

Adult Faith Development and Programming Renaissance Module

HANDOUTS

By Gail Forsyth-Vail



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Handout 1: Schedule of Sessions and Topics

Session 1 (2 1/2 hours)

Activity	Time
Opening Worship and Introductions	30
Agenda Review and Logistics	10
Pressing Questions	5
Creating a Covenant	15
All Adults Are Learners	10
Perspectives on Adult Programming and Faith Development	35
Adult Spiritual Growth	45

Session 2 (2 1/2 hours)

Activity	Time
Stories and the Human Brain	40
Transformative Learning	50
Space Between the Logs	20
Stories in Adult Faith Development Programs	40

Session 3 (2 1/2 hours)

Activity	Time
Practicing Beloved Community	50
Who Are the Adults in Our Congregations?	10
Mixing and Huddling	25
Journaling and Sharing	10
Generations Theory and Its Implications for Programming	30
Program Mission	25

Session 4 (2 1/2 hours)

Activity	Time
Cultural Context	40
Church of the Larger Fellowship Worship Service	30
Electronic Media in Adult Faith Formation	20
Needs, Capacity, and Responsibility	20
Next Steps for Your Congregation's Program	40

Session 5 (2 1/2 hours)

Activity	Time
Introduction to Tapestry of Faith	45
Volunteer Facilitator Recruitment, Training, and Support	75
Putting It Together to Take Home, Part 1	30

Session 6 (2 1/2 hours)

Activity	Time
Putting It Together to Take Home, Part 2	50
Presentations and Feedback	60
Parking Lot	20
Closing Worship	20

Handout 2: Introduction to Renaissance and RE Credentialing Programs

The Renaissance Program has a distinguished history of providing standardized training in a specific topic useful to religious educators (as well as parish ministers, seminarians and lay leaders). The Renaissance program is a major component of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Religious Education (RE) Credentialing program. Most of the modules are designed as “face to face” gatherings of 15 hours and may be used in any order:

- Administration as Leadership
- Adult Faith Development and Programming
- Curriculum Planning
- Ministry with Youth
- Multicultural Religious Education
- Philosophy of Religious Education
- Teacher Development
- Unitarian Universalist Identity
- Worship for All Ages

Other modules are designed as distance learning modules of 30-35 hours:

- Unitarian Universalist History
- Unitarian Universalist Theology

For more information, visit the [Renaissance program page](#) on the UUA website.

The Religious Education Credentialing Program is a three-level program for religious education professionals intended to nurture the call to religious education as a profession, to provide a comprehensive path for professional development, and to articulate and uphold professional standards and guidelines in religious education leadership. For more information, visit the [RE Credentialing page](#) of the UUA website.

Handout 3: Preparation for Module Evaluation

Locate the [Renaissance Program Participant Online Evaluation Form.](#)

Please complete and submit it within one week of completion of this Module. The official Renaissance Certificate will be sent to you within ten days of receipt of evaluation. All feedback is confidential and is seen only by Renaissance staff; feedback to leaders is shared only in the aggregate. Your candid comments are very helpful in developing strong leaders and a strong Renaissance program.

There are three areas on which you will be asked to provide feedback:

I. Module Leadership – consider each leader separately

- Group Facilitation Skills
- Knowledge of Content Area
- Sensitivity to Different Learning Styles
- Teamwork with other Leader
- Organization/Communication
- Other Comments or Suggestions for Leaders

II. The Learning Experience

- What was most valuable for you?
- Please share at least five significant learnings from the module:
- What expectations did you bring to the module? Did the module meet your expectations? Please explain.
- In what ways will you use the learnings from this module?
- How will you share your learnings in the congregation or with peers?
- Other comments or suggestions about the learning experience

III. The Reader

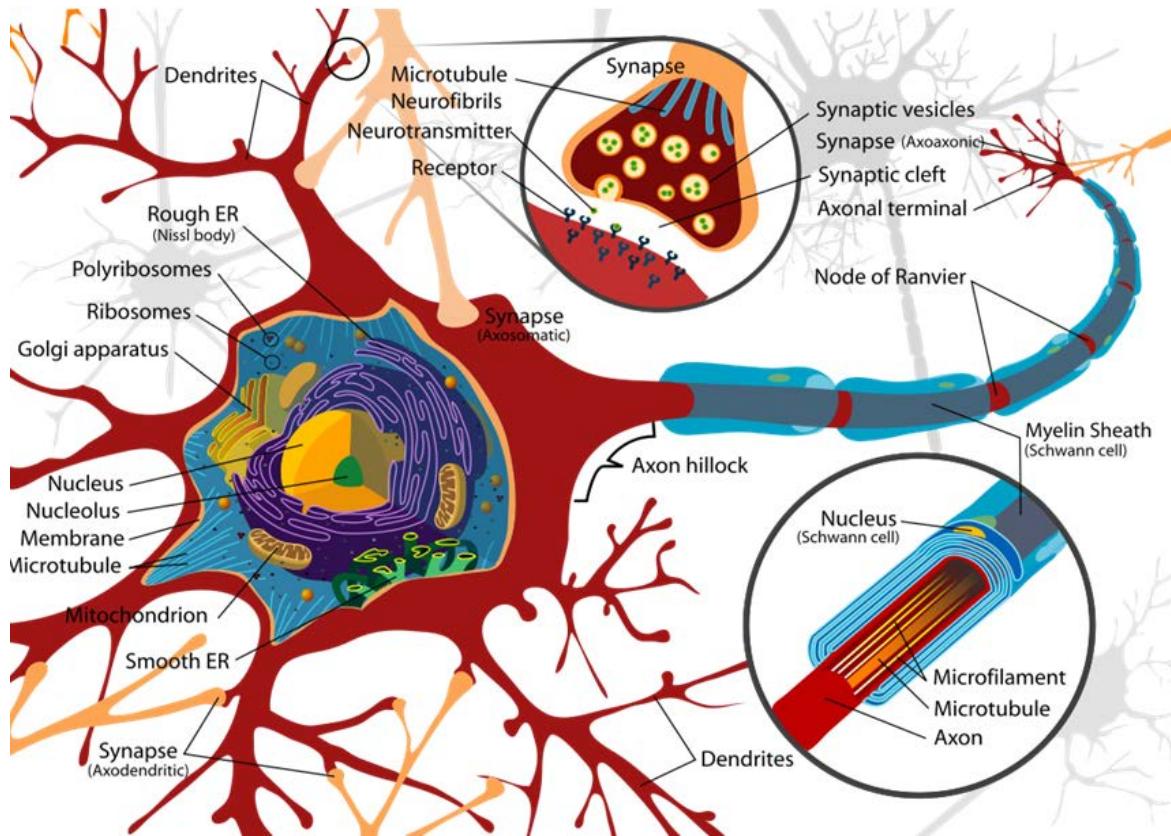
- I read: all/most/some/none of the reader
- I found the reader: very useful/somewhat useful/not useful
- Comments on the reader

Handout 4: Stories and the Human Brain

Human beings are story tellers. Our evolutionary heritage has left us with brains which are “wired” to make sense of what happens to us and what we encounter and learn by arranging information in narratives. **Our brains establish connections that make pieces of what we experience fit together in a coherent narrative.**

But how does this work on a biological and biochemical level?

