

# **Unitarian Universalist Identity Renaissance Module**

## **HANDOUTS**

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# Handout 1: Covenant

## **FIRST READER:**

We need to know that what we share will be held within the group.

**ALL:** Request confidentiality.

## **SECOND READER:**

There will be many opinions, ways of relating, and ways of learning in the group.

**ALL:** Assume diversity and respect differences.

## **THIRD READER:**

When we choose to pass, no explanation is expected or needs to be given.

**ALL:** Respect personal boundaries.

## **FOURTH READER:**

We will follow the schedule, arrive promptly, and remain together until we have agreed to end.

**ALL:** Show respect for the group.

## **FIFTH READER:**

Our time together is limited. All are encouraged to participate fully without dominating the conversation either in large or small groups.

**ALL:** Step up; step back.

## **SIXTH READER:**

It is important that the contributions of each person be heard and understood.

**ALL:** Remember to speak loudly and clearly.

## **SEVENTH READER**

During all sessions, we will try to avoid the distraction of electronic devices.

**ALL:** Agree to honor this covenant while the group is together. So may it be for all of us.

## Handout 2: Goals and Schedule of Sessions

Goals of the module:

- to gain an understanding of identity as a process of development across the lifespan which unfolds through an interplay of heritage, culture, and lived experiences
- to learn how this process unfolds in youth raised as Unitarian Universalists and persons who came to the faith later in life
- to identify ways to foster the process, specifically among Religious Education participants and generally among congregants
- to explore the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources as part of identity development

This module will help participants explore their own UU identity as well as how to foster a UU identity in children, youth and adults. One assumption of the module is that our work as religious educators is to create lifelong UUs.

### Session 1: Identity as a Process

Welcome (5 min)

Introductions (20 min)

Covenant (10 min)

Orientation (15 min)

Our Personal Journeys (60 min)

Break (5 min)

Unitarian Universalist Identities across the Lifespan (55 min)

Closing and Reflection (10 min)

### Session 2: Developing Unitarian Universalist Identities

Opening (5 min)

Growing a Unitarian Universalist Identity (50 min)

Learning Types and Their Needs (15 min)

Break (10 min)

Is There One Unitarian Universalist Identity? (30 min)

Honoring Both Universalist and Unitarian Roots of Identity (60 min)

Closing and Reflection (10 min)

### Session 3: Unitarian Universalist Identities, Then and Now

- Opening (5 min)
- How the Principles and Sources Became Part of UU Identity (35 min)
- UU Principles and Sources in UU Identity Formation (40 min)
- Break (10 min)
- Social Media and UU Identity Development (30 min)
- Six-Word Stories (40 min)
- Group Project and Teams (10 min)
- Closing and Reflection (10 min)

### Session 4: The Complexity of Unitarian Universalist Identity

- Opening (5 min)
- Best Practices for Honoring UU Ancestors (45 min)
- Exploring Our Growing Edges (35 min)
- Break (10 min)
- Group Projects (75 min)
- Closing and Reflection (10 min)

### Session 5: Living a Unitarian Universalist Identity

- Opening (5 min)
- Presenting Group Projects (80 min)
- Break (10 min)
- Promoting UU Identities in Our Congregations (50 min)
- Parking Lot (20 min)
- Closing and Taking-It-Home Ritual (15 min)

## Handout 3: 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

When a person has completed five modules, the Renaissance Office sends a Certificate of Achievement as well as a Renaissance pin to the participant, and notifies the congregation, minister, regional staff contact and local LREDA chapter about the achievement.

For more information, visit the Renaissance program page of the UUA website:

<http://www.uua.org/careers/re/renaissance/index.shtml>

**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:

<http://www.uua.org/careers/re/index.shtml>

## Handout 4: 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 5: Being a Vibes-Watcher

A Vibes-Watcher is a person who mindfully considers the dynamics of a group as its members work together, converse, and otherwise interact. At the end of each session, the vibes-watcher reports on their perception of group dynamics and how members may have been included or excluded.

