [GuideStar](http://www2.guidestar.org/) (at [www2.guidestar.org/](http://www2.guidestar.org/)) to find a local project you could join and could help someone grow in self-sufficiency. There are many literacy and tutoring organizations (for example, [Everybody Wins](http://www.everybodywins.org/) (at [www.everybodywins.org/](http://www.everybodywins.org/))) and programs that match experienced moms as mentors for new mothers. Find something that would appeal to your family and make use of your individual gifts.

### FAMILY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Spend some time thinking and talking about all the people who have helped you and your family grow and learn. If you are still in touch with them, create a thank-you note or make a phone call.

### FAMILY ASSESSMENT

The story we heard today told how a community looked together at their most important problems and how they could solve them. They looked at their priorities for choosing problems to solve, and also looked at their resources for solving each problem. Consider your family as a micro-community. Is it time to examine your most pressing organizational problems and investigate your resources for solving them? If you want to talk with your family about making changes, Lynn Lott's book *Chores Without Wars* offers creative and fun ways to help everyone pitch in. The [Flylady](http://www.flylady.net/) (at [www.flylady.net/](http://www.flylady.net/)) website is free and has helped thousands of families deal with clutter and other organizational challenges.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: BODY TRACINGS (20 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Rolls of blank paper at least 36 inches wide
- Colored pencils, markers and (optional) arts and crafts supplies such as construction paper, scissors (including left-handed scissors), glitter or sequins, glue sticks and tape
- Optional: Bright light

### Preparation for Activity

- Cut or tear paper in generous lengths to accommodate participants' heights.
- Make sure the meeting space has adequate, clean work tables and floor space for all participants to work on their body tracings. If needed, rearrange furniture and/or find an additional room the group can use for this activity.
- Set out markers and (optional) arts and crafts materials to share.
- Optional: Use a length of the newsprint to write and display the words "Open Minds, Loving Hearts, Helping Hands" as a backdrop for the activity.

### Description of Activity

Like Activity 3, Time and Talent Exploration, this activity gives participants a chance to consider the ways they contribute to meeting the needs of others.

Direct pairs of participants to trace one another's bodies with a pencil as their partner lies on a length of paper—without pressing too close to anyone's body. Then ask participants to write or draw on their body outline the ways they use their bodies to help others. Suggest some of their gifts may be associated with particular body parts. For example, near the tracing of their ears someone might write, "I listen with compassion when my friends have problems to talk about."

Give everyone a chance to admire one another's work. Ask if they learned anything new about somebody in the group. If participants have been shy about coming forward with how they help their community, and if you think participants know one another well enough, allow a brief exchange of sincere compliments or appreciation for what they know one another to be good at.

### **Including All Participants**

If it is difficult for someone to lie on the floor, they could stand against a wall for someone to trace their shape. If someone needs to remain seated, consider making a rough outline on about the right size paper. Or, if you have a bright light available, tape paper to a wall and use the light to cast each participant's shadow in profile. Have everyone cut out and decorate a silhouette instead of a tracing.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: REVERSE MURAL (20 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Large roll or large sheets of plain paper
- Crayons, markers and/or (optional) a textured medium such as oil pastel
- Scissors (including left-handed scissors)

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Decide how many murals to create, what size paper sheets to use and how many participants will be in each small group. Six artists per mural would be great. If you are using a roll of paper, cut or tear off the total amount of paper you will use. If you are using individual large sheets, set aside the number you will need. Crease each large sheet to make fold lines that divide the paper into the number of panels you chose—each participant will work on one panel.
- Decide how well coordinated you want the resulting mural to be. You may wish to limit the colors participants use; give everyone in a group one color or the same small set of colors (say, three).
- On the back of each large sheet, label each panel so you can tape the murals back together after participants finish their individual panel

drawings. If you are making more than one mural, use a different set of numbers to label the panels of each mural (1-6, 7-12, 13-18) or (A1-A6, B1-B6, C1-C6).

- Set out crayons or markers to share.

### **Description of Activity**

This activity is a freestyle way to experience making a shared project through individual efforts.

While the paper is still whole, ask each participant to make one large broad, sweeping line, curve or other mark that touches most or all sections of the paper. Once everyone has had a turn, ask someone in the group to cut the paper along the fold lines (or if all the participants are very young, do this for them).

Give each participant a panel. You may allow them to choose, but assure them they need not feel disappointed if the one they want is taken since they each will change the piece anyway.

Invite participants to decorate or complete the drawing on their panel in any way they wish. Tell them how much time they have and that, when they are done, you will put the panels back together.

After everyone is done, ask the groups to look on the back of their sheets. Have volunteers help you lay the panels on the floor or work table — artwork side down — and tape the panels together.

Allow the group to react to their own creations and the murals of other groups.

Discuss how the murals look. Are they fun? Are they interesting? Very often a group's mural will hang together very well. Is anyone surprised that the beginning, random marks could inspire somewhat coordinated ideas for the panels? Ask what this experience might suggest about how our individual life and work fit into a community's efforts.

### **Including All Participants**

This activity is vision-dependent, but can be made more inclusive if you provide a textured medium, such as oil pastels, for the initial whole-mural marks and for any participant with vision limitations to use.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: MAKING MACHINES (15 MINUTES)**

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Decide whether to make one large group machine or several small group (of at least four members) machines.
- Prepare a space large enough to allow the group(s) plenty of room to form and observe "machines."

## **Description of Activity**

This classic theater game reinforces the idea that everyone can be an important contributing member of a creative community. Each participant pretends to be a different piece in an imagined machine. Ask if anyone is already familiar with this activity. Invite that person to help you explain the process. Explain that when the group has decided on its machine, one member will start the machine with a sound and movement they can repeat for the machine's "life." Once the first person has established their sound and movement, others in the group will join the machine, one at a time. Encourage them to make large movements, involving all or a big part of their bodies. Encourage them to connect not just side to side but also in front of or behind one another and to achieve different levels, for example with some standing, or on all fours, or sitting. Invite each new participant to connect to the other(s) and contribute their own sound and motion, until everyone in the group is part of the machine.

Give the group(s) a few minutes to decide what kind of machine to portray. You might suggest a category such

as "real machines", "imaginary machines", or "machines to protect a part of the interdependent web." Or you may leave it completely open-ended.

Add a dimension of cooperation by asking the machine to speed up. Changing speed makes it difficult for participants to synchronize their motions. The machine goes faster and faster until it collapses on the floor (or pieces fly off!).

### **Variation**

Another way to play this game is to invite participants, one at a time, to join a machine in any way they wish, with no prior discussion about the machine's purpose. To conclude, ask participants what they think the machine's purpose was and what specifically their role was as part of the machine.

### **Including All Participants**

If any participant cannot move or make sounds easily, allow them to participate as they wish. Perhaps they could suggest what type of machine they would like to be part of.

## STORY: THE CAICAN WATER PROJECT

Based on information provided by Rev. Mike Young, The First Unitarian Church of Honolulu.

Sometimes, the moment you meet someone, you know they will be a very important friend in your life. Other times, friendships start slowly. You might not know how important the friendship is for many years.

The partnership between a congregation in Honolulu, Hawaii, and a Unitarian Universalist Church in Caican, Philippines began slowly, with children exchanging letters and pictures.

After some years, Mike Young, minister of First Unitarian Church of Honolulu, had a chance to visit the Philippines, and he went to Caican. He met many generous, wonderful people at the partner church. But, it was the Caican children he fell in love with. One time a whole crowd, all ages, came swimming with him in the ocean of their coastal village.

The next year, Rev. Young went back to the Philippines and again, he spent a few days in Caican. Again, he swam in the ocean with the children. This time, one of their ministers came swimming too. Mike let the children use the dive mask he had brought. It was too big for them. Some water leaked in, but the Caican children did not mind because the mask helped them see their ocean fish, up close and personal!

Back on land, a Caican minister, Rev. Tirso Ponca, took Mike to one of the village's hand-pumped wells to wash off the salt water. The fresh water felt good. Rev. Young cupped his hands to take a drink.

Rev. Ponca sounded angry. He told Mike, "You must never do that! The water is not safe!" Later, Mike learned why Rev. Ponca had tried to protect him. For 20 years, the children of Caican had been born with yellow eyes. They had a condition called jaundice, a sign of a disease called Hepatitis A. Hepatitis germs were in the well water—the water he had wanted to drink. Caican's simple septic tanks and shallow aquifer could not adequately filter and recycle the village's water. Water used for bathing and washing came back again through the public hand-pumped wells. The village of Caican had no safe drinking water.

Mike Young decided right then: Babies in Caican would no longer be born with yellow eyes! Now he knew their congregation's partnership could be so much more than letters, photographs, or even visits and playing in the ocean together. In his heart, Rev. Young had already begun the Caican Water Project.

In a true partnership, partners make plans together. Rev. Young had to find out if the people of Caican

wanted to work on getting clean water for the village. Maybe there was something else more important the Honolulu congregation could help them get done.

So the people of Caican had community meetings. They talked about what was good about life in Caican, and ways they could make life even better. They listed problems they had tried to solve in the past and what had worked to solve them. For problems that were not solved yet, the people talked about what they could do differently to reach a solution. They talked about the time, the money and other resources they already had, which they could use to create solutions. They talked about ways local organizations or the government could help.

Because some people don't like to talk at big meetings, community members went around to each person's house to talk with them individually. Everyone had a chance to give their ideas to make life in Caican even better.

And the result of all this talk? The people of Caican agreed that clean water was the top priority to work on with their partner, First Unitarian Church of Honolulu. After Mike Young went home to Hawaii, the Caican people elected a committee to lead the water project. They started looking for sources of clean water.