Kendall Haven writes:



The typical brain contains 100 billion brain cells (100,000,000,000)- about the same number as the number of stars in the Milky Way...Each cell is linked by synapses to as many as 100,000 others. That means your brain has created over 500 trillion (500,000,000,000,000) wiggling string-like fibers called axons and dendrites that connect with other neurons at junctures called synapses. These synapses are awash with neurotransmitters and hormones that modulate the transmission of electrochemical signals. Synapses constantly form and dissolve, weakening and strengthening in response to new experiences...

A typical brain neuron receives input from thousands of other cells, some of which inhibit rather than encourage the neuron’s firing. The neuron may, in turn, encourage or discourage firing by some of those same cells in complex positive

and negative feedback loops. Somehow, through this freeway maze of links, loops, and electric traffic jams, we each manage to think, perceive, consider, imagine, remember, react, and respond...

Haven cites research that shows that humans are not only hardwired for stories due to our evolutionary heritage. We also learn to learn through stories because we are fed a steady diet of stories in childhood, when our brains are far more plastic than those of adults. In other words, we arrive genetically predisposed to learning through stories, and **stories told in childhood determine the ways in which our brain synapses develop.** This is why dominant cultural narratives, family narratives, and political, ideological, or religious narratives so powerfully shape the ways in which we understand new information. These narratives are wired in to our brains due to the synapses that are created as we organize our experiences. Literally, “cells that fire together, wire together.” (Carla Shatz, Stanford University).

That does not mean that our brains do not alter our story maps to accommodate new information. Quite the opposite. Once those story maps are established in our brains, we use them to help us make sense of new information. **Our brains work hard to fit that information into stories that we already hold, while, at the same time, those narratives are modified and adapted to accommodate the new information.**

Our identity is shaped by the narrative that we hold about our own unfolding life stories. Writing about a narrative approach to adult development, M. Carolyn Clark and Marsha Rossiter state, “...construction of an acceptable life narrative is the central process of adult development. The life narrative is repeatedly revised and enlarged throughout one’s life to accommodate new insights, events, and perspectives. Developmental change is experienced and assessed through the process of storytelling and restorying one’s life.”

REFERENCES

Haven, Kendall, *Story Proof: the Science Behind the Startling Power of Story* (Westport, CT, Libraries Unlimited, 2007)

“Narrative Learning in Adulthood,” by Carolyn Clark and Marsha Rossiter, published in *Third Update on Adult Learning Theory*, Sharan B. Merriam, editor, San Francisco, Wiley Periodicals, 2008

“[Neuron cell diagram](#)” image is in the public domain.

Handout 5: Meditation on Leftovers, from Spirit of Life, Workshop 7

By the Rev. Gordon McKeeman, reprinted from *Out of the Ordinary* with permission of the author. Copyright (C) 2000 by Gordon B. McKeeman. Published by Skinner House Books, an imprint of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Sometimes I enjoy cooking. I've discovered that one of the greatest of culinary skills is making new creations out of leftovers. It takes imagination. It takes a little skill with spices, herbs, and sauces. The achievement of a satisfying and palatable meal from leftovers can be a model of how one might conduct one's own life in a creative way.

The first thing you need to do is open the refrigerator door. You'll see an assortment of things: containers, jars, bags, boxes, and things wrapped in foil, waxed paper, or plastic. Now I invite you to open a different door, the door of your past. What you find there will be leftovers, too. You will probably find your [family's] voices, their admonitions, perhaps their praise, maybe their blame, their warnings, some expressions of their love, their anxiety. You may find traces of their uncertainties, problems, and hopes.

You will rediscover some decisions you have made without thorough understanding of the consequences: about leaving home or not leaving; about when you decided to be married or not to be, or both, and to whom. You will probably remember some of the jobs you took, some of the jobs you wanted but didn't get, and some of the ones you thought about and turned down. You will also find some circumstances, accidents, diseases, and the times you were born into and lived through. You will find your family and some of its ways, its heritage, its customs, the habits that were funny or odd and are somehow deeply ingrained and make other ways seem even odder than your own. You will find people who touched your life in a thousand unaccounted and unexpected ways, who were there at special moments and changed you or made you a gift: the gift of a smooth stone, a happy day, or an unforgettable experience. And there will be all the ruins, sorrows, guilts, regrets, along with the fears and the hopes, dreams and doubts, forgivings and forbiddings. Don't we have crowded refrigerators! Every one of us, such a collection of leftovers...

Welcome to the world where we all cook using leftovers—some of us with imagination, some with creativity, some merely resenting the task, some thinking that there is no possibility in it. Add the secret ingredient. Something will come of it that will be at least edible, probably even palatable.

Questions for reflection and sharing

- What leftovers do you find when you open the door to your past?
- How do you cook with these leftovers?
- What secret ingredient might you add to make something edible?

Handout 6: Under Our Charge –The Utes and the Unitarians, from Faith Like a River, Workshop 15

Note: This story is told from the point of view of the Unitarians, and not the Utes.

By Ted Fetter

Although the relationship between the Ute tribe and the American Unitarian Association, a principal forerunner to the UUA, is not well known, the two share a significant story together. The Unitarians became, in effect, agents of the United States Government in its policy toward Native Americans.

In the 1870s, President Ulysses S. Grant set out a new policy toward Native Americans. Dubbed the "peace policy," it involved religious organizations in the operation of the 69 Indian agencies that were located throughout the country on reservations. There were at least three reasons for involving religious professionals: there would be less corruption, a greater chance for resources from the denominations, and increased likelihood of converting the Indians to Christianity, a major step toward assimilation.

As part of that program, the American Unitarian Association (AUA) accepted responsibility for two Ute agencies in Colorado. Between 1871 and 1878, the Unitarians nominated five different men, including four ministers, to serve as Indian agents for the two agencies. The responsibilities of Indian agents were to carry out government policy, distribute the supplies as guaranteed by treaty (but seldom delivered in full or on time), hear Indian grievances against whites (but without any power over white settlers), and investigate and deal with white complaints against the Indians. Indian agents were also to insist that the Natives learn English and learn how to farm.

The Utes were a proud people. They lived in what they called the "Shining Mountains," most of what is now Colorado. They prospered as hunter-gatherers, using summer and winter camps to follow buffalo and other game. Houses that could not be moved seemed impractical, and there was no need or desire to cultivate crops. In Robert Emmitt's book *The Last War Trail: The Utes and the Settlement of Colorado*, Saponise Cuch is quoted: "It was a life with little hunger and want, where play and humor were taught to smother pain, sickness and death; a life where the good play of the hunt brought food, and the pleasure of the dance brought a man a wife, a woman a husband; a life where a man owned little and belonged to everything."

When whites came to Colorado, the Utes emphasized diplomacy to avoid war. They agreed to limit their lands in the Treaty of 1868. When gold discoveries fed settlers'

appetite for Ute territory, they were forced to give up more land. Nevertheless, the Utes sought to live on the land they still had and in accord with the dictates of the treaties.