The vibes-watcher can better consider group dynamics and on the behavior of individuals by holding elements of the covenant in mind:

*There will be many opinions, ways of relating, and ways of learning in the group.*

- How did the members of the group respect one another's opinions?
- Is anyone offering opinions that feel more like criticism?
- Are all members of the group respecting one another's different ways of learning and of relating with one another?

*All are encouraged to participate fully without dominating the conversation either in large or small groups.*

- Is anyone sharing too much information or dominating the conversation?
- Is everyone who wishes to share getting a chance to do so?
- Does anyone need to step up, or step back?

*It is important that the contributions of each person be heard and understood.*

By observing group dynamics, the vibes-watcher assists the module leaders in creating a safe learning environment where everyone feels respected and valued. Like the leaders, the vibes-watcher should be respectful and not critical when reporting on group dynamics. It is helpful to avoid using names and to offer suggestions using "we." For instance, the vibes-watcher might say:

*“A few people seem to be doing most of the talking. This could be because others do not feel comfortable enough to contribute, but as we progress, we should remember that we might need to step up or step back.”*

*or*

*“Some of the participants are being interrupted when they share their ideas. Even when we’re excited over something, we need to remember that everyone should be heard and understood.”*

## Handout 6: Reflection Questions for Session 1

- ① How does understanding your own personal journey toward a faith identity help you understand where others might be on theirs? And how does this understanding prepare you to assist others on their UU Identity journey?
  
- ② Where have heritage, culture, and lived experiences worked to build your religious identity?
  
- ③ How do developmental stages correspond with the unfolding of Unitarian Universalist identity?

## Handout 7: A Wide and Generous Faith

I am a third-generation Unitarian Universalist. This religion runs in my blood. It has spurred me and soothed me. But most Unitarian Universalists are at one time or another newcomers to our faith. Ninety percent of us come out of other religious traditions; some come from none at all. This makes for both richness and confusion.

Nonetheless, regardless of background, we each share a few fundamental convictions. Finally, let me put it this way. Too often in this world, religion has been the agent of division and fear. Unitarian Universalism seeks to heal a fractured world and the broken lives within it by calling every one of us to the best that is in us. Beyond nationalism and ethnic prejudice, beyond materialism and greed, beyond the petty and the shallow—we invoke a global loyalty, an ecological ethic, and a deeper mercy.

In the last analysis our Unitarian Universalist mission and the faith that sustains it is clear and straightforward: We would treat the wounds of a narrow spirit with the salve of a generous heart. How better than that to eradicate fear? How better than that to honor life's mysteries?

William F. Schulz, past UUA President, from *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*, (Skinner House Books: Boston, 2012) page 6

## Handout 8: Abbreviated Summary: Child Development

Adapted from *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*, by Dr. Tracey L. Hurd, published by the UUA (Boston, 2005)