They looked upstream of their aquifer and upstream of the recycling septic system. They found a clean, flowing spring that seemed to produce enough water for the village! The owner of the land agreed they could drill a well and put a pump there. When Mike returned to Caican, a happy parade of children, teenagers and adults took the American minister to see.

At first it seemed getting water from this spring would be a lot of work. They had to dig a well, get the pump and a tank and lay almost two miles of pipe to bring the water to Caican. They had to provide ways for people along the pipeline to get water, set up another tank and build faucets. But sometimes we get ahead of ourselves with what a big job we've got. Rev. Young remembered the first step was just to drill the well and make sure the water would really be clean to drink.

Drilling the well cost \$385, a fortune in the Philippines but not so much for the American congregation to raise. First Unitarian Church of Honolulu sent the money. The well was dug and everyone waited for test results. Would the water be safe to drink?

The new well was polluted. Not with hepatitis, but with a common bacteria, E. Coli. The people cleaned the well head. They pumped more water. This time the tester said, "Clean!"

Plans went ahead to lay pipe and build six faucets so the village would have drinkable water. Soon, maybe

there will be a tap in every home. And Caican babies will no longer be born with yellow eyes.

It sounds like a happy ending: A partnership that started out as letters and photos, and became very, very important. But there have been two surprising results. One is that just as the Honolulu partners helped Caican's Unitarian Universalist congregation bring their village clean water, the Caican congregation has helped other villages in the Philippines. Caican villagers now

teach people in other communities to organize the meetings and interviews that bring good community solutions to real community problems.

Another surprise—and not so happy—is that the water improvement in Caican may worsen the village's sewage problem. More water means more flushing. Mike Young knows the partnership's work is not finished. The next project is inevitable: a sewage system for Caican that works. Everything is connected.

## **HANDOUT 1: TIME/TALENT/TREASURE SURVEY**

**Name:**

If I had (more) time to help out in my community, I would want to:

I am really good at:

One way I use my talent to help others is:

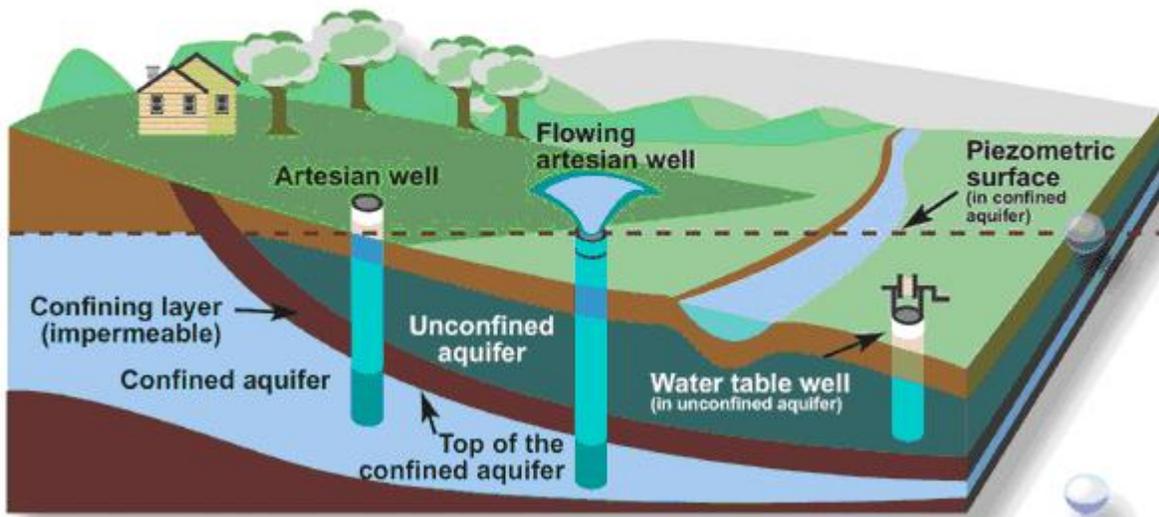
If I won \$100, I would:

If I won \$100 and wanted to give the money away, I would

# LEADER RESOURCE 1: AQUIFER

Environment Canada's [Freshwater Website](#). Reproduced with the permission of the Department, 2009.

## Aquifers and wells



## **FIND OUT MORE**

### **Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council**

Learn about the [UUPCC](http://www.uupcc.org/) (at [www.uupcc.org/](http://www.uupcc.org/)) online. The website includes information about current projects and how North American UU congregations can become partner churches.

On the UUPCC website, the Caican Water Project and related projects in the Philippines are well documented. Find a primer of the [community consensus-building process model](http://www.uupcc.org/communitydev/MayoBato.pdf) (at [www.uupcc.org/communitydev/MayoBato.pdf](http://www.uupcc.org/communitydev/MayoBato.pdf)) used in the Philippines.

### **Family Re-organization Projects**

Read Lynn Lott's book *Chores Without Wars* (Roseville, CA: Prima Lifestyles, 1998) for a discussion about sharing individual gifts and taking pleasure in service, in the microcosmic community called a family.

# WORKSHOP 7: GATHER IN THANKS

## INTRODUCTION

*The natural response to genuinely-felt gratitude is generosity. — Rev. William Metzger, UU Minister, from a sermon, "Gratitude and Generosity," delivered at First Unitarian Church, Philadelphia, March 4, 2007*

This workshop helps participants connect the concepts of gratitude and generosity. Participants offer thanks for something much of our Western society takes for granted, abundant clean water. They explore how Unitarian Universalist Principles call us to conserve water and to take action to ensure access to clean water for all life that shares our planet. This workshop has a low-key, thoughtful feeling. If you feel the need for a more active approach, consider the Alternate Activities. Alternate Activity 1, Water Drop Competition, nicely complements Activity 4, Spiritual Circle of Thanks, while Alternate Activity 2, Boat Float Competition, could substitute for Activity 4.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Engage participants in the cycle of gratitude and generosity
- Link gratitude and generosity as religious concepts embedded in Unitarian Universalist faith and practice of environmental stewardship
- Introduce social action as a way to express both gratitude and generosity.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore generosity and gratitude in song
- Experience their own gratitude and capacity for generosity in the context of water resources
- Understand that Unitarian Universalism calls us to express both gratitude and generosity through stewardship and social action

- Consider a story from the Muslim tradition that illustrates how we can express our gratitude through generosity to others.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Song — From You I Receive	10
Activity 2: Story — The Dog at the Well	10
Activity 3: River Scene — Gratitude and Generosity Rainstorm Symbols	10
Activity 4: Spiritual Circle of Thanks	15
Faith in Action: Congregation Gratitude and Generosity	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Water Drop Competition	10
Alternate Activity 2: Boat Float Competition	15
Alternate Activity 3: Thank You Letters	10
Alternate Activity 4: Great Quotes	5

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

In the moment before this session begins, with all your preparations complete, find a quiet spot to sit and meditate on gratitude—for life itself, and especially for the abundance of water resources and opportunities for stewardship in your own life. No matter the droughts and other problems we in the West experience, it is difficult to even imagine the killing thirst and the risk of disease from contaminated water that are common in the poorest regions of the world. True spiritual moments of gratitude can awaken generosity inside us and connect us with others, with need, with what we can do to help. Let your gratitude build inside you the will to move beyond the immediacy of personal want and to give, starting with the participants in Gather the Spirit today.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, cup of water and plant on a table.
- Place chairs for all participants in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose background music for the Opening and other quiet activities in the workshop. See *Before You Start* in this program's Introduction for suggestions.
- Optional: If you have set up a blog for Gather the Spirit participants, prepare instructions for accessing the blog. Make a copy for every family and/or plan to email the instructions to participants.

### Description of Activity

In Gather the Spirit, the chalice-lighting involves water, not flame.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to share an opening ritual to help everyone connect with the sounds of water. Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.
- Tap your fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects and make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

Ask participants to briefly report on their Gather the Spirit activities. Who tried a Taking It Home activity from the previous workshop? Does anyone have a new idea to briefly share about stewardship or water?

If you have started a Gather the Spirit blog for the group, make sure all participants know about it. Explain, as needed, that participants can post results of their explorations of Gather the Spirit topics or other comments or ideas relevant to the program; and, they can respond to one another's postings. Hand out blog access instructions to any who need them.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Pay attention to accessibility; arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations or who use a wheelchair.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: SONG — FROM YOU I RECEIVE (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

## Preparation for Activity

- Review the song "From You I Receive", Hymn 402 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. If you are not comfortable leading the song, invite a musical volunteer to assist or to accompany you with piano or guitar.

## Description of Activity

Invite participants to rise, as they are able, and form a circle. Invite participants to pair up with their immediate neighbors; if there is an odd number, a leader can partner with someone.

Say you will lead them in a simple song with hand gestures. Teach "From You I Receive." The song has four phrases, and this is how the gestures go:

- First phrase ("From you I receive"): First partner holds hands out, palms up; second partner holds hands out, palms down, and places them over first partner's hands.
- Second phrase ("to you I give"): Partners reverse their hands.
- Third phrase ("together we share,"): Partners take each other's hands.
- Fourth phrase ("and from this we live."): the partners hug themselves or each other, whichever seems more appropriate for your group

(The lyrics are reprinted here by permission of Rabbi Nathan Segal.)

Have the group sing the song, with the hand gestures, two or three times. You may wish to ask each participant to turn away from their first partner and pair with their neighbor on the other side.