The Unitarians who came as Indian agents were hardworking, honest, and dedicated. They saw the needs of the Utes and tried their best to assist them. For example, when the supplies guaranteed by the treaties were not provided as promised the agents entreated Washington to meet its obligations. When white settlers came onto the reservation in violation of the treaties, they objected to this encroachment, but were unable to force the whites to leave or to get local law enforcement to remove them. When the government insisted that the Utes farm their lands, the agents pointed out that much of the reservation was arid, experienced frost twelve months a year, and was infested with grasshoppers.

Rev. Edward H. Danforth, Indian Agent at White River, Colorado, wrote this in his annual report dated August 31, 1877: "Fourteen different families have commenced in a small way at farming. Unfortunately for them and the esteem in which the work will be held in future the grasshoppers, the extraordinary drought, and July frost have cut their crops off entirely. About twelve acres were prepared and planted by Indians—potatoes, corn, garden vegetables, and oats were planted and sown, but they will get nothing for their labor."

While well-intentioned, the Unitarian Indian agents were not very effective. Though they tried to be helpful, they were politically naive in their relations with the Indian Affairs Office in the Department of the Interior and with local political leaders. They were not able to secure added funding from the AUA for schools; generally the agents' wives were the teachers for Ute children. And they were not good managers of the resources and staff the government supplied.

In addition, some of the Unitarian agents had personalities that stood out as odd on the Colorado frontier. The best example is Rev. J. Nelson Trask. Trask arrived at the Los Pinos Agency in 1871, and from the start he seemed strange. One historian writes: "Trask walked about the agency in a dark blue swallow-tail coat, skin-tight trousers, and, to protect himself from the sun, an old-fashioned floppy beaver hat with a broad brim, and a set of green eye goggles." Trask was one of several agents who had a strong moral sense that the Indians were not being treated fairly but who could not establish a satisfactory relationship with the Utes, to say nothing of a working relationship with local officials in Colorado.

Most importantly, the Unitarian Indian agents were part of the United States government policy towards Native Americans, a program that forced the Indians to choose between

annihilation and assimilation. These agents implicitly adopted a stance that supported assimilation of the Utes into the dominant culture, trying hard to teach English, encouraging adoption of settled agriculture in an unforgiving climate, and succumbing to white intrusion on Ute land. While sympathetic to the Utes, they could see no alternative.

The interaction between the Utes and the Unitarians ended in 1878 and 1879. Rev. Danforth had wanted to end his service at White River. In 1878, without consulting the AUA, the United States government appointed Nathan C. Meeker as its Indian agent. Although Meeker was not a Unitarian, he continued to correspond with the AUA and to seek its guidance and assistance. Meeker was much stronger than his predecessors in his insistence on agriculture and his forcefulness in dealing with Ute leaders. His intransigence led to conflict and strife with many Utes. The difficulties climaxed with his murder. "The Utes killed Meeker for his inability to understand the Indian people he was supposed to represent. They drove a barrel stave through his throat so in the afterlife he could not tell lies." As a result of the so-called Meeker Massacre, the Utes were forcibly removed from their precious Colorado homeland in 1880 and relocated to parched, dry land in eastern Utah. The program in which the Unitarians played a part had reached its conclusion: the Utes lost their Shining Mountains forever.

Questions for reflection and sharing

- Alice Blair Wesley said, "It is terribly arrogant to suppose that because we can see, with hindsight, mistakes of the generations before us, it's okay to demonize them. Without demonizing them, we need to be as clear as we can be about their gifts to us and their mistakes, because the consequences of both still shape us." What do you see as the gifts in this story? The mistakes?
- What is the enduring legacy of this story for Unitarian Universalists? What do we take away from this story, and what can we do with it, both personally and as faith communities?

Handout 7: The Cost, from Resistance and Transformation, Workshop 11

From the minutes of an annual meeting of The First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans, date unknown (sometime after 1966).

Note: First Parish of New Orleans was active in the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s.

This financial information was provided to the congregation at an annual meeting, in order to explain the need to refinance the mortgage on the building. It describes the financial costs incurred by the congregation as a result of its social justice activities. Lines in italics are clarifications not found in the original document.

13.60 dollars per week for 7 years to finance a radio program, starting in 1950.

25,000 dollars Freedom Fund [*This money was raised from outside sources, primarily from Unitarians across the country who donated to the cause.*]

- paid for the groceries, etc. of white families (*who lost their jobs*) after keeping their kids in integrated schools
- paid for legal defense of church members arrested for sit-in
- grant given to William Higgs (*the only white attorney in Mississippi who would take civil rights cases and a member of the Jackson congregation until he was forced to leave the state*)
- financed the work of the Freedom Riders
- provided bail money for a student protestor
- paid for radio spots urging families to return their children to school
- paid for an armed guard for a full month outside the parsonage after the building had been bombed by the KKK
- paid for the expenses of many civil rights cases

50,000 dollars from Arthur Miller and others to pay for civil rights cases (*Ben Smith, a New Orleans lawyer and member of the congregation, was one of the only attorneys in the city who would take up civil rights cases. The congregation took an active role in legal action surrounding desegregation.*)

100,000 dollars for a "Black Cultural Organization" (acted as a fiscal sponsor) (*Because the church was one of the few places where blacks and whites could meet and share a meal together, the church building became a home to any number of organizations that could not find meeting spaces anywhere else.*)

By 1965 Freedom Fund was exhausted.

Other considerations:

- Sold the Parsonage for 19,000 dollars to pay for debts resulting from activities
- Took on a mortgage of 70,000 dollars to pay for a new building (*Their old one was condemned during their civil rights activities.*)
- Some members reduced pledges to 2 dollars per year
- Loss of membership (*The congregation lost at least 40 members when it split in 1958.*)
- Insurance doubled to 2,000 dollars a year (1965) (*after the bombing*)

Summary: In 1967, the congregation had only 17,000 dollars in savings and owed 56,000 dollars.

Questions for reflection and sharing

- How does a congregation balance fiscal responsibility and long-term stewardship with a moral imperative to work for justice?
- Are some justice issues so important they are worth risking the long-term survival of a congregation? What issues are worth risking everything for?
- Does social justice work offer Unitarian Universalists in congregations a chance to grow? For example, in integrity? In understanding our faith? In visibility in the larger community? How do we weigh the potential for growth against immediate fiscal issues?
- How have tensions between fiscal responsibility and social justice affected your congregation? Do you think the congregation strikes a good balance between these needs?

Handout 8: A New Small Group, from The New UU, Workshop

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Note: This story is a fictional account, drawing on the stories heard by one minister from various people in different congregations about what their congregations mean to them.

A New Small Group

It was the first gathering of a newly formed small group. The eight people who gathered in Ann's living room recognized one another, but had no real connection, except for the two married couples who were there. Ann, one of the two leaders of the group introduced herself, offered opening words from a hymnbook, and then invited a moment of silence. In the silence, a slow gentle relaxation came. A man who had come directly from work loosened the grip of his tie. A young woman's shoulders dropped visibly. Another woman leaned back in her chair, closed her eyes, and focused on her breath for the first time in days.

Ann broke the silence. "As Bill and I talked about this group, we thought it might be odd to begin with a regular check-in since we don't know one another well. We decided it might be helpful to begin with a question about the way in which we're all connected: our membership in the church. So, here's the question we came up with: How is our congregation important to you?"