	<b>Preschool Child</b>	<b>Early School Age Child</b>	<b>School Age Child</b>
<b>Physical Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body is acquiring gross and fine motor skills</li> <li>• Learns through physical experiences</li> <li>• Needs sensory and tactile experiences</li> <li>• Doesn't have link between thinking and action refined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts coordinating motor skills (rides bike, games)</li> <li>• Uses tools for drawing, writing</li> <li>• Very active; needs physical challenges               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns through doing                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to play</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine and gross motor skills almost fully developed</li> <li>• Central nervous system primarily fully developed</li> <li>• Needs food, rest, exercise               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May enter puberty</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is a top consumer of media images of bodies, ideals, wellness</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive, Intellectual Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self is primary reference point: "egocentric"</li> <li>• Obtains Object Permanence               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorizes &amp; classifies                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dichotomizes                       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appearance = reality</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fluid between fantasy &amp; reality</li> <li>• Needs to problem solve</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts to understand the notion of "Conservation"</li> <li>• Interested in numbers, letters, words, facts</li> <li>• Self is still primary reference point               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoys being "correct"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Learns best in the "zone of proximal development"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages in logical thinking               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops hierarchical reasoning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Concrete Operational thinking—based on non-abstract "pieces"</li> <li>• Develops specific learning styles; learning disabilities may become more clear</li> </ul>
<b>Social, Affective Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social circle of family is primary reference points</li> <li>• Has not acquired race or gender constancy</li> <li>• Starting to learn notion of "friend"</li> <li>• Empathic, but centered on self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns through social interaction</li> <li>• Enjoys peers and working together               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has beginning "true" friendships</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Often rigid is thinking about gender, race, roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peers and friendships are important</li> <li>• Identities navigated through social relationships               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes perspectives of others</li> </ul> </li> <li>• May segregate based on gender, racial, ethnic identities</li> </ul>
<b>Moral Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorizes right and wrong- sometimes too rigidly</li> <li>• Needs support linking words to actions &amp; moral issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends to order and authority; uses rules</li> <li>• Develops a sense of industriousness</li> <li>• Starts to understand motive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses "Golden Rule"</li> <li>• Interested in fairness, justice and care</li> <li>• Aware of moral issues &amp; interesting in helping</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual, Religious, Faith Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns about religion and faith through experience</li> <li>• Receptive to spirituality               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not afraid of "big questions"—full of wonder</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fowler's Intuitive Projective stage of faith development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does religion to know religion</li> <li>• Latter part of Fowler's Intuitive Project stage of faith development</li> <li>• Needs to have rigidities, and "correct" answers gently challenged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoys membership in faith or denominational communities</li> <li>• "Does" religion &amp; spirituality</li> <li>• Enters Fowler's Mythical Literal stage of faith</li> </ul>

# Handout 9: Abbreviated Summary: Adolescent Development

Adapted from *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*, by Dr. Tracey L. Hurd, published by the UUA (Boston, 2005)

	<b>Early Adolescence</b>	<b>Middle Adolescence</b>	<b>Late Adolescence</b>
<b>Physical Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitions into adult body</li> <li>• Eats and sleeps more</li> <li>• Demonstrates or does not demonstrate behaviors that may indicate risk for eating disorders or depression</li> <li>• Seeks support for self-esteem and body image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops sexuality more fully; feelings of gendered attraction and sexual orientation are often central</li> <li>• Navigates greater risks relating to alcohol, drug use, sexual activity</li> <li>• Peak physical growth stage for male youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieves full physical development</li> <li>• Gains more assurance about body image</li> <li>• Engages in sexual activity; more likely to be partnered</li> <li>• Learns to manage stress and maintain health</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive, Intellectual Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrates on self and other's perceptions of self</li> <li>• Engages an "imaginary audience," a mental idea of others watching</li> <li>• Particular intelligence strengths become evident (linguistic, mathematical, interpersonal, musical, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the ability to think deductively, inductively, conceptually, hypothetically</li> <li>• Engage in practices to celebrate new mindfulness about self (journal writing, re-reading emails, etc.)</li> <li>• Become more critical of the world around them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Particularly open to learning; a time ripe for formal / informal education</li> <li>• Expresses ideas with more linguistic skill</li> <li>• Sees many points of view and may claim multiple realities as the truth</li> </ul>
<b>Social, Affective Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social relationships with peers are very important</li> <li>• Learns social scripts (embedded in the contexts of race, ethnicity, and class) about what it means to be a sexual person</li> <li>• Expresses criticism of self and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tries to claim an identity/ies</li> <li>• Needs to belong and have a sense of self-worth</li> <li>• Struggles with gender and sexual identity – often a time of increased stress for GLBTQ and questioning youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases self-reliance</li> <li>• Develops sense of identity and intimacy</li> <li>• Expresses interest in vocational and personal life choices</li> <li>• Brings to realization sexual identity of self</li> </ul>
<b>Moral Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates interest in ethics of care and justice</li> <li>• Respects social order, although sometimes challenges it as well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinks conceptually and enjoys moral reasoning</li> <li>• Engages in "principled morality" – principles are more important than laws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrestles with personal morality and life choices</li> <li>• Expresses interest in moral and philosophical thinking, for self and wider world</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual, Religious, Faith Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoys presence or absence of religious creed</li> <li>• Expresses interest in religion that embodies one's values</li> <li>• Sustains faith development by engaging with a community that allows questioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptualizes religion as an outside authority that can be questioned</li> <li>• Questions faith, leading to deeper ownership or disenfranchising</li> <li>• Deepens religious or spiritual identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claims authority around issues of faith</li> <li>• Further develops spirituality as an important part of self</li> <li>• Engages in "faith" beyond traditional organized religion</li> </ul>