Ask the group to sit, and offer this transition into the workshop's story:

This is a very simple song, with very simple words. But it has deep meaning. I receive something, and feel grateful. Then I give something. We share, because we are both giving. And this sharing helps us live. Now we're going to hear a story about someone who received something and was grateful, so then they gave something.

## Including All Participants

Be mindful of accessibility issues. This activity can be done seated, with partners turning in their chairs so they face each other.

## ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE DOG AT THE WELL (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Dog in the Well](#) (included in this document) "

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story.

### Description of Activity

Say that now you will share a story called "The Dog at the Well" which comes from the Muslim religion. Begin by introducing the Muslim faith.

Islam is a religion that many people follow, in many different places in the world. People who follow Islam are called Muslims. Many Muslims live in the United States. The Muslim holy book is called the Qur'an and the Qur'an has many of the same stories found in the Hebrew and Christian holy books. The stories in the Qur'an are primarily from the prophet Muhammad, who taught Muslims how to live. This is a story with a message about gratitude and generosity.

Read or tell the story. Help the group process the story with questions and ideas like these, adapting to fit the age and maturity level of participants:

- Why do you think the man helped the dog?
- What do Unitarian Universalists say about animals? (Affirm that we respect and care for animals because they are part of the interconnected web.)
- Are there animals you don't like? Which ones? Why not?
- Would you take care of an animal that needed help (provided it was safe to help the animal)? Even if it was a kind of animal you do not like? (For example, a participant who does not like cats finds a stray kitten.)
- What about insects? Some people will not step on a spider or an ant because it is a living creature. Do you feel differently about insects lives than other animals' lives? Why or why not?

Affirm the group's answers and say:

In Islamic culture, a dog is considered a very low creature. That makes the lesson in this story more meaningful. Muhammad is conveying God's calling to care for everyone, including even the lowliest of creatures. As Unitarian Universalists, we are also called to care for all of

Earth's people, animals, and all living things.  
That means sharing.

### **ACTIVITY 3: RIVER SCENE — GRATITUDE AND GENEROSITY RAINSTORM SYMBOLS (10 MINUTES)**

#### **Materials for Activity**

- River Scene mural (Workshop 1, Activity 2)
- Leader Resource 1, [Raindrop Template](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 2, [Cloud and Lightning Bolt Templates](#) (included in this document)
- Stiff blue, yellow, and white paper
- Scissors, including left-handed scissors
- Fine-tipped markers in various colors
- Optional: Quiet music and a music player

#### **Preparation for Activity**

- Post the group's River Scene if it is not already posted.
- Make sure the markers will not bleed through the paper; participants will write or draw on both sides.
- Use Leader Resource 1 to make a template of a large raindrop and Leader Resource 2 to make templates of a cloud and a lightning bolt. Trace and cut out enough raindrops, clouds and lightning bolts for all participants. Or, if you will have time, make a few templates and one sample of each symbol, and have participants trace and cut their own.
- Set the materials, except the markers, at work tables.
- Optional: Choose quiet, instrumental music for this activity and Activity 4, Spiritual Circle of Thanks. See Before You Start in this program's Introduction for music suggestions. Set up and test the music player.

#### **Description of Activity**

Gather participants at work tables. Indicate the sample raindrops, clouds and lightning bolts you have made. (Or, invite participants to make raindrops, clouds and lightning bolts using the materials on the tables.) Explain that you will ask participants to write an expression of gratitude on one side of a rainstorm symbol, and an offer of generous stewardship on the other.

When everyone has a cut-out symbol, invite the group to take a moment to look quietly at the River Scene. If you

have brought music, begin playing it now. Invite everyone to examine the River Scene for something they are grateful for in real life—maybe rivers themselves, or animals and plants that live in or along rivers, or some way people connect with water. While participants reflect, distribute the markers.

Tell participants:

Once you know what you are grateful for, write your thanks on one side of your symbol. Then, sit back quietly and think again, this time about what you do or could do to be generous. How can you give stewardship to the Earth's water resources? Let your mind carry you along our River Scene to all the world's fresh waters and the people, animals and plants that need it. How can you be generous in taking care of water and making sure all life that needs clean water has access to it? What can you give?

If you will next lead Activity 4, Spiritual Circle of Thanks, invite participants to hold on to their symbols and gather in a circle.

#### **Including All Participants**

Participants with new or limited writing skills may wish to dictate their ideas; match them with someone who would like to write for them. You may also give participants the option to draw their ideas. Invite older participants to assist younger ones, if that seems appropriate.

### **ACTIVITY 4: SPIRITUAL CIRCLE OF THANKS (15 MINUTES)**

#### **Materials for Activity**

- Clear plastic glasses and a pitcher of clear, cool water
- Rainstorm symbols (Activity 3, River Scene — Gratitude and Generosity Rainstorm Symbols)
- Optional: Quiet, instrumental music and a music player

#### **Preparation for Activity**

- Fill pitcher(s) with enough clear, cool water to fill all the individual glasses.
- Have on hand the gratitude and generosity rainstorm symbols participants created in Activity 3.
- Optional: Choose music. Set up music player.

#### **Description of Activity**

Gather participants in a circle. Ask the group to conduct this activity in a serious, quiet, way. If you have music, begin playing it now.

Quietly distribute empty glasses. Then join the circle, bringing the pitcher of water with you. Pour water into

the glass of the participant nearest you. Ask the participant not to drink yet, but to pour water into the glass of the next participant, then pass them the pitcher. Let this process continue until the last person in the circle pours water into your glass.

Now go around the circle again. This time, invite each person to read or describe what they have written or drawn—first what they are grateful for, and then the generosity they offer or want to offer. After each symbol is read, invite everybody to take a sip of water and say "thank you" aloud.

When all have shared who choose to, begin humming "From You I Receive" quietly, inviting participants to join with you. After humming it through two or three times, sing the words two or three times.

Allow a moment of silence after the song ends.

End by saying:

We hope the gratitude and generosity expressed in word and deed, will be passed from one person to another.

### **Including All Participants**

Be aware that some may find the full pitcher of water too heavy to pour or pass and may need help. Some participants may want to "pass." You might suggest that if someone does not want to share what they have written or drawn, they may simply take a sip of water when it is their turn. The group can respond with a shared sip of water and a "thank you"—a way of showing gratitude for the person's presence and thoughts

## **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Taking It Home handout
- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Adapt Taking It Home for your group. Prepare copies or email to adult participants and parents.
- Place the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint and post.

### **Description of Activity**

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop:

Today, we talked about gratitude and generosity, how they work together. We thought about how we can experience the cycle of gratitude and generosity, how we can be generous stewards of the Earth and its water in our own lives.

Invite the group into a moment in silence. Then, invite participants to offer a thought about what moved them during this workshop. Say something like:

Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection before volunteers respond. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the chalice bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us until we meet again.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared.

## **FAITH IN ACTION: CONGREGATION GRATITUDE AND GENEROSITY**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Templates (Leader Resources 1 and 2), paper, scissors (including left-handed scissors) and fine-tipped markers in assorted colors for making raindrops, clouds and lightning bolts (Activity 3, River Scene — Gratitude and Generosity Rainstorm Symbols)

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Consult your minister, religious educator, music director and lay worship leaders to plan a time and way for the Gather the Spirit group to participate in a congregational worship service.
- Post newsprint for brainstorming.

### **Description of Activity**

Help participants plan a worship service for the congregation using elements from this workshop that express their understandings of the relationship between gratitude, generosity and water stewardship. Invite them to identify their goals for the worship service: perhaps people will become more thankful for the water resources they have; perhaps some will decide that they, too, should express their gratitude by finding new ways to offer stewardship to water resources.

Record ideas on newsprint, drawing from this program.  
You might:

- Use some music you have heard or sung
- Share a story you have heard
- Lead the congregation in "From You I Receive" with hand gestures
- Distribute rainstorm symbols for people to write messages of gratitude and generosity.

Once the worship service plan takes shape, engage volunteers to take on specific responsibilities. Schedule a rehearsal. Publicize the worship service.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it. How was your mix of discussion and action? In the midst of the busy-ness, did you successfully include spiritual elements? Are participants growing in their understanding of the need to protect and equitably share the Earth's water resources? What should you do differently next workshop?

If you will lead another workshop, look ahead to assign leadership responsibilities.

## TAKING IT HOME

The natural response to genuinely-felt gratitude is generosity. —

Rev. William Metzger, UU Minister, from a sermon, "Gratitude and Generosity," First Unitarian Church, Philadelphia, March 4, 2007

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** We talked about the two-part cycle of gratitude and generosity. A person feeling gratitude may respond with a generous act. That generosity generates new gratitude, and so on. Together, gratitude and generosity may brim over enough to be a "two-G force" for good. In this workshop we applied gratitude and generosity to stewardship of Earth's water resources.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** Do you feel gratitude and generosity working together in your own lives? When somebody does something for you, do you want to do something for them, or do you just think you should? If you do not feel an impulse to generosity, consider whether you are truly feeling gratitude. How can you be more aware of the experience of gratitude on a daily basis? What happens if you are generous to somebody and they are not grateful or generous in return? How does that feel? Does generosity need to have a reward?

Is Christmas a two-G day for you and your family, a time when gratitude and generosity work together? If your

family does not celebrate Christmas, are there other two-G days in your lives? Do you want to schedule more of them?

What about a home water day? Should you have one? What will you do? You could try some of the ideas below, for example, search on the Internet to find ways you can easily help with the stewardship of water.