Feet shuffled a bit, and a tinge of anxiety entered the room. A young woman interrupted the silence. "I'm Dylan. I've only been a member of the church for a few months. I never thought I'd be a church person—I mean, my grandparents are not church people. My parents don't go to church. But the music transports me, and the minister speaks directly to my life. I have found one friend who takes classes at the same college I do, which is nice—it makes me feel like I have a connection to someone. There's a professor from my school who comes, too, but I'm kinda shy about that. I don't know whether to say something to him or not, but it's sorta comforting to see a familiar face. Running into him at school reminds me of my connection to the church, and running into him at church helps me feel connected, even if I don't know him, really, at all." She paused a moment and gathered her thought, "I've been looking for some way to search out answers for the big questions I have about where I'm going and what matters in life. Who would've thought I'd find it in a church? But here I am."

Dylan's words were greeted by smiles and nods.

Two of the men looked shyly at one another and one began. "I'm Arturo, and this is my husband Alan." Alan, the man who had loosened his tie earlier, nodded. "We found the church when we were looking to get married. The openness and acceptance impressed us."

Alan picked up the story. "You'd think the hard part would have been our sexuality. What was funny—not funny funny, but odd—was I learned things about my family I hadn't expected. They were OK with me being gay, but seemed uncomfortable with Arturo's heritage."

"I'm Cuban," Arturo interjected. "And, I'm not sure they were OK with your being gay."

Alan laughed. "Anyway, Rev. Chris was great with talking us through everything—not only the ceremony, but the family dynamics. Even the cultural issues."

"Yeah, we did our vows in both Spanish and English. My grandmother really appreciated that," Arturo beamed.

Alan went on. "We decided to explore making the church our home. And it was the perfect place to bring Diego, who we adopted from Columbia. It matters that he's around other families who completely accept us as a family."

Another woman went next. "I'm Leslie. When I moved across the country to here, I had no idea how to make friends or where to start. I had been active in a Unitarian Universalist congregation back in North Carolina, but it took me several months before I was ready to jump in. Once I did, I could remember what I loved about my former congregation. They're different, sure. There are ways I'd pick my old congregation. But, there are ways I'd pick this one. I've made friends. I've learned the routines. I'm glad to be here."

Bill, the second leader of the group, spoke next, beginning with a deep sigh. "Some of you know my story. This church saved my life." He paused a moment, biting his lip and composing himself. "Our son Matt was fifteen when he took his life. I don't know how I would have survived without this church community. People came immediately, bringing food, giving hugs, and taking the younger children so Patty and I could be alone together and try to make sense of it all. The service was amazing. Andy and Nick, Matt's best friends from the youth group, spoke a marvelous tribute at the service." Bill stopped to wipe his eyes. "Since then, I've learned a lot about youth and suicide. I've gone into the schools and talked about the realities and the resources. The people of this congregation have supported me through it all. I've grown into a more out-going and self-confident person. Of course, I'd trade it all to have Matt back. But I don't think I would have survived, much less grown, if it hadn't been for this congregation."

Silence enveloped the group for a moment.

"It's hard to have anything to say after that," said Ann. She smiled shyly. "My name's Ann, but I already said that. I don't have a story anywhere near as dramatic as Bill's, but my connection runs deep, too. I came to the church just after my divorce. My children were grown and gone, and I was lonely. There was a lot I didn't know about myself, though. I started going to the women's group. Listening to their stories, I realized I wasn't alone with my issues. And whenever I needed to talk, they listened to me, too. Since then, I've branched out. I even started singing in the choir." She laughed. "I hadn't

sung since I was in high school, and it was great! I agreed to co-lead this group because it's time to take a risk and try leadership. I hope I'll do OK for you."

The next woman picked it up. "I'm Donna. I first came to this church when I was ten years old. My mother was a charter member. Most of my adult life I lived away, but when Mother got sick ten years ago, I came back here to take care of her. First, I came on my own; for a year, I commuted back and forth before I persuaded my family to move here." She smiled at the man next to her and took his hand. "Mom had drifted away from the church, but I brought her back, because I needed the support, whether she did or not. Her old friends took her in right away, but it took awhile for me to find my place, especially to find a place separate from my mother, but still somehow connected. I found it in the Green Sanctuary group. I was a biologist before I moved back here, and I get really excited about being an environmental evangelist." She looked to her husband.

He spoke up. "I'm Ted. Donna brought me along. Me and our two teenagers. I had never been part of a church, so it was an adjustment. What really helped me, though, was knowing that my kids' questions were being heard in an atmosphere that I could trust. I've worked in the religious education program with the middle school youth. Middle school's such a great age—they've begun thinking for themselves, understanding abstract concepts, and they have such incredible energy." Ted's eyes twinkled. "I've loved it."

Ann summed up. "There are a lot of fabulous stories in this group. I'm glad we're together, and I look forward to where we're going to be able to go as a group."

Questions for reflection and sharing

- Which of the group members do you identify with the most? Why?
- How would you imagine yourself fitting into a group like this?
- What are you seeking from the congregation? Is there a particular aspect of your life that is bringing you here?

Handout 9: Opening Scenario, from What We Choose, Workshop 8

Note: This is the opening activity for a workshop.

Activity 1: Opening Scenario

Preparation for Activity

Read the scenario and facilitator notes in the Description of Activity. Prepare to present the scenario and facilitate the conversation that follows in such a way as to ensure the emotional and spiritual safety of people of color and/or working-class people who may be part of your group.

Description of Activity

Share this scenario and lead a discussion using the questions that follow:

Your congregation decides to help the children who attend a day care center in an economically depressed area of a neighboring city. You collect very nice costumes that children of your congregation have used for recitals, plays, and other events in order to give them to the children of the day care center so that the children of that neighborhood will have something to wear for Halloween.

When you call the day care center to tell them about the wonderful costumes you have collected, the center director refuses to accept the costumes, effectively saying, "Our parents are perfectly capable of dressing their kids up for Halloween. If you want to do something, bring your kids over here and get to know us."

Ask:

- What are the underlying moral issues?
- How would you react under these circumstances if you were the day care center director receiving the offer of the costumes? If you were a congregational volunteer making the offer? If you were a member of the congregation who also used the day care center (or whose sibling/cousin/friend used the center)?
- What unstated stories and histories might be at play?

Note to facilitators: This conversation has the potential for being painful for people of color, lower-income people, working-class people, and/or parents who struggle with finances. Be alert for "they" and "them," "we" and "us" language that makes the day care center staff or clientele a group whose concerns and circumstances are outside the experience of the members of the group. Examples:

- "I don't know why they turned down the offer. Those kids have so little. You would think they would be grateful."
- "We try so hard to do the right thing; why don't they understand that we meant well?"

- "It's too bad they were so stubborn about this; they don't know what they are missing"
- "Don't they understand how busy our kids are/we are? It would be so hard to arrange for our kids to meet theirs. What do they expect us to do?"

When you encounter we/they, us/them language, gently remind participants that such language assumes the day care center staff/clientele are people whose concerns and circumstances are outside the experience of the everyone in the workshop group. Invite participants to open their hearts to broader perspective and understanding.