## Handout 10: Examples for Facilitating UU Identity Development

Stage	Activity Suggestion
Preschool Child	Learning gestures to accompany a short covenant or children's version of the principles
Early School-Age Child	Exploring moral dilemmas through skits, drama, or creative play
School Age Child	Applying the principles to scenarios from everyday life
Early Adolescence	Group activities that grapple with "big questions" (often a time at which we have young UUs start working on a Credo statement as part of Coming of Age)
Middle Adolescence	Step-up/Step-back activity to begin working through how identity and privilege might be related
Late Adolescence	Discussing complex moral dilemmas, and how their faith informs those complex moral dilemmas

## Handout 11: Brief Overview of UU History Resources

Knowing our Unitarian Universalist history can help deepen our sense of UU identity. There are several adult Tapestry of Faith programs that explore UU history:

### [Faith Like a River: Themes in Unitarian Universalist History](#)

Each of 16 workshops uses stories to trace the history of an idea, practice, question, or challenge that is still present in some form in UUism today. Workshop topics include heresy, covenant, reason, tolerance, freedom, evangelism, multiculturalism, Unitarian theology, Universalist theology, the UUA consolidation, and others.

[A Timeline of UU History](#) is included in the first workshop.

Leader resources throughout the program provide helpful background information, such as:

[A History of Covenant](#)

[A History of Statements of Belief](#)

### [Resistance and Transformation: Unitarian Universalist Social Justice History](#)

Each of the 16 workshops looks at prophetic, parallel, and institutional social justice work in our UU history. Each workshop uses story and primary source documents to examine a particular social justice issue, exploring challenges, successes, and times in which we fell short of our ideals. While some workshops include material about historic social justice topics most concern history of the social justice issues of the twentieth and twenty-first century, including pacifism, civil rights, women in religion, responses to calls for Black empowerment, sexuality education, welcoming GLBT people, and others.

### Harvest the Power Workshop 2 Unitarian Universalist Journey

This workshop deepens lay leaders' sense of identity as Unitarian Universalists by building knowledge and understanding of our Unitarian Universalist history and heritage.

### The New UU Workshop 2 Where Do We Come From? Unitarian Universalist Roots

This workshop offers a brief overview of Unitarian Universalist history, focusing on ideas and people more than on institutional and denominational structures.

## Handout 12: Reflection Questions for Session 2

- ① Despite our different theological beliefs, how is a distinct Unitarian Universalist identity formed?
  
- ② How does the multiplicity of Unitarian Universalist identities affect identity formation of our youth and young adults?
  
- ③ How does the process of identity development unfold differently in children and youth raised as Unitarian Universalists and person who chose this religion for themselves?
  
- ④ How does honoring both parts of our heritage (both Unitarian and Universalism) shape identity formation?

## Handout 13: Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

WE, THE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, COVENANT TO 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.