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try ...** to find new ways your family can help with water resources. Try the [Earth Easy](http://eartheasy.com/live_water_saving.htm) (at [eartheasy.com/live\\_water\\_saving.htm](http://eartheasy.com/live_water_saving.htm)) website, the [Green Venture](http://greenventure.ca/) (at [greenventure.ca/](http://greenventure.ca/)) website, the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](http://www.epa.gov) website and a website dedicated to the vulnerable [Mono Lake and Mono Basin](http://www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation) (at [www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation](http://www.monolake.org/about/waterconservation)) which supplies water to people in Southern California.

## FAMILY GAME

**Water Inventions.** Can you think of something clever to help people in lands with too little clean water and too little money? Your invention should be inexpensive to make and transport (or buildable locally) and easy to use.

**Water Scavenger Hunt.** Try a new watery drink, food or recipe. Maybe it will be a new kind of gelatin desert, or a new kind of melon.

## FAMILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

**Say "thank you".** Make words of gratitude part of your daily routine. Say a blessing at dinner, or at special meals. If you pray, include statements of thanks in your prayers. If you meditate, bring in the knowledge of all that is given to you, and feel your gratitude; reflect on all the gifts which go willingly from you to others, and know that you are generous. Be conscious of the two-G force, and help to build it whenever you can.

## FAMILY EXPERIMENT

Experiment with water in its three forms—vapor, liquid and solid. Which takes up the most space? If you wanted to carry all the water you could, what form would you choose? What happens when you fill a container to the brim with water and put it in the freezer? What happens to the lid on a pan when you boil water and it turns to vapor? Note: Be careful. Don't experiment with boiling water without an adult to help.

## FAMILY RESEARCH

Do Internet research on dowsing, or water witching, and see if you want to try it. Dowsing means looking for water with a forked stick or a similar tool. Some people believe that if they walk around holding the stick in their hands just right, it will point down when they are over water. Some use this approach to know where to dig a well. But don't expect too much. There is doubt that dowsing really works.

## FAMILY SPACE SEARCH

**Is there water on Mars?** Until recently, scientists thought water existed only on the Earth. Some have begun to change their minds. Why? What does this mean? You can check this out by visiting the [National Aeronautics and Space Administration](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/mars/news/mgs-20061206.html) (at [www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/mars/news/mgs-20061206.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/mars/news/mgs-20061206.html))online.

## FAMILY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

Act in stewardship by "adopting" an endangered whale or other marine creature. That means paying money to help with stewardship of the resources the creature needs. You can start by visiting the website of an international organization such as the World Wildlife Foundation.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: WATER DROP COMPETITION (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Plastic cups
- A pitcher of water
- Food coloring
- Eye droppers or spoons
- Wax paper
- Straws
- Newspaper or tarp to cover floor

### Preparation for Activity

- Prepare an area where participants can safely have fun with water. Cover any carpet or other vulnerable surface with a tarp or newspaper.
- Cut equal size sheets of wax paper — one per team
- Fill the pitcher with water. Use the food coloring to color the water.

### Description of Activity

Use this activity as a more active replacement for Activity 4, Spiritual Circle of Thanks. Form small teams of equal numbers, ideally two or three each.

Explain that teams will compete to be the first to blow a colored drop of water back and forth across a sheet of wax paper using a straw. Place the lengths of wax paper parallel to each other on the floor or a table. Fill a cup with water for each team. Give each team an eye dropper or spoon. Ask teams to divide up so approximately half their members are on either side of the wax paper. Hand a straw to each participant.

Tell teams to place a drop of water at one end of the wax paper, and decide the order in which its members will blow the drop.

When all are ready, say "Go" and let the teams start blowing the water back and forth. The team that finishes first wins the prize—a chance to clean up first.

### Including All Participants

If anyone would not be comfortable on the floor, set up the contest on a table with all participants seated.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: BOAT FLOAT COMPETITION (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Paper muffin-baking liners
- Marbles
- Pans or bowls filled with water, one for each team
- Newspaper or tarp to cover floor

### Preparation for Activity

- In an area where participants can splash some water, cover carpet or other vulnerable surface with a tarp or newspaper. Set up pans or bowls on the protective tarps,
- Fill the pans or bowls with water.

### Description of Activity

Teams compete to place the most marbles in a floating paper muffin-baking liner before it sinks. Each participant placing a marble says "Thanks to water for... [something different each time]."

Divide the group into equal teams of four. Place before each team a pan or bowl of water, a supply of marbles and a paper muffin-baking liner.

Explain that everybody competing should try to think of a new reason to thank water, but if somebody really cannot think of something fresh, they may repeat what has been said already. They may even say "Thanks to water for holding up our muffin-baking liner." (It's important to keep this fun and not embarrass anyone by putting them on the spot.)

Say "Go!" Walk around and listen to the "thank you's." See which team gets the most marbles in and the most thanks out before the sinking occurs.

When the competition is over, ask if anybody heard any surprising reasons to thank water.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: THANK YOU LETTERS (10 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Paper and pencils/pens

### **Description of Activity**

Invite participants to write overdue thank you letters. As you distribute paper and pencils/pens, ask them to think of someone in their life whom they might thank. If participants cannot think of a thank-you letter they just never got around to writing before—for a gift, perhaps—they might write a "thank you" for something that does not ordinarily involve a thank-you letter. Maybe a teacher, a dentist or a parent or child did something meaningful that they are thankful for. The thank you can involve water, but does not have to. In some way, someone has been generous to them. This is an opportunity to express gratitude.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 4: GREAT QUOTES (5 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Newsprint, markers and tape

### **Preparation for Activity**

- If you will present the quotations below, write them on newsprint and post.

### **Description of Activity**

Ask groups of three or four, of mixed ages, to create their own wise quotations about gratitude. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker to write their wise words. Then ask the groups to come together and share what they have created.

If it would be helpful, offer these quotations and, lead a brief discussion:

Saying thank you is more than good manners. It is good spirituality. — Alfred Painter

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. —

President John F. Kennedy

Gratitude is wealth. — Unknown

## STORY: THE DOG AT THE WELL

Permission to use "The Dog at the Well" in this curriculum granted by Marilyn McFarlane, author of *Sacred Myths: Stories of World Religions* (Sibyl Publications, 1996).

One day Muhammad told his friends and followers a story about a thirsty man, a well, and a dog. This was the story:

A man left his home to take a long journey. It was a hot day, and he had not walked far before his head began to ache and his mouth felt dry. The sun blazed overhead, the fields he passed were brown and withered, and no water could be seen.

"I'm so thirsty. I must find water," he muttered. "Surely I will soon come to a well."

Just as he had the thought, he saw a well by the side of the road. Thankfully, he hurried to it, almost tasting the sweetness of the cool water that lay in its depths. But when he peered into the well, he saw no water. The well was dry. Disheartened, and even more thirsty now, he continued along the scorching road, hoping to find another well. Sure enough, before long he saw one. "At last, water!" he whispered, looking into the well. But it too was dry.

There wasn't a drop of moisture in the land. With a parched throat and feeling weak, the man walked on. "I can't go much further without water," he thought. And then he saw a well. Almost afraid to hope, he looked over the edge. Far below, in the darkness, water sparkled.

"Allah be praised!" the man said. He looked around for a rope and bucket to lower into the well so he could bring up the life-giving water. There was no rope, no bucket. How could he reach the water he needed so badly?

Only one way remained. If the water would not come up to him, he would have to go down to it. He scrambled over the top and carefully, bracing himself against the sides with his arms and feet, descended into the well. Deeper and deeper he went, until at last he touched the cool, wet water. Cupping his hands, he scooped the water and drank and drank. He murmured, "Praise Allah for the liquid of life."

Feeling much better, the man began the long, difficult climb up out of the well. At last he reached the top and stood again on the road under the hot sun. He was starting to walk away when he heard a sound—a soft, sad whine. He looked down and saw a dog, sniffing at the ground. The dog looked miserable. His eyes were glazed, and he was panting with thirst. He came up to the man and licked the edge of his robe, which was wet from the trip down the well.

"This poor animal is as thirsty as I was," the man thought. "He'll die in this heat if he doesn't get water."

The dog looked up at the man and wagged his tail, grateful for the bit of moisture.

The man made his decision. "Wait here," he said. "I will bring you some water."

Into the well he went. Again he descended down, down, all the way to the bottom where the cool liquid lay. When he got there, the man braced himself against the walls of the well and took off his soft leather boots. He dipped one boot and then the other into the water and filled them. He clamped the tops of the boots between his teeth and began to climb up again.

This time the trip to the top was much harder. The heavy, water-filled boots pulled on his mouth, and his teeth hurt. Once the slick, wet leather slipped, and he almost dropped the boots, but he tightened his grip and held on. Slowly he kept climbing until he reached the top.