Handout 10: Key Insights from *The Power of Stories* by Jacqueline J. Lewis

In her book about leading multiracial, multicultural congregations, Jacqui Lewis writes about using the power of story to support, guide, and lead a congregation through the transformative change necessary to create multicultural and multiracial community, where many voices and perspectives are heard (she uses the term ‘multivocal’). Here are some insights that can be applied to adult faith development in our congregations:

- People and congregations are formed by stories. Leaders need to “story” a compelling vision in which cultural diversity is an ethical and moral imperative in the present, not a hope for the future. Congregational leaders help form and reform religious identity with stories they choose as texts. We need to choose stories that are counter-stories to the dominant cultural narratives about race and ethnicity, and lift up stories from people whose experiences are on the margins of the dominant culture.
- We need to create “border” experiences in our congregations, where people encounter the stories and perspectives of people different from themselves. Border experiences challenge our own culture-bound narratives and help us to expand our perspective. When we engage in border experiences, we are practicing being part of multicultural, multiracial, multivocal beloved community. To allow people to practice being part of beloved community, a congregation and its leaders must
 - Help people tell their stories
 - Help people listen to the stories of others
 - Weave those stories together
- Multiracial, multiethnic environments where border experiences with those of different perspectives and experiences abound are also environments that have ambiguity, complexity, vulnerability, and risk. We must create in our congregations holding environments, transitional spaces in which people can develop and practice new ways of being. Three keys to creating a holding environments are:
 - Create space for worship, play and imagination
 - Offer both identifiable, familiar grounding and new, fresh, and surprising ways to image the story of your faith community. As you narrate the new story, connecting it to the old is part of what makes it compelling; it is part of what authorizes the new story. Lewis quotes her predecessor at Middle Collegiate Church, Gordon Dragt: “I always keep one foot firmly planted in the center, but the other is dangling over the edge.”
 - Help people have important experiences together. Learn to appreciate what each brings to the community. Be multivocal, inviting each person to hear the emerging story in their own (cultural) language.

Handout 11: Special Edition of *Catalyst*

CATALYST SPECIAL ISSUE

MOSAIC MAKERS: LEADING VITAL MULTICULTURAL CONGREGATIONS CONFERENCE



Welcome to our special issue of *Catalyst*! Our time at the Mosaic Makers: Leading Vital Multicultural Congregations conference (February 17-19, 2012) was exhilarating, energizing, meaningful, and deeply informative. The event grew out of the Multicultural Growth Consultation (March 2011) and was a by-invitation gathering for congregations that are deeply engaged in the work of building intentional multicultural community.

Over 100 leaders from the following congregations and districts were represented:

All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, D.C.

All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, OK

First Parish in Cambridge, MA

First Unitarian Church of Oakland, CA

First Unitarian Church of San José, CA

First UU Church of Richmond, VA

First UU Church of San Diego, CA

Mount Diablo UU Church in Walnut Creek, CA

Unitarian Society of Germantown, PA

Mosaic Makers was a partnership between the Multicultural Growth team of the Unitarian Universalist Association and All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, D.C.



UU Church of Annapolis, MD

UU Church of Silver Spring, MD

UU Congregation of Miami, FL

Metro NY District

Joseph Priestley District



Cover page photos by Teresa Cooley

We spent two-and-a-half days learning together, building intentional multicultural community, and generating new energies around doing this vitally important work in our communities and congregations.

Participants, presenters, and planners alike learned much from one another, and we're delighted to share some of the wisdom that emerged from the conference. These personal reflections center around the four pillars of intentional multicultural community: **Leadership, Worship, Justice Ministry, and Congregational Life**.



Photo by Colin Bent

This was worship during the Mosaic Makers Conference. Bilingual readings, embodied rituals, materials representing genuine cross-cultural relationships, the intentional presence of multiple voices and ethnicities both in worship elements and in worship leaders—all this and more made our worship genuinely multicultural. Music was spirit-filled and contemporary; popular-style music—animated, harmonically rich, easy to remember and sing—reflected Black church tradition. No single culture dominated.

Both of us were struck by the way in which many participants let go our sense of control and allowed the experience to claim us. This, too, is a quality of multicultural worship—the openness of congregants to respond to the leaders' call, so that we feed each other in a mutual spirit of trust. Multicultural worship is not just a matter of what is offered, but also of how it is received; the Mosaic Makers were a ready congregation, and it was a powerful joy and gift to be among them.

—Rev. John Crestwell, UU Church of Annapolis, MD and
Rev. David Takahashi Morris, Mount Diablo UU Church, Walnut Creek, CA



Photo by Terasa Cooley

Chaplain's perspective

Connections, Re-Connections, Inter-Connections—the Mosaic Makers conference provided space for all of these and more. Storytelling paved the way, providing space and context for each participant to go deeper in the work of creating multicultural community. In my role as Chaplain, I had many opportunities to hold the conference community in love and in care; it was an honor and a privilege to do so during the conference and in follow-up conversations since then.

Within this community, I witnessed an authenticity that was heartening to see. People offered their whole selves to a deeper understanding of developing and honoring multicultural sensibility. Participants were encouraged to imagine what Beloved Community might look like and what their respective congregational or ministerial settings might reflect. Each of us was encouraged to consider the role of Unitarian Universalism in moving us toward that vision, and identifying the places where those of us who are engaged in the work of transformation fit in.

In reflecting on my Jamaican motto, “Out of Many, One People,” I realize that we are moving steadily in that direction. The ripple effect of this prophetic conference will help us to get there.

—Rev. Hope Johnson, UU Congregation of Central Nassau in Garden City, NY

Worship

A multiracial group of Unitarian Universalists sings and waves their arms; on a screen in front of them a much larger group is clapping, laughing, swaying. A choir sings with West African-style drummers; voices ring out a hymn from the Muskogee Nation; an evangelical Universalist African-American pastor preaches a “Gospel of Inclusion” to a responsive congregation.

Photo by Colin Bent





Photo courtesy of Terasa Cooley

Leadership

Three themes emerged from the Mosaic Makers Conference:

- 1) Leading vital multicultural congregations is a "shared leadership" job. No minister, religious educator, board member, or committee chair can do this work alone. Religious professionals and lay leaders must work together to project a bold vision and lead the change that enables multicultural community to thrive.
- 2) Direct experience in multicultural community is essential to motivating and supporting multicultural leadership development. The partnership with All Souls/DC provided critical pieces of the learning that UU leaders took home to their congregations.
- 3) To "grow leaders" for this transformative work, UUA staff, UU congregations, and innovative UU leaders must partner with each other. All of our staff groups are allied in sharing leadership and supporting the many facets of this work.

As staff group directors, we joyfully embrace collaborating and cooperating to support and nurture multicultural and multigenerational leadership in the Unitarian Universalist community.

—**Taquiena Boston**, Director of Multicultural Growth and Witness,

Rev. Terasa Cooley, Director of Congregational Life, and

Rev. Sarah Lammert, Director of Ministries and Faith Development

Congregational Life

Mosaic Makers provided a wonderful opportunity for growing, learning, sharing, and struggling together with colleagues from across the country. The work that each congregation is doing to help build congregational and UUA Beloved Community is vitally necessary. Opportunities like this conference—where we hear from colleagues who are using a variety of different approaches and from expert presenters, and where we learn how to better hold ourselves accountable—are crucial to our cause.