THE LIVING TRADITION WE SHARE DRAWS FROM MANY SOURCES:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;

- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

### **UU Principles and Sources – Children’s Language**

- Every person is important and valuable
- All people should be treated fairly
- Our church is a place where we accept one another and learn together
- Each person is free to search for what is true and right
- All people have the right to speak out and vote on things that matter to them
- We work for a peaceful, fair and free world
- We take care of the earth, the home we share with all living things

These ideas come from many places:

- the sense of wonder we all share
- women and men long ago and today — people whose lives remind us to be kind and fair
- the ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world’s religions
- Christian and Jewish teachings which tell us to love all others as we love ourselves
- the use of reason and the discoveries of science
- the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life

Thankful for all of these ideas, we want to learn even more. We come together to freely share our thoughts and feelings and promise to trust and help one another.

### **Rainbow Principles**

Red	Respect others
Orange	Offer fair and kind treatment to all
Yellow	Yearn to learn throughout life
Green	Grow by exploring ideas together
Blue	Believe in our ideas and act on them
Indigo	Insist on peace, freedom and justice for all
Violet	Value our interdependence with nature

## Handout 14: Elevator Speeches

### To the Point: 15 Unitarian Universalist Elevator Speeches

*Alicia LeBlanc, Editor*

Available from the [UUA Bookstore](#).

Quick!

What's Unitarian Universalism?

*Here is a diverse collection of brief responses to that question—short enough for an elevator ride, cashier line, or sidewalk chat. If you are wondering what Unitarian Universalism is, this may serve as an intriguing introduction. If you are a UU, perhaps this will help inspire your own responses.*

Judith A. Frediani, UUA Curriculum Director

I am a UU because I am convinced I need other people who love what I love. I am a UU because I want to join hands with others to create a community where we grow spiritually, where we support one another, and where we work together to create a world in which everyone matters, everyone is free, everyone is respected, and everyone lives in peace. I am a UU because I have seen what love, understanding, and commitment can do. And finally, I am a UU because I am convinced that if we let the love in our hearts guide our ways, the possibilities before us are breathtaking.

—Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President

Our denomination is unique because every Unitarian Universalist has the right to develop a personal philosophy of life, without being told what to believe. We can learn from all philosophies and religions, and also from science and the arts. We explore important life issues in a caring community, united by shared values rather than by shared theological opinions. And no matter what we do believe about theology or philosophy, we try to live a good life and leave the world better than we found it.

—Rev. Chris Schriener

Unitarian Universalists have different religious beliefs but share a common faith. We know that life is holy, that each person is worthy, and that, when we join together to plant the seeds of love, the world blossoms.

—Erik Resly

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal, not creedal faith. That means that,

although we may believe differently, we come together to search, grow, serve, and minister. Francis David said it best, “We need not think alike to love alike.”

Both Unitarianism and Universalism sprang from liberal Christianity. Unitarianism speaks to the nature of God as One: Holy, Transcendent, Immanent, Whole, Mystery.

Universalism speaks to the nature of our relationships—with the Divine, with ourselves, with each other, and with the planet which we call home.

—Michelle Buhite

The historical organizing principle of Unitarianism was the unity of God, not the trinity. The historical organizing principle of Universalism was the goodness of God, not the judgment of God. Unitarian: God is one.

Universalist: God is love. We have evolved into a religion that has no creed, each person is free to believe what they find to be true. This means that, on a Sunday morning, you might be sitting next to people who give different names to what they believe (theist, atheist, agnostic, Christian, Jewish, undecided, humanist, Muslim). We become Unitarian Universalists because we believe that humans need the freedom to grow toward their own

beliefs. We gather in community to encourage one another in our spiritual growth, to learn how to live together in loving diversity, and to work together for good purpose in the world.

—Rev. Kathleen Hepler

It’s a blessing you were born.

It matters what you do with your life.

What you know about god is a piece of the truth. You do not have to do it alone.

—Laila Ibrahim

We are a church of many beliefs, worshipping as one community, and focused on making this a better world.

—Rev. Steve J. Crump

Our faith is not interested in saving your soul—we’re here to help you unfold the awesome soul you already have.