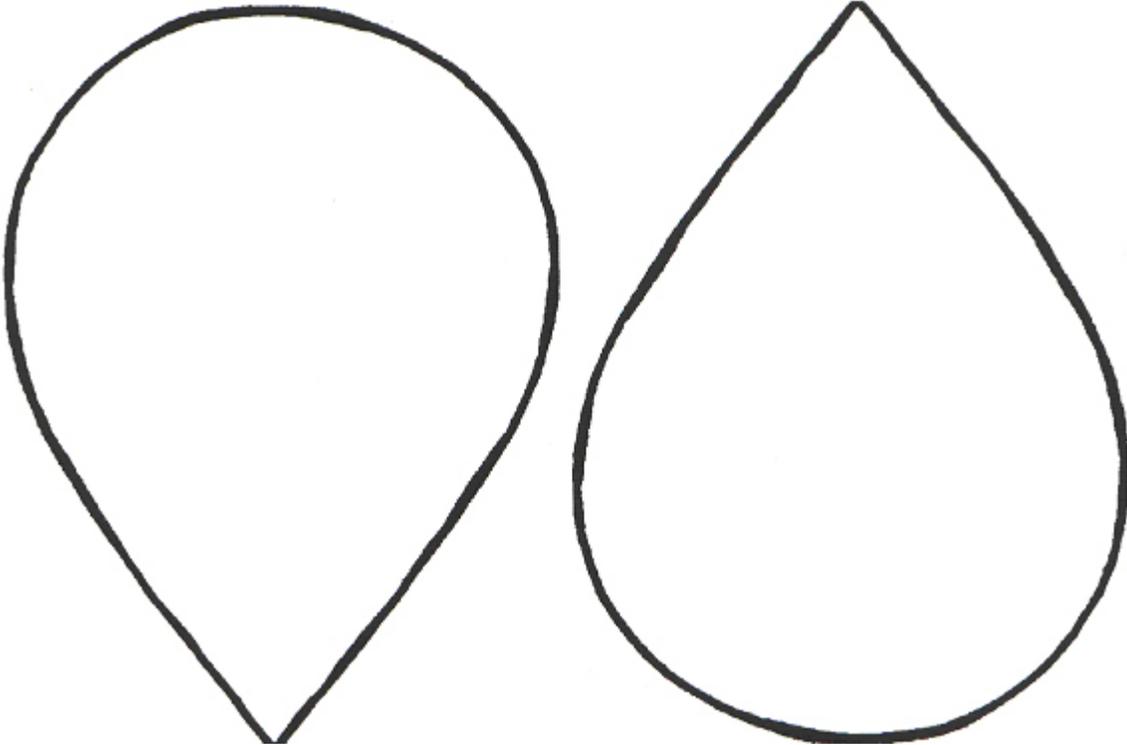
When he was on the ground again, he knelt and opened the boots so the dog could drink. The dog drank all the water in both boots, his tail wagging happily.

The man smiled. "Now neither of us will die of thirst," he said. He pulled on his damp boots, patted the dog again, and continued on his way.

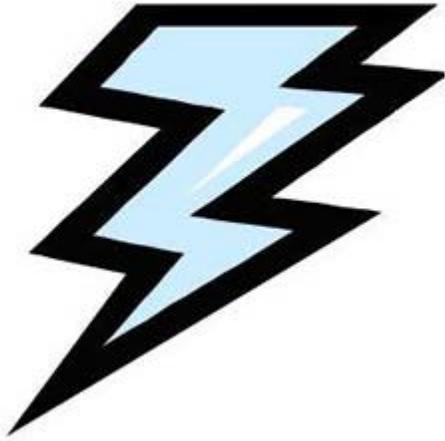
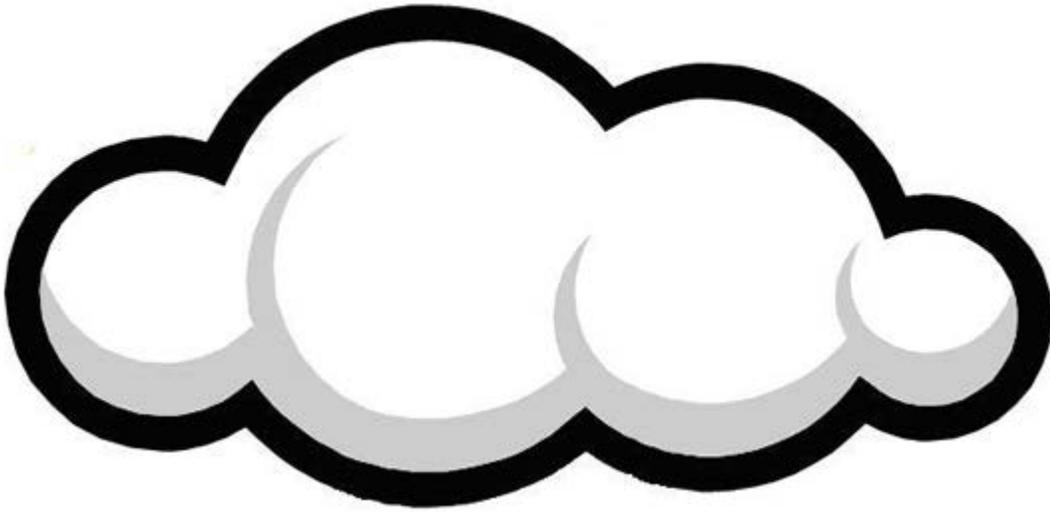
Allah was pleased by this kind act. He was so pleased that all the man's past sins were forgiven, and years later, when the kind man died, his soul was taken to heaven.

The blessed prophet Muhammad concluded his story by saying, "You too will be rewarded for being good to all living creatures."

**LEADER RESOURCE 1: RAINDROP TEMPLATE**



## LEADER RESOURCE 2: CLOUD AND LIGHTNING BOLT TEMPLATES



## FIND OUT MORE

### Gratitude

In a Spring, 2007 UU World article, "[The Heart of Our Faith](http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/11144.shtml)" (at [www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/11144.shtml](http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/11144.shtml)), Rev. Galen Guengerich, All Souls Church, New York, makes a case for a Unitarian Universalist theology based on gratitude. He writes, "(Gratitude) is the means by which we remember both our identity and our duty." In a related sermon, he said:

The discipline of gratitude is about knowing how much we have been given and acknowledging the scope of our dependence. It's about saying "thank you" to the people we love, to the world we enjoy, to the universe we inhabit, and to the God who holds us all in a divine embrace.

### World Water Day

Learn about [World Water Day](http://www.worldwaterday.org/) (at [www.worldwaterday.org/](http://www.worldwaterday.org/)), the international effort to focus action and attention on the world's water resources on March 22, every year.

### A Local, Sustainable Solution

PlayPumps International maintains a lively, educational website about how water works, [KnowH2O](http://www.knowh2o.org/site/c.jgLLITOFKtF/b.3429435/k.ADD7/A_Water_Education_Initiative_from_PlayPumps_International.htm) (at [www.knowh2o.org/site/c.jgLLITOFKtF/b.3429435/k.ADD7/A\\_Water\\_Education\\_Initiative\\_from\\_PlayPumps\\_International.htm](http://www.knowh2o.org/site/c.jgLLITOFKtF/b.3429435/k.ADD7/A_Water_Education_Initiative_from_PlayPumps_International.htm)). Find facts, download action ideas and read about [PlayPumps](http://www.knowh2o.org/site/c.jgLLITOFKtF/b.3429435/k.ADD7/A_Water_Education_Initiative_from_PlayPumps_International.htm) (R) water projects in rural communities around the world. The website explains, "The PlayPump systems are innovative, sustainable, patented water pumps powered by children at play. Installed near schools, the PlayPump system doubles as a water pump and a merry-go-round."

### Stewardship of Animal Habitats

The [World Wildlife Foundation](http://www.wwf.org) (at [www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org)) (WWF) protects species by working to protect their natural habitats. Raising money to "adopt" a wild animal through WWF could be a good family or congregational stewardship project. Read about the WWF's most recent [World Water Day activities](http://www.worldwildlife.org/who/media/press/2009/WWFPresitem11899.html) (at [www.worldwildlife.org/who/media/press/2009/WWFPresitem11899.html](http://www.worldwildlife.org/who/media/press/2009/WWFPresitem11899.html)) and click on the cup of latte to watch a video, "How Much Water Does It Take to Make a Latte?"

# WORKSHOP 8: GATHER TO CELEBRATE

## INTRODUCTION

*(In) the early '60's I realized that the world was being turned into a poisonous garbage dump. By the time the meek inherited it, it might not be worth inheriting. — Pete Seeger, folk singer and activist*

*You can't expect people to fight for a cleaner river unless they learn to love it. — Pete Seeger, folk singer and activist*

This workshop lifts up the water stewardship and public education efforts of folk musician, activist and Unitarian Universalist Pete Seeger with a story about the sloop Clearwater, which sails the Hudson River in New York. Clearwater serves as an example of the impact of group action and, along with the workshop's suggested use of music, highlights that working together in stewardship of Earth's resources can be fun. Participants write letters to themselves pledging specific actions of stewardship and/or to promote equitable sharing of Earth's water resources. The River Scene is completed with the addition of paper-constructed boats.

## GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore the concept of being called to action
- Convey that social action can be fulfilling and enjoyable, by introducing Pete Seeger, his music, and his water stewardship efforts since 1969 in the New York Hudson River Valley
- Encourage participants to pledge specific actions of water resource stewardship.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Experience how working together advances a shared goal
- Hear a contemporary story of social action and water stewardship;
- Learn about activist, musician and Unitarian Universalist Pete Seeger

- Consider how boating affects water resources
- Commit to specific actions to conserve water, protect water resources and/or promote equitable sharing of Earth's water
- Optional: Explore the relationship of seeds and water resources.

## WORKSHOP-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Boat Blowing Contest	10
Activity 2: Story — The Clearwater	10
Activity 3: River Scene — Boats	15
Activity 4: Letter to Me	15
Faith in Action: Congregational Water Use Awareness	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Spiritual Circle — Song, Story and Seed	15
Alternate Activity 2: Round-robin Water Story	10
Alternate Activity 3: More Seeger Music	10

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Reflect back to a very "aware" moment you have spent on the water—a time in a canoe, perhaps rocking on a wide lake, when you could appreciate the vast sweep of universe and nature.