Often, we think of our ministries around diversity in isolation, only seeing our congregation and our own ideas, without sharing and learning from each other.

The conference provided a space to share freely and honestly as well as to push each other and allow ourselves to be pushed to do more.

All Souls' staff and volunteers were present throughout the weekend, learning from the experience and sharing their own insights into how our congregation does intentional multicultural ministry. Mark Hicks, Eric Law, and Gordon Dragt gave us perspective about our congregations and vision for the work that needs to be done. The conference felt like a wild success!

—**Lex Cade-White**, All Souls Church, Unitarian in Washington, D.C.



Photo by Colin Best

Justice Ministry

The Mosaic Makers conference reminded me that justice ministry—indeed all ministry—is about relationships. I was thrilled and moved to discover that All Souls DC's relationship with the jazz clarinetist Evan Christopher (who dazzled us in concert the first night of the conference) had grown out of contacts made during a congregational service trip to New Orleans. Gifts in the service of justice are always returned tenfold, sometimes in ways we could never have imagined.

I appreciate the UU philosophy that social justice work must be done in partnership and with accountability to stakeholders.

In my small group session on social justice and outreach, I learned of congregations following these practices with immigrant advocacy groups, LGBTQ groups, and at-risk youth by providing a venue for an event, sharing advocacy work or participating in a joint service project. One congregation's large endowment is dedicated entirely to giving grants to local groups! I was inspired by the variety of ways in which we can do justice ministry and look forward to sharing them with my own congregation.

—Karin Lin, First Parish in Cambridge, MA

A Religious Educator's perspective

The Mosaic Makers Conference was well-attended by leaders from the UU Church of Silver Spring, the congregation that I serve as Director of Religious Education. We had music, religious education, worship, board, program council, and diversity team leaders representing many aspects of our wonderful community. Each of us had different perspectives and different goals in attending the conference. We entered as different pieces of a whole. We left with one heart, and a shared mission. We left united.

Hearing Evan Christopher and his band filling All Souls D.C. with exuberant, spontaneous, one-step-from-the-edge jazz music, we could not help but be swept up and together by it. Listening to Reverend Gordon Dragt speak about how hard work can lead to transformation, we knew that we could create this kind of transformation in our own congregation.

Workshopping with Mark Hicks and Eric Law, we exercised the tools we had been given. We could not wait to share all we had learned and experienced with our greater church community.

The experience was invigorating and inspiring, but I found one of the most valuable takeaways to be the sense of shared purpose the members of my congregation felt at the end of the conference. We are ready to move forward in our multiculturalism work as one body, and we are ready to do so with joy.

—Sarah Gonzalez, UU Church of Silver Spring, MD

Photo by Teresa Cooley





Photo by Colin Beat

A Presenter's perspective

James Baldwin famously said, "not everything can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." My experience during this amazing conference was, in large part, an object lesson for this phrase. Inside the supportive container of the conference, we all became "teachers" and "learners," tackling some of the more prickly issues that surface when doing AR/AO/MC work.

One of my realizations as a diversity worker is how strikingly different the project of "building a beloved community" is for those socialized into white identities as opposed to those socialized as targets of oppression. I was gratified to hear both budding insights as well as wisdom-statements from both groups. For whites: the deeper realization of not only how privilege seeps into their lives, but also a modeling of how to interrupt its power and presence. For people of color, the relief that comes when what Charles Taylor calls "recognition" occurs, that is, when cultural expressions signal that the experiences that shaped your life matter.

When I departed All Souls on Sunday afternoon, my heart was both swelling with pride and brimming with confidence of what we can achieve.

—**Mark A. Hicks**, Angus MacLean Professor of Religious Education, Meadville Lombard

Final Reflections and Ministers' Day

The 2012 Mosaic Makers Conference was a soul-stirring, life-enriching, and energizing experience for our team from First UU Church of San Diego. We were inspired, challenged, and renewed by our participation.

One takeaway for me was the thought-provoking contrast difference between multi-cultural work and anti-racism, anti-oppression work—and the fact that both are needed. I deeply appreciated, and was moved by, Mark Hicks' stimulating question: how much of our multiculturalism and anti-racism work is about interrupting white culture, rather than creating a space and devoting energy to the reality and faith development of people of color? He indicated that the question itself, and the responses to it, are religious education.



Photo by Tracy Ahlquist

After this full weekend, ministers gathered for a day to continue reflecting, learning and sharing. In the early afternoon, we chose to set aside the afternoon agenda and to gather in small groups to talk deeply about the weekend, the morning's session, and what they provoked in us. We then joined again in the larger group and spent the rest of the afternoon in large group and small group discussions about M/C work and ways to expand it in our congregations. I left with a deeper appreciation of my colleagues' willingness to listen carefully, speak honestly from the heart and stay engaged in the process of exploration. And I look forward to continuing this work with my colleagues, my congregation and the UUA.

—**Rev. Kathleen Owens**, UU Church of San Diego, CA

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Handout 12: Reflection Questions

- If you had to tell one story that summarizes what your congregation is about, what would that be?
- How is adult programming connected to your congregation's story?
- How can adults practice being part of beloved community through adult faith development programming?
- How can we create ways to share and broaden our personal stories and our congregation's story?
- How can we create holding environments that support transformative learning? How does Lewis's work help identify ways to pay attention to the space between the logs?

Handout 13: Generations Theory Summary

These summaries are based on the work of William Strauss and Neil Howe, in Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069 (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992) and Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

Below is a brief summary of the forces that shaped the generations of people in our congregations, as well as a list of broad generational characteristics. As is the case with any generalization, the lists may not accurately describe particular individuals. In general, these lists reflect experiences and perspectives of the dominant culture.

The GI Generation (born between 1901 and 1924)

Shaped by the Great Depression, World War II

Characteristics:

Many experienced upward mobility, faring better financially than their parents
Institution builders and leaders, conformists

The Silent Generation (born between 1925 and 1945)

Shaped by the Roosevelt Presidency, the Korean War, the Cold War, anticomunism, technological and scientific advances, the Civil Rights Movement

Characteristics:

Often experienced steadily increasing affluence
Worked to define and humanize the world; founded organizations of political dissent that boomers would later radicalize
Fewer in number than GIs and Boomers
Uncertain about both personal and national roles and expectations

The Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1963)

Shaped by the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, the sexual revolution, liberation movements, political unrest and assassinations, the Watergate scandal

Characteristics:

Often drawn to revolt, rebellion, mistrust of institutions
Often sought the “self,” making decisions according to individual principles
Committed to gender equality, racial equality, environmental stewardship
Moved from the counterculture to strong ideological positions on the right or left

Generation X (born between 1964 and 1980)

Shaped by the Regan and George H. W. Bush presidencies, the end of the Cold War, AIDS, the home computer, the Internet as a tool for social and business purposes, a high parental divorce rate, a high incarceration rate

Characteristics:

Cynical and disengaged
Pragmatic
Self-contained
Pessimistic about the economic future

Believe that a person's success or failure is determined by their own choices

Millennials (born between 1981 and 2001)

Shaped by highly involved and protective parents and institutions, electronic social networking and new media, targeted marketing, Columbine, September 11, unemployment, the War on Drugs, environmentalism

Characteristics:

Tech-savvy

Seek instant gratification

Idealistic and community-focused

Are team players

Culturally liberal

As-Yet-Unnamed Generation (born after 2001)

Shaped by communications and technology the War on Terror, and forces as yet unknown

Characteristics:

To be revealed

Handout 14: Program Mission

Why does your congregation devote resources- volunteer time, staff time, and/or money to adult programming? How does adult programming support your congregation's *mission* or reason for being?