—Andrea Lerner

This is a place where you’re welcome, where you’re invited into a fuller relationship with yourself, with the spirit of life, with other people, to build a

better world, and to build a better you.

—Rev. Shana Lynngood

At its best, Unitarian Universalism is a religion of people who covenant to treat one another well, care for the earth, and protect the beautiful tapestry of cultures and communities that make up the people of the world. Love is the core value from which we build.

—Sunshine Jeremiah Wolfe

Unitarian Universalism is a BIG faith and we have a big message—that there is one Spirit of Life that moves within and between us and calls us to care for each other. Our faith celebrates the beauty, diversity, and goodness of all creation—all life. We believe in love and compassion for all—and in using our best learning to make the best choices we can.

—Natalie Fenimore

In our faith, God is not a given, God is a question. God is not defined for us, God is defined by us. Our views are shaped and changed by our experiences. As we grow, our faith grows. We struggle with what it means to be alive and yet have to die. We probe the depths of our own being for little hints of meaning. We create a faith by which we can live and struggle to live up to it.

Throughout, each of us is fated to travel his or her own path. In the larger sense, we have chosen to journey together because we find that it is helpful. We find that it is good.

—Rev. Forrest Church

Unitarian Universalism is a non-judgmental religious home that will accept and support you wherever you may be in life's journey. It is composed of diverse communities operating without a common belief about God, the universe, and death. Instead of creed, we share a spirit and vision of radical inclusivity, individual agency, and social justice. It is a safe space to stand out, stand up, and change your mind, particularly during life's transitions. We embrace personal discovery and growth through learning, engagement, and service. Our only doctrine is love.

—Victoria Mitchell

The Unitarian side of our family tree tells us that there is only one God, one Spirit of Life, one Power of Love. The Universalist side tells us that God is a loving God, condemning none of us, and valuing the spark of divinity that is in every human being. So Unitarian Universalism stands for one God, no one left behind.

—Rev. William Sinkford, former UUA President

Love is the spirit of this  
church, and service its  
law.

This is our great  
covenant: To dwell  
together in peace, To  
seek the truth in  
love, And to help one  
another.

—Rev. James Vila Blake

Purchase paper copies of this UUA Pamphlet Commission Publication  
from the [UUA Bookstore](#) for distribution or display

## **Handout 15: Guidelines for Group Projects**

Working in groups of three or four, you will develop a final project that synthesizes your learning of the material in the module. Groups will be given a choice of four projects, or they may come up with one of their own if all members of the group are in agreement and the module leaders have approved it. These projects are:

- Design a month-long celebration of Unitarian Universalism, culminating in a multigenerational worship service
- Design a volunteer training session focused on fostering and promoting UU identity (for RE teachers, youth advisors, membership volunteers, etc.)
- Design a workshop for parents/other adults focused on fostering and promoting UU identity beyond the congregation - at home, school, or in the workplace
- Design a multigenerational justice project or other activity to promote and foster UU Identity development in people of all ages

Groups will have 70 minutes in Session 4 to work together on the project. In Session 5, each group will have 10 minutes of presentation time followed by feedback, comments, and suggestions from the group (although presentation time may vary, depending on the number of groups).

If possible, create your project in a way that can be shared electronically. Projects will be shared with all participants and the Renaissance Office.

## Handout 16: Reflection Questions for Session 3

- ⦿ How do the UU principles impact or connect with your own faith identity? Why?
  
- ⦿ Is UU identity more fixed or fluid? Why? Is that more of a liability or a gift?
  
- ⦿ How does Unitarian Universalist identity formation today differ from the way it was in the past?
  
- ⦿ How might you use the Unitarian Universalist Principles as a tool for forming Unitarian Universalist identity in children? Youth? Young adults? Older adults?
  
- ⦿ How is social media changing methods of Unitarian Universalist identity formation?
  
- ⦿ What social media tools might you use for forming Unitarian Universalist identity in children? Youth? Young adults? Older adults?