In the moments before this workshop begins, with all your preparations complete, meditate on the sensation of floating in a boat or when swimming, and the connection of that sensation to the spirit of meditation. You may find that floating on or in water shares with the meditative experience the feeling of letting go, of being supported, open, free and receptive to whatever transpires. Allow yourself to relax, to drift, in the course of this meditation, before returning to the reality of the moment and the pleasant duty of welcoming the group.

## OPENING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- Cup of water
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Newsprint, markers and tape
- Optional: Gather the Spirit blog access instructions
- Optional: Music and music player
- Optional: Small table

### Preparation for Activity

- Set the chalice bowl, cup of water and plant on a table.
- Place chairs for all participants in a circle around the table.
- Write the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post.
- Optional: Choose music for the Opening and other activities in the workshop. See Before You Start in this program's Introduction for suggestions of water-themed music.
- Optional: If you have set up a blog for Gather the Spirit participants, prepare instructions for accessing the blog. Make a copy for every family and/or plan to email the instructions to participants.

### Description of Activity

In Gather the Spirit, the chalice-lighting involves water, not flame.

Gather the group in chairs around the table with the chalice bowl, cup and plant. Indicate where you have posted the chalice lighting words. Say you will "light" the chalice by pouring the cup of water into the clear bowl as the group says the words aloud. Lead the group to say:

In the clear light of this chalice we see that as the drop joins the brook, the stream, the river, and becomes a mighty sea, so do each of us gather with others and become a group strong enough to care for and change the world.

Invite the group to share an opening ritual to help everyone connect with the sounds of water. Say:

We will make the sounds of rain. Follow me and make a storm together.

Lead participants by verbally directing and physically demonstrating these sound steps. Pause on each for 10 or 15 seconds, gradually building the storm's intensity:

- Rub your palms together to make the sound of wind.
- Tap your fingers together for the sound of a gentle sprinkle.
- Snap your fingers as the rain comes on.
- Clap your hands for heavier rain.
- Slap your thighs to make it pour.
- Stomp your feet for thunder.

Then reverse the process. Go slowly back through the sound steps and bring the storm to an end.

You might ask the group to suggest additional body percussion or other effects and make another storm. (Turning lights on and off for lightning is one possibility. Making whoo sounds for wind is another.)

Ask participants to briefly report on their Gather the Spirit activities. Who tried a Taking It Home activity from the previous workshop? Does anyone have a new idea to briefly share about stewardship or water?

If you have started a Gather the Spirit blog for the group, make sure all participants know about it. Explain, as needed, that participants can post results of their explorations of Gather the Spirit topics or other comments or ideas relevant to the program; and, they can respond to one another's postings. Hand out blog access instructions to any who need them.

Suggest participants bend and stretch before sitting again for the next activity. If needed, ask a few volunteers to help re-arrange chairs and set aside the table with chalice bowl, cup and plant.

### Including All Participants

Pay attention to accessibility; arrange the chairs to accommodate participants with mobility limitations or who use a wheelchair.

If any participant cannot make sound with hand motions, adapt the activity. Assign a few participants a foot-stamping part, or a vocal part such as the sound of wind starting as a breeze, becoming a howl and then calming to a breeze as the storm subsides.

## ACTIVITY 1: BOAT BLOWING CONTEST (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- At least one large pan or tray

- Water
- Small, floating "boats" such as corks or small pieces of wood—any small, light object that will float
- Newspaper or tarp to cover floor

### Preparation for Activity

- Find a table or floor space where participants can splash some water. Cover any carpet or other vulnerable surface with a tarp or newspaper.
- Fill the pan(s) with water and place on table(s) or floor.
- Place "boats" next to pan(s).

### Description of Activity

Participants discover the value of working together and the difficulties in working at cross-purposes as they attempt to blow "boats" across water while others blow in different directions.

Form small, mixed-age teams of two or three. Have each group send its youngest member forward to try and propel a boat across a pan or tray of water.

Gather the team representatives around the water. Place a "boat" in the center of the water. Tell the contestants their goal is to move the boat to the opposite shore for their team. Ask them to hold their hands behind their backs and, at the word "Go!", start blowing and keep blowing until you say to stop, whether the boat temporarily reaches the shore or not.

If the contestants are of very different ages and sizes, place the oldest and largest farther away from the water than the smallest and youngest. If contestants are spaced fairly equally around the water, the boat will stay largely in the middle.

Say "Stop!" Ask what everyone noticed. Help the group to see that people working against each other cannot accomplish much. You might have all contestants come to one side of the water and blow in the same direction. They should easily be able to move the boat wherever they want it to go.

Repeat the experiment if you like, so others get a chance to try it.

Conclude by saying:

In Gather the Spirit we have talked a lot about stewardship and social action. Let's also think about community action. We can often accomplish more by joining in community with others than we can alone. We just need to make sure we are all blowing in the same direction—working together, toward a shared goal.

### Including All Participants

Participants with mobility or respiratory issues that keep them from competing may act as judges and coaches, perhaps directing contestants how to begin working together and achieve a given goal.

Anybody with a cold or another airborne illness should step back and be a cheerleader for their team.

## ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE CLEARWATER (10 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of the story "[The Clearwater](#) (included in this document) "

### Preparation for Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the story.

### Description of Activity

Tell the group that Pete Seeger is a Unitarian Universalist who has said he attends a Unitarian Universalist congregation partly because he likes to sing there. He is a powerful voice for justice in our world, and an example of how we can be stewards to the world's water resources and have a good time doing it.

Read or tell the story. Lead a discussion to process the story with questions and ideas like these:

- Why did Pete Seeger and his friends decide to act?
- What did they accomplish?
- What makes some people try to be good stewards while other people don't act as if they care?
- People sometimes say they feel "called" to act in a certain way. What do you think that means?
- Do you feel called to do anything?
- What about stewardship of water resources?
- Suppose you do not feel called to take care of the Earth and its waters? Do you still believe it is a good idea? How will you do it?

Leader notes to share as appropriate: The concept of "being called" can be difficult for young people to grasp—perhaps because it sounds so much like being called to the dinner table or the phone. Some people might say that being called to something serious such as social action or becoming a minister is having a feeling deep inside that a certain action must be taken. And some people might explain being called in a religious or spiritual way. Ask the group what they think being "called" means and discuss as necessary.

## ACTIVITY 3: RIVER SCENE — BOATS (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- River Scene mural (Workshop 1, Activity 2)
- Colorful card stock or construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, paper clips and tape
- Optional: Natural colored tissue paper (for sails)
- Optional: Music, and a music player

### Preparation for Activity

- Retrieve and post the group's River Scene if it is not already posted in the meeting space.
- Set arts and crafts materials at work tables.
- Optional: Choose music for this activity. Pete Seeger songs or sailing and boating songs would be especially appropriate. Set up and test the music player.

### Description of Activity

- Invite participants to create paper boats to add to the river scene. Tell participants they can create any boats they like to sail down the river, and that you'll find a way to include them in the scene at the end of this activity. There is only one rule about the boats: They must be friendly to water resources in general and to your river in specific. So gasoline engines with their potential for pollution are out. Sailboats, canoes, rowboats, and rafts are in.
- Remind the group about Pete Seeger's Clearwater. You might challenge them to create a boat that not only floats on the river without harming it, but also can in some way to keep the river clean.

If you have music, begin playing it now.

When all have completed their boats, ask them to share what they have done, then add them to the River Scene.

### Including All Participants

Be sure your work area is Accessible for all participants. Try to offer work surfaces of various heights, so some can stand and some can sit while making their boats.

## ACTIVITY 4: LETTER TO ME (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Paper and pencils/pens, envelopes and postage stamps

### Preparation for Activity

- Decide with co-leaders and your religious educator who will mail the participants their letters, some months from now. It is very important that someone take responsibility for this follow-up.

### Description of Activity

Distribute paper and pencils/pens. Ask each participant to write a letter about specifically how they plan to offer stewardship to the Earth and its resources. Say, "Think of this letter as a pledge of stewardship." If any participants do not yet write, ask them to draw a picture of how they will protect Earth's water or have them speak their own plan for a co-leader or an older participant to write down.

When the letters are done, invite volunteers to share their letters with the group. When all who wish to have shared, ask the group, "What does a pledge mean?" Say a pledge is a promise. Use an example from a letter a participant has shared; for example, "This pledge means, from now on, Alex will take shorter showers in the morning." Or, "From now on, Petra will donate one week's allowance each month to a project that is helping bring water pumps to villages in Ethiopia."

Say when you make a pledge, it is important to make it specific and, whether you share it aloud or not, make the pledge to yourself as well as the group.

Distribute envelopes. Invite authors to place their pledge letters in the envelopes, address the envelopes to themselves, seal the envelopes and hand them to you.

Say that you will put stamps on the envelopes and mail them out in three months. When participants receive the letter they have written themselves, it will remind them of their pledge and they can check in to see how they are doing. If they have been active stewards, they can congratulate themselves. If not, they can increase their efforts.

Make a note in your calendar to stamp and mail the letters on the promised date.

## CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- Taking It Home handout
- Clear bowl to serve as a chalice
- A small, hardy plant (such as a spider plant or shamrock plant)
- Optional: Small table
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

## Preparation for Activity

- Adapt Taking It Home for your group. Prepare copies or email to adult participants and parents.
- Place the chalice bowl and plant where all can gather around it.
- Optional: Write the closing words on newsprint, and post.

## Description of Activity

Gather the group. Briefly summarize the workshop: Today, we heard a story about Pete Seeger and his friends sailing on the Clearwater to help save the Hudson River. We talked about the way some people feel called to do certain things, like helping to save and share the Earth's resources. We talked about how all the Earth's resources are connected, so working to protect one also helps protect others.