Craft a one-phrase or one sentence adult program mission statement that addresses these questions:

Ideally, what is the role of adult programming in the lives of individual members of the congregation?

Ideally, what is the role of adult programming in supporting the congregation's mission?

Handout 15: Reframing Hope—Topics for Discussion

How we frame our situation has an impact on our attitudes, our cognitive abilities, and our behavior. Because we are congregational leaders, how we frame our situation is vitally significant. Indeed, it is part of the prophetic calling to name what is while at the same time imagining what can be.

1. Carol Howard Merritt talks about the ways in which power is being transferred to the edges. She names technology as a major factor bringing about this change, as knowledge is available to everyone and individuals are sparking one another's imaginations and sharing resources. How are you seeing this transfer of power at work in your congregation? How do your congregation's adult programs take seriously the notion of sparking one another's imaginations and sharing resources?
2. Merritt talks about people in our congregations longing for communication, connection, and intimacy with other people, as well as connection with a faith tradition. Where do you see this longing for connection, with people and with a faith tradition, reflected in your congregation's adult programming? How might you strengthen your congregation's responses to these longings?
3. Merritt describes how stories bind communities together, as small glimpses into one another's lives allow for deeper connection. She further notes that social media are helpful in sharing stories and building community, saying that social media provide a way to recreate the community-building interactions that once took place while shucking peas or sharing other labor. Do you agree? How interactions on social media play out in your congregation? How do you manage people's different levels of facility with social media and interest in interacting online? How do we navigate the differences between digital and embodied communities?
4. Merritt invites us to consider our congregation's mission in multigenerational terms, including caring for individuals who are part of our congregation and responding to the ways in which the world outside is hurting. How does your congregation think in multigenerational terms? How does your adult programming reflect a multigenerational sensibility? How might you strengthen this aspect of congregational life and the programming that supports your congregational mission?

Handout 16: Considerations for Adult Programming

How much programming can your congregation actually support, in terms of volunteers, building space, budget, and participants? How do you determine that?

What times of the week are available for programming? When are people likely to come?

Is there a formal application process, structure, or timeline for programming proposals? Who decides what programs are to be offered?

How is programming supported? Who is responsible for logistics? Advertising? Supporting volunteers? Dealing with difficult situations if they arise?

Handout 17: Sample Needs Assessment Survey

We are seeking your input to help determine what adult offerings are best for our congregation. Please check all those that interest you and add any comments you may have:

TOPICS

- Programs about Unitarian Universalism: history, theology, ethics, and so on
- Programs to support your spiritual journey: spiritual practices, death and grief, parent or caregiver support, small group ministry, and so on
- Programs that offer opportunities to socialize
- Programs that connect to the wider world: social justice topics, book and movie discussions, and so on

Comments: _____

FORMAT

- A single-session program on a Sunday morning
- A single-session program on a weeknight
- A several-session program on a weeknight
- A several-session program during the day
- A half-day program on a Saturday or Sunday

Would you make use of childcare if it were offered? _____

Comments: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES!
The Adult Religious Education Committee

Handout 18: Considerations for Volunteer Facilitator Recruitment

A person who leads an adult program should be:

- Committed to the Unitarian Universalist Principles, to the congregation, and to the faith development components of this program
- Knowledgeable enough about Unitarian Universalism to manage the content of the program
- Willing and able to thoroughly prepare for each workshop
- Effective at speaking, teaching, and facilitating group process
- Flexible, and willing to modify workshop plans to more fully include all participants
- Able to listen deeply and to encourage all individuals to participate
- Able to demonstrate respect for individuals, regardless of age, race, social class, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- Able to honor the life experiences each participant will bring to the program

The committee or person who oversees the program should consider the following questions:

- What practical supports are there for the program?
- Who announces the program and recruits participants?
- Who registers people? How is information from those who recruit and register participants communicated to the facilitator(s)?
- Who unlocks the building, sets up chairs, and makes coffee? Who makes copies?
- Who answers questions about content or provides a sounding board when facilitators or leaders are preparing to lead or facilitate a workshop, presentation, or small reflection group?
- Who supports or provides a sounding board for facilitator(s) when there is a problem with their group, workshop, class, or presentation?
- Who, or what group, is responsible for deciding whether and how to intervene if a facilitator seems unable to appropriately fulfill their commitment? Who would be involved in such an intervention?

Handout 19: Sharing the Floor: Some Strategies for Effective Group Facilitation

Here are techniques to help facilitators of adult RE programs, committee meetings, or small groups ensure that all participants have a chance both to listen and to be heard and to make best use of the group's precious time together.

1. Create a Group Covenant

Whatever the primary focus for your group, it is essential to agree on expectations for behavior in your work together and very helpful to have those expectations in writing. Covenants may include a range of issues, such as arriving on time, keeping confidentiality, respecting someone's choice not to speak, avoiding negative comments, the right to pass, etc. Ongoing groups should review and renew their agreements annually, or whenever new members are added.

A group covenant provides these benefits:

- Expectations are clarified so that misunderstandings are less likely.
- The agreement makes it clear that everyone, not just the leader(s), is responsible for the effectiveness and pleasantness of the group experience.
- The covenant provides a clear and specific reference for addressing problematic behavior. Leaders or participants can speak to a group member privately or in the group if they feel that the person's behavior is not in keeping with the agreement.

Short-form covenanting is a time-efficient way to help a group agree to guidelines. Prepare a draft covenant on newsprint before the first meeting and ask participants to respond to it. Invite them to add, delete, or modify the expectations it lays out until everyone understands and accepts them.

Long-form covenanting invites the group generate its guidelines from scratch. Although it takes a little longer, it is more participatory and may foster more of a sense of ownership. One approach is to say something like: "Think of a time when you were a member of a productive and safe group. What would make this group productive and safe for you?" List responses and encourage discussion until consensus is reached. Then ask, "What do you think should happen if our behavior is not in keeping with our agreed-upon guidelines?" Discuss.

2. Begin On Time, End On Time

Take the responsibility for timeliness very seriously. It is a way of modeling respect for the group. Keeping on time gives leaders credibility and builds group trust. It sends the

message that this group respects each person's time, needs, and commitments. It also fosters other expressions of respect within the group.

3. Post a Timed Agenda

Because people like to know what they are doing and where they are going, always post an agenda for each meeting. Next to each item suggest a time to be allotted for it, and check with the group to get their agreement. This is no less important with support groups than with Board meetings, although the level of detail will vary.