## Handout 17: Growing Edges in Unitarian Universalism

*Our Principles grew out of a communal sense of what it means to be Unitarian Universalist and can now help to define that identity for us, by naming the central values we hold in common. The Principles also call upon us not just to affirm these values, but also to work actively in the world to bring them into being. The various ways we do that, both individually and collectively, say something about how we are defining Unitarian Universalist identity at this particular time in our history.*

Projects and activities that work to make the UUA an antiracist, multicultural institution. Examples include:

- Unitarian Universalist support of Black Lives Matter
- Mosaic Makers
- Commitment to ending the “New Jim Crow” (a movement to end racial profiling, criminalization, disenfranchisement and mass incarceration of people of color)
- Mama’s Day (highlighting the aspects of motherhood that are not usually visible in the greeting card aisles so all families can thrive)
- The Church of the Larger Fellowship’s support of Latino ministries

Projects and activities that support LGBTQ rights and inclusion. Examples include:

- Standing on the Side of Love
- The Welcoming Congregation program
- The 30 Days of Love
- Advocating for marriage equality
- The UUA’s Office of LGBTQ Ministries

Comprehensive Lifespan Sexuality Education (OWL)

Tapestry of Faith Lifespan Curriculum

## Environmental Justice Initiatives

- Sustainable Living and Ethical Eating
- Unitarian Universalist support of Commit2Respond (a campaign to unite people of faith and conscience for climate justice)
- Divestment and socially responsible investment

## Immigrant Justice

- Unitarian Universalist support of the Sanctuary Movement
- Unitarian Universalist support of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition
- Standing on the Side of Love

## Economic Justice Initiatives

- Escalating Inequality
- UU Class Conversations
- UUs for a Just Economic Community
- UU Service Committee

UU College of Social Justice (assists UU congregations to harness the collective power for change through trips and programs that provide a hands-on experience for current and future activists)

Soulful Sundown and other changes in worship style in our congregations

Increase in non-male ministers and ministers of color

Music Ministry (with the professionalization of music directors)

Membership Ministry (with the professionalization of membership directors)

Faith Architects (a program for connecting Young Adult Unitarian Universalists with congregational life)

Faithify (a crowd-funding site for Unitarian Universalists)

## Handout 18: Reflection Questions for Session 4

- ⦿ Why do some UUs lift up famous people from history and how does this practice complicate the development of UU identity?
  
- ⦿ Why do we need to be careful with the legacies of many Unitarians, Universalists or Unitarian Universalists who were progressive on some issues but oppressive on others?
  
- ⦿ What are the ways we are defining our Unitarian Universalist identity for this particular time in our history and what that means future?

## Handout 19: Living Our UU Identities and Values

1. A recent event of police brutality against African Americans comes up in the discussion while you are meeting with 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Some children say that they've heard others at school talking about not getting into trouble being the solution to avoiding police brutality. You want them to know that their religion has a long history of working for racial justice and equality but you don't want to preach or pontificate. How do you use this opportunity to share their history with them and open their minds to the possibility of participating in a worthwhile venture? How would you ensure that this discussion does not marginalize or leave out any youth of color in the group nor ask them to speak as representatives of their race or ethnic group?
2. A new member of the Religious Education Committee calls you with a concern. As the committee made their curriculum plan for the coming year, they chose to specifically emphasize UU identity. "This is really not important to me," says the committee member. "I don't care what religion my children choose when they grow older. I want them to learn about all the world's religions. Why do we need all this UU stuff anyway?" How can you address the committee member's concern? What will you say about "all this UU stuff"?
3. A parent of a six-year-old asks to speak to you after service. It seems the child's friends have been talking about God and saying prayers. The child is upset that they don't say prayers at home. The parent is reluctant to say anything but also does not want to say a prayer for appearance's sake. The parent isn't sure how to handle the situation. What are the issues here? How can you help the parent reach a decision comfortable for the child and the rest of the family?