Give participants a moment in silence. Then, invite participants to offer a thought about what moved them during this workshop. Say something like:

Think about our time together. What will you take with you as we leave today?

Allow a moment for reflection. Then invite volunteers to answer. Then say:

We will recycle our chalice water by nurturing our plant.

Pour the water from the chalice bowl into the plant.

As you pour, recite the closing words:

We leave our Gather the Spirit friends now, but not our Gather the Spirit friendships. May they be with us always.

Distribute the Taking It Home handouts you have prepared. Thank and dismiss participants.

## FAITH IN ACTION: CONGREGATIONAL WATER USE AWARENESS

### Materials for Activity

- Paper and pencils/pens
- Optional: Clipboards
- Optional: Newsprint, markers and tape

### Preparation for Activity

- If the congregation has a Green Sanctuary committee, invite the members to participate in this Faith in Action.
- Obtain information on finding and fixing leaky pipes on the [Environmental Protection Agency Office of Water](http://www.epa.gov/ow/) (at [www.epa.gov/ow/](http://www.epa.gov/ow/)) website.

## Description of Activity

Lead the group to identify and implement ways the congregation can conserve water.

Share these facts and tips from the EPA website:

- Reduce faucet leaks by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and, if necessary, replace the faucet with a Water Sense labeled model.
- Leaky toilets are most often the result of a worn toilet flapper. Replacing the rubber flapper is a quick fix that could save a home up to 200 gallons of water per day.
- For a leaky garden hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.
- Landscape irrigation systems should be checked each spring before use to make sure they are not damaged by frost or freezing.

Distribute paper and pencils/pens, and clipboards if you have them. Take the group around and outside the building. Inspect all the pipes, faucets and hoses, noting any leaks or drips.

Return to the meeting space. On newsprint or paper, list recommendations to submit to the congregational leadership. Introduce the recommendations with a brief description of the work the group has done in Gather the Spirit to understand stewardship of water and why it is important. Perhaps the group or some representatives can present the recommendations to congregational leadership. The group can advocate for fixing any problems they have found. If the congregation cannot afford to immediately replace leaky faucets or switch to energy efficient toilets, see if the group could work on a fundraiser.

## LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Meet with your co-leaders after the workshop to reflect on it and share your overall responses to your involvement in Gather the Spirit. If the group will continue its stewardship activities in any way, how can you support the group? Be specific (and realistic) about the time and effort you will continue to give. Plan how you will engage your religious educator and other adults in your congregation in any ongoing the Gather the Spirit projects.

Do you have ideas about how you might change Gather the Spirit next time around? Decide who will make appropriate notes, and where they will be shared or stored so they will not be forgotten.

Divide any final clean-up chores.

Celebrate the successful conclusion of Gather the Spirit.

## TAKING IT HOME

(In) the early '60's I realized that the world was being turned into a poisonous garbage dump. By the time the meek inherited it, it might not be worth inheriting. — Pete Seeger, folk singer and activist

You can't expect people to fight for a cleaner river until they learn to love it. — Pete Seeger, folk singer and activist

**IN TODAY'S WORKSHOP...** We talked about Pete Seeger and his friends sailing in the Clearwater to help clean up the Hudson River. We think about how everything in the web of life is connected, so that helping to take care of one part also helps other parts. We also talk about ways we can offer stewardship even after our time together in Gather the Spirit ends.

**EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about...** Do you feel that you and your family are called to help take care of the Earth? Can you describe what that feeling is like? Where do you think it comes from? How is it different than being called on the phone, or called to dinner?

Do you have butterflies around your home? Do there seem to be more than there used to be? Fewer?

What if you live in a city apartment? What special things can you do to help with the Earth's resources?

What does it mean to "think globally and act locally"?

**EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Try...** to learn more about Pete Seeger and the Clearwater. His own book is very good. It's called *Where Have All the Flowers Gone: A Singer's Stories, Songs, Seeds, Robberies*. The Hudson River sloop is still active in environmental causes. [Find out more online](http://www.clearwater.org/) (at [www.clearwater.org/](http://www.clearwater.org/)).

## FAMILY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Meditate together, and think about being called to do something. Be open to the idea that you might have an inner sense of what you need to do. That could be doing something special with your life, or something special to help other people. It might come to you soon, but it might not come to you for a long time. You can't force it. But you can be open to it. This means being ready to think about it when it happens, and maybe to act on it in some way. How you really feel deep inside is important.

## A FAMILY GAME

**Water Scavenger Hunt.** Look for something you cannot see—a sense of satisfaction inside you. Be ready for a feeling that you have done something very good to help protect and share the Earth's water and other resources.

Find new ways your family can help with water resources.

**Play Poohsticks.** If you live near a flowing creek or river with a footbridge, play this game of Winnie the Pooh and his friends. You will need a few sticks. Competitors each choose a stick and show the sticks to one another so you know whose is whose. Stand on the upstream side of the bridge and drop in your sticks at exactly the same time. Cross the bridge quickly, in time to see the sticks emerge on the downstream side. The person whose stick floats out first is the winner. The game is fun, and proves one can enjoy a stream or river without polluting it. It's important to choose a safe bridge (no traffic) and have an adult present.

## FAMILY GARDEN

Plant your own garden. Make it beautiful as well as practical. Avoid dangerous chemicals that can hurt the Earth and contaminate groundwater. A butterfly garden or flowers to attract songbirds or hummingbirds can bring beauty and ecological balance to your immediate environment. Do you live someplace where you cannot plant a garden? See if you can join in a congregational gardening effort or a community garden, where different people use a small parcel of land to grow their own food and flowers. Or, plant seeds indoors, in pots. Enjoy plants and flowers there, or put them outdoors to attract butterflies.

## FAMILY WATERCRAFT BUILDING

**Build a boat.** You can learn to build a canoe, a kayak or a rowboat. Or, build a model to have fun sailing. Whatever you build, choose a boat that's friendly to water—not one that will spill oil or gas into a beautiful, life-giving river or lake.

**Take a boat trip.** Enjoy travel along the Earth's water resources. If you can use a canoe or a sailboat, that's great. If you need to go on a larger boat to go further, see if you can find one that's environmentally friendly. That means it doesn't pollute the water. It also means that people on board are careful what they do with their garbage and trash. They don't just throw it overboard.

## FAMILY RESEARCH

Do Internet research on stewardship. How many different sites talk about stewardship? What kinds of stewardship? How many congregations talk about stewardship? Note: Congregations often use the word "stewardship" to describe their own fundraising activities. If you pledge money to your own congregation in a stewardship campaign, are you being a steward to anything but your own congregation? Maybe you are. Find out how your congregation spends its money.

## FAMILY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

Adopt a body of water or a piece of land to improve. Find a place that's a mess and start cleaning it up. It's as easy as that.

## ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SPIRITUAL CIRCLE — SONG, STORY AND SEED (15 MINUTES)

### Materials for Activity

- A copy of *Singing the Journey*, supplement to the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A recording of "Blue Boat Home"
- Seeds for butterfly gardens

### Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether you will teach, perform or listen to the song, "Blue Boat Home", Hymn 1064 in *Singing the Journey*. The CD [Earth Town Square](http://www.petermayer.net/music/?id=6) (at [www.petermayer.net/music/?id=6](http://www.petermayer.net/music/?id=6)) by Peter Mayer has "Blue Boat Home."
- Consider inviting a guitarist or other musician to join you.
- Obtain seeds for all participants well in advance of this workshop, from a local garden shop or an online vendor; some offer combination seed packets specifically to grow flowers that attract butterflies, or hummingbirds.

### Description of Activity

Consider this activity to conclude the Gather the Spirit program. Participants enjoy and perhaps move to a song, hear a story about planting seeds and receive seeds to continue their stewardship of Earth's resources.

Begin by asking the group to hear or sing the song "Blue Boat Home." Invite those who are willing and able to rise in body or spirit and move with the music in any way they like. The upbeat music suggests easy motion, and the movement may be a welcome break for people who have been sitting quietly.

Segue from the song with thoughts like these:

The song leads us to imagine that we are all boats, sailing around on our blue boat home, the earth. This is a beautiful idea and it certainly makes us want to take good care of the earth, its lands, and its waters. That's a big job, and we can't do it all at once or all by ourselves. But we can do our best and we can do a whole lot of little things to help. Now let's share a story that can help us think about what we can do.

Tell the story of God and the seeds. Here's a version included by Anthony de Mello in the book *Taking Flight*:

*A Book of Story Meditations* (New York: Doubleday, 1990):

A woman dreamed she walked into a brand-new shop in the marketplace and, to her surprise, found God behind the counter.

"What do you sell here?" she asked.

"Everything your heart desires," said God.

Hardly daring to believe what she was hearing, the woman decided to ask for the best things a human being could wish for. "I want peace of mind and love and happiness and wisdom and freedom from fear," she said. Then as an afterthought, she added, "Not just for me. For everyone on Earth."

God smiled, "I think you've got me wrong, my dear," God said. "We don't sell fruits here. Only seeds."

Ask group members what the story means to them. Help them understand ideas like these:

We can't always do everything we want. And we can't always be sure what our actions can accomplish. But we can do our best to take actions that will grow into good results. All our lives we can keep planting seeds to help make the world a better place. And sometime we will see that the results are good.

Ask participants to sit quietly for a minute and think about this. If it seems appropriate, quietly hum a bit more of "Blue Boat Home," and let others join in with you.