Use the timed agenda to enlist the whole group in taking responsibility for the process. If they fall behind in the timing, say "I'm concerned (or 'I notice') that we are behind our agreed-upon schedule. What do you suggest we do about this?" Let the group make suggestions. Usually, they volunteer that they need to be more focused and self-disciplined, particularly if you ask, "Shall we extend our meeting time by 45 minutes?"

Be aware that the group may decide that it really needs to spend the entire time on one activity. If this is the consensus of the group, then it is what they should do, as long as it is an intentional group decision. Responsibility, not inflexibility, is the goal.

4. Model Brevity

Leadership is not license to ramble. Make sure your thoughts are organized and succinctly presented. In check-ins and other sharings, be sure you share for less than the time allotted for each person.

5. Use a Talking Object

Some groups use a talking stick or other object which a person must be holding in order to speak. This practice discourages people from spontaneously (and repeatedly) sharing their thoughts out of turn. It clearly gives the floor to one person at a time, and encourages shared responsibility for participation, since the speaker, not the leader, must decide who to hand it to next.

6. Pass a Watch

Sharing by one person after another can consume much more time than planned. If the group has agreed to allot a certain number of minutes (such as two or five) to each person, pass a watch with a second hand around the circle. Each person times the person next to them, and gently signals them when their time is almost up. As facilitator, you share first, modeling a timely wrap-up. Of course, common sense should prevail if someone is sharing a particularly painful or otherwise sensitive experience. In groups with a history of saying they want a short check-in but doing a long one, this is a consciousness-raiser that often does not have to be repeated.

7. Form Small Groups

People like to talk. One way to give everyone more time to talk within a limited time frame is to divide participants into smaller groups for discussion. When the whole group regathers, the small groups can share according to the time you have allotted—from as little as a word or phrase to a written report from each.

Use the promise of small group time to interrupt lengthy or tangential discourses, suggesting that the small group exercise will be a more appropriate place to share that story or have that conversation.

8. Post an Unfinished Business List

Post a sheet of newsprint on which to list people's questions and concerns that cannot be addressed in the program without derailing the schedule or focus of the group. As people go off on tangents that are important to them, but not germane to the task at hand, interrupt politely, affirm that their issue deserves attention, explain that it cannot be addressed at the moment, write it on the newsprint, and promise to return to it. Be sure to return to it at the time you have set aside.

9. Equalize Opportunities to Speak

Some people are quick to speak up; others need time for reflection. Some are comfortable competing for the floor; others are not and will not. Here are some techniques to equalize opportunities to speak:

Moment of Reflection. After you have raised a question or topic, ask everyone to reflect silently for a minute (or two) and collect their thoughts. Do not allow anyone to break this silence except to ask a clarifying question. Then break the silence by calling on someone who has not spoken at length or by using one of the options below.

Around the Circle. Go around the circle with each person who wishes to do so speaking briefly to the topic. Start with someone who has not previously spoken at length.

Raising Hands. Ask the group to agree that they will raise their hands when they wish to speak, refraining from interrupting when someone else has the floor. The facilitator makes a note of the order in which people raise their hands and periodically indicates who will have the floor next. For example, "Mary is up, then John, Bill, and then Cathy." If this system seems "juvenile" or controlling, try it. It is actually very fair, inclusive, efficient, and relaxing because people can turn their attention to speaking and listening with respect rather than competing for the floor and trying to hold it against the threat of interruptions. A word of caution: it is important that the facilitator facilitate, and not take advantage of the process. A facilitator who wishes to participate in the discussion must symbolically raise a hand and take their place on the list.

Stepping back. If some of the group have not yet spoken, ask those who have spoken to yield the floor and allow those who have not to go next, if they wish. Remember, this is an invitation to them; it should not feel coercive or put anyone on the spot.

Body language. Watch for body language indicating that someone wants to speak, but is hesitant to compete for the floor. Call on them in an encouraging way.

Eye Contact. Try to avoid making eye contact with participants who have been talking too much. It is a green light for them to speak. (It is surprisingly hard to avoid looking at the person you have come to expect to speak out.)

10. Conduct a Process Check

Schedule a five- to ten-minute group process check as a regular feature at the end of each session or meeting. Ask, “How was our process?” When you introduce this concept, make it clear that a process check is not an evaluation of the leader(s), but an invitation to everyone to reflect on their own participation and their experience of the group process as a whole. A process check encourages self-awareness, communicates that everyone shares responsibility for the process, and gives people an opportunity to voice their concerns or suggestions.

11. Intervene When Necessary

Usually participants are reluctant to confront each other and look instead to the facilitator to handle dominating members. If preventative strategies have failed, try these interventions.

Interrupt. Don’t be afraid to interrupt a speaker in front of the group. Letting one individual go on and on is disrespectful of all participants. Respectful but firm interruptions include:

- “Excuse me, Frank, but I’m concerned about the time.”
- “I’m going to stop you there, Mary, because I’m concerned that we are moving off our focus.”
- “Frank, can you summarize your point in 25 words or less, because we need to move on.”
- “Mary, is this an issue we can put on the Unfinished Business list? We can’t address it right now.”

Usually people respond by cooperating. If the facilitator is willing to interrupt garrulous behavior, the garrulous usually become quieter, the quiet become bolder, and a rough equality evolves. If appropriate, appeal to the group covenant and the agenda as objective references for behavioral expectations.

Speak to the person privately. When a participant is really not responding to preventative strategies or gentle confrontations in the group, speak with the individual at the break or after the meeting. You can be more candid in private.

- Use “I” statements to state the problem: “I am concerned about staying on our schedule.” “I am concerned that not everyone has an opportunity to speak when some people speak at length. It is my responsibility to bring everyone into the process.”
- Name the participant’s behavior if they don’t own it themselves. Be specific. “Frank, are you aware that you interrupted Mary, John, and Louise when they were sharing? We agreed as a group to listen to each other respectfully.”
- Give the person an opportunity to voice concerns. “Mary, how is this group working for you? You seemed frustrated tonight. Is there something you need from me or the group?”
- Try to enlist their help in agreeing to a solution. Affirm them and appeal to their sense of fairness. “Frank, I value your participation in this group, and I need to be respectful of everyone’s time and needs. What do you think I should do when someone repeatedly interrupts others?”

Hopefully, the participant will acknowledge their behavior and modify it in the future. If the behavior continues unabated, the issue may be bigger than the group. Speak with your parish minister or religious educator before confronting the person privately again and reiterating your concerns. If, as a result of this confrontation, the person chooses to leave the group despite your respectful efforts to include them appropriately, do not count their departure as a failure. Your priority as facilitator is the well-being of the group and its process.

Handout 20: Putting It Together to Take Home Project Instructions

Work in your project group to propose a plan that addresses a big picture concern you share. Create a generic, rather than congregation-specific plan. When you take the plan home, it will need to be adapted to your particular circumstances. Create a presentation using newsprint or PowerPoint to share with the large group.

Consider: What or who is/are your intended audience(s) (e.g., congregation, board, Adult RE Committee) for presentation of proposal?

Imagine that you are making a proposal to your intended audience. Share the presentation you create for your intended audience, including:

- Overview and goals of proposed plan
- Background: Why is this plan a good idea? What concern/issues/needs will it address?
- Plan for communication with and engagement of appropriate parties
- List of first few steps
- Strategies to meet expected challenge