Move into the final part of the activity with words like these:

As we have gone through Gather the Spirit together, we have talked a lot about the stewardship of the Earth, about taking care of the Earth and all its resources, and doing what we can to make sure Earth's resources are protected and shared fairly with everyone. And we have talked about different ways that we can help. Today we're going to talk about a new way: planting butterfly gardens. Everyone can take some seeds with them to plant whenever and wherever you can.

Lead a brief discussion about butterfly gardens. Explain that these are gardens with flowers that attract butterflies. "But why do we want to do that? Are butterflies good for the Earth? Why?"

Say that in the web of all existence, anything we do for one part can help other parts as well. Plants help keep the soil from eroding. They provide shade that helps small forms of life to exist. They play a part in the water cycle. Butterflies are important in pollinating plants; when flowers attract butterflies, we will eventually have more flowers.

Give each participant a packet of butterfly plant seeds, and say you hope everybody will plant them, whenever and wherever they can. That can be outdoors when the weather is good. It can be indoors if people have a sunny place where plants can grow.

The seeds you offer should be for plants that will attract butterflies and that can be easily and successfully grown in your area. Some possibilities are aster, black-eyed Susans, daylilies, marigolds, and phlox. Googling "butterfly gardens" will lead to websites that can help you identify good plants for your own geographic area. See Resources for one good Internet possibility. The staff of any good, local garden store should also be able and willing to offer information.

### **Including All Participants**

If any participants have limitations which could prevent their planting seeds and raising flowers, create partnerships of people who can assist each other with the project.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: ROUND-ROBIN WATER STORY (10 MINUTES)**

### **Description of Activity**

In a round-robin story, one person begins a story by speaking one sentence aloud. The next person adds a sentence, and so it goes around and around the circle until time runs out or the story reaches a logical end.

Invite the group to sit in a circle. Say you will take turns adding to a story that starts with a pledge to save water. Encourage the group to be very imaginative about the wonderful results that could eventually come from making this pledge. Will your group wind up saving the whole universe?

Offer an opening sentence to start the story. Here is a possibility: "I went to my congregation for Gather the Spirit and I learned that as a Unitarian Universalist, I have to do my part in saving water."

Allow participants to pass if they wish, but consider having an adult assist a child who seems to be having trouble getting ideas.

## **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: MORE SEEGER MUSIC (10 MINUTES)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Pete Seeger songs, and music player
- Newsprint, markers and tape

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Select a medley of Pete Seeger songs about stewardship of the Earth and its resources. The CD Pete (Earth Music Productions, 1996) has several songs with water images: "The Water Is Wide," "Safely Down My Golden River," "Of Time and Rivers Flowing" and "River of My People." Also meaningful in the context of Gather the Spirit is "Well May the World Go."
- Set up a music player.
- Post blank newsprint and set markers nearby.

### **Description of Activity**

Gather participants to sit comfortably and listen to the music together. Engage the group to listen for phrases related to the fact that all life needs and must share Earth's waters. Or, ask the group to listen for phrases about stewardship. Invite participants to go to the newsprint and write any phrases that strike them, as they listen, and then return quietly to their seat.

### **Variation**

Once you have listened to a few songs, or the newsprint has a good list of phrases, challenge the group to compose a new poem or song using the phrases they have listed.

## STORY: THE CLEARWATER

By Janeen K. Grohsmeyer.

In the month of July in 1969, a gigantic rocket was launched into space. It sailed through the darkness away from the Earth, and it carried three people to the moon, a quarter of a million miles away. Two people got out of the spaceship and walked on the moon.

It was amazing. Through the ages, people have looked up at the moon and wondered what it would be like to go there. And finally, we had. People had walked on the moon. It wasn't easy. We had to come up with new ideas, figure out new ways of doing, invent new techniques and build new machines. Thousands of people had to work together to make the trip to the moon happen. And we did. We made it happen.

There was another group of people working together to build a ship, and that was another amazing thing that happened in the month of July in 1969. It wasn't as famous, so perhaps you haven't heard of it.

After all, this ship wasn't a space ship, full of new inventions. It was a sailing ship, built like the sailing ships of old, the kind called a sloop. It had wooden beams, strong ropes, and a towering mast more than 100 feet high.

It didn't go to the moon, a quarter of a million miles away. It sailed the Hudson River, 142 miles from the state capital at Albany down to the great port of New York City, and then back again.

It didn't have thundering rockets or powerful thrusters; it had great white sails—like the wings of gull—that caught the breeze and carried it forward on a whisper of the wind.

The name of this ship was the Clearwater, and she still sails the Hudson River today.

Thousands of people worked together to help build the Clearwater, but she started from the idea of just one man. His name was Pete, and he and his family had lived next to the Hudson River for years and years. When they first moved there, after World War II, trees grew all along the banks. Otters slid down the muddy slopes into the water. Fish swam in the river. Birds nested in those trees. The Hudson was a living river.

But as the years went by, people cut down some of the trees and put up oil tanks. They dumped old cars and made a junk heap right across the river from Pete's house. People built factories up and down the river and dumped chemicals into it. People built homes near the river and dumped their dirty water and their garbage in it. Every year, people kept cutting down more trees and dumping in more filth.

After a while, the water got so dirty that the fish couldn't live there anymore. With the fish gone, the otters didn't have anything to eat. With the trees gone, the birds didn't have anyplace to nest. The Hudson River wasn't a living place anymore. It was barely even alive.

Pete knew this was wrong. He knew the fish and the otters and the birds needed a place to live. He knew the trees shouldn't all be cut down. He knew the river should live. He knew the water should run clear again.

So, he decided to make that happen. He decided to build a ship, like the great sailing ships that had traveled the river 100 years ago, back when it was clean and clear. The ship would show people what had been, and what could be again.

That ship would be the Clearwater.

Pete knew he couldn't build a ship all by himself. It takes a lot of work to build a ship, and it takes more than a dozen people just to sail it. He would need help.

He knew he couldn't clean up the river all by himself, either. The Hudson is a long river; a lot of people live near it. All of them would have to help.

So, Pete went to get help. He asked people. He wrote letters to people. He talked to people. But mostly what Pete did was sing to people.

You see, his full name was Pete Seeger, and he'd been a singer and a songwriter all his life. He sang at concerts, at campouts, at meetings, and at temples and chapels and churches—including at least one Unitarian Universalist one. His mother had been a Unitarian, and Pete joined a Unitarian Universalist congregation in New York City and sang there.

He sang in many places, and his songs were for everyone. Maybe you know some of them?

He wrote: If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning...

And he wrote: Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing...

And a lot more. Maybe you've even sung a few of his songs.

Pete knew that music could bring people together. He knew that the words in the songs could help people see a better world. So Pete wrote songs about the river, about the water and the trees, and about what we would have to do to make the water clear again. He traveled all over, singing these songs.

People came from all over to hear him sing, and in his music, they saw a better world. So they gave money to help build the ship Clearwater; \$60,000 was collected

from those concerts. Plus, thousands of people sent in membership money for the Hudson River Sloop Restoration group. In July of 1969 (four years after Pete got the idea, and the same month that people walked on the moon), the ship Clearwater was launched into the Hudson River. She slipped into the water, and her sails caught the breeze, flying like a gull on a whisper of wind.

Less than a year later, in April of 1970, the Clearwater sailed down the Hudson River and out into the Atlantic Ocean, down past New Jersey and Delaware and Virginia, and into the Chesapeake Bay and up the Potomac River, right to the capital of the United States: Washington, DC. Clearwater went to Washington for the very first Earth Day, 40 years ago, to help teach people about how to help keep our land clean and our water clear.

Because Clearwater is more than a special ship. She's a special school. More than 10,000 people go on board every year—all kinds of people—old people, young people, big kids, little kids—and they learn about fish and crabs and water and bubbles and grass and all the things a living river needs. Some of the teenagers get to help sail the Clearwater to different places. They hoist the sails and tie the ropes and scrub the decks, just like real sailors do. They even spend the night on the ship.

And they often sing songs, just like sailors do, just like Pete Seeger. People are still singing his songs, and the Clearwater is still sailing, up and down the Hudson River, 142 miles from the state capital at Albany down to the great port of New York City, and then back again.

She's done a good job. People have done a good job. The Hudson River's cleaner now than it was, all those years ago when Pete first got the idea to build Clearwater. The sky is cleaner, and the land is cleaner, too. Other rivers are cleaner too. But they're not as clean as they used to be, hundreds of years ago. They're not as clean as they could be. They're not as clean as they ought to be.

That's our job—to make that happen—to make the land clean and the air fresh and the water clear. It may not be easy. We'll have to come up with new ideas, figure out new ways of doing things, invent new techniques, and build new machines. And we'll probably write some new songs. Millions of people will have to work together to make it happen.

And we can do it. After all, we've worked together before to make things happen. We went to the moon! And that was an amazing thing, no doubt about it.

But you know... no one stayed on the moon. They all came home. No one lives on the moon. It has only dry dust and dead rocks. The moon has no air. The moon has no water. The moon has no earth.

We need Earth.

We need Earth to be a living place—our living place—with clean land and fresh air and clear water. Because fish and otters and birds aren't the only ones who live here. We do, too.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

### **The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater**

Keep track of river activism and its impact, see video of Pete Seeger in concert, and find out about Clearwater children's camps and programs on the [Hudson River Sloop Clearwater](http://www.clearwater.org/) (at [www.clearwater.org/](http://www.clearwater.org/)) website.

### **Butterfly Gardens**

Learn about how butterfly gardens promote ecological balance and find out all about them on [The Butterfly Site](http://www.thebutterflysite.com/gardening.shtml) (at [www.thebutterflysite.com/gardening.shtml](http://www.thebutterflysite.com/gardening.shtml)).