4. The teens have decided that the only function the Youth Group will serve is social, primarily food events. They don't see any point in bringing religion into it because "you can believe anything you want and still be a UU." One youth said that Unitarian Universalism is a pointless religion. The youth advisor is upset. The parents are upset. You will be meeting with the teens. How will you plan the meeting?
  
5. A fourth grader has asked a question that the teachers haven't been able to answer. They have asked you for help. The teachers' breakfast is next Sunday and you plan to use this question as the discussion topic. In the meantime, you have to figure out an answer for yourself. The question is "How do you know if you're a UU?"



# Handout 21: Selected Resources

## Session 1: Identity as Process

Welcoming & Entering Resources:

### [Between the Lines](#)

This book, available only online through Google Books, was written by Jacqui James to tell the stories behind the hymns we use in our hymnals. This important resource is essential for music directors and religious educators who want to be able to place certain hymns in context or understand the tradition behind the song.

### [Signs of Our Faith](#)

In the Tapestry of Faith Curriculum, Signs of our Faith, the song "Come, Come, Whoever You Are" is explored in depth. See session number 10, Signs of Welcome, Activity 3 to get a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalist values related to welcoming others.

### [Religious Education Credentialing Program](#)

This page contains information for congregations and religious education professionals about the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Religious Education (RE) Credentialing Program, professional development for religious educators, and religious educator transitions.

### [Renaissance Program: Religious Education Leadership Training](#)

The Renaissance Program is a major component of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Religious Education (RE) Credentialing program. Each 15-hour module provides standardized basic training in a specific area useful to religious educators.

### [Welcome: a Unitarian Universalist Primer](#)

This resource contains chalice lighting words and readings, the seven Principles and Six Sources and a brief history of Unitarian Universalism.

### [Worship Web](#)

You can browse worship resources by category (chalice lightings, prayers, meditations) or by subject matter. You can search the entire data base by Principle, Source or spiritual theme making it a spectacular resource for those planning worship, offering some words of reverence as a chalice lighting or just for a personal spiritual practice.

### [Covenant of Right Relations](#)

Developing a Covenant of Right Relations is an important step in clarifying expectations and creating a safe environment for congregations. "Covenant" is Latin for "come together" and means a "solemn agreement" or "promise from the heart" regarding a course of action between parties.

## **Identity is a Process Resources:**

### [The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide](#)

Revised and updated, the *Pocket Guide* is one of the most complete introductions to Unitarian Universalism available, covering ministry, worship, religious education, social justice, and history. This module uses an excerpt from The Pocket Guide, *A Wide and Generous Faith* by John Buehrens to introduce Activity Five: Our Personal Journeys in Session One.

### [A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism](#)

Written by Forrest Church and John Buehrens, this new edition of the classic introductory text on Unitarian Universalism includes a revealing, entertaining foreword by best-selling author Robert Fulghum (*All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It*), a new preface by UU moderator Denise Davidoff, and two new chapters by the authors, John Buehrens and Forrest Church explore the many sources of the living tradition of their chosen faith.

## **Unitarian Universalism across the Lifespan Resources:**

### [Handout: Stages of Faith Development](#)

This handout from the Tapestry of Faith program for Youth, *A Place of Wholeness* easily spells out the Stages of faith development identified by James Fowler.

### [Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning](#)

This book outlines James Fowler's groundbreaking study of how human life is progressively centered on a basic set of meanings and values that shape the faith people live by. In his approach, faith is not necessarily religious, nor is it the same as belief. Fowler encourages us to consider the word faith more of a verb than a noun, helping us to understand that faith is the dynamic system of images, values, and commitments that guide one's life. By building upon the contributions of such key thinkers as Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg, Fowler develops the six stages that his theory presupposes helps us to sort out the meaning of our lives--from the intuitive, imitative faith of childhood through conventional and then more independent faith to the universalizing, self-transcending faith of full maturity that is reached by the very few.

### [Nurturing Our Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook](#)

Tracey Hurd's stages of development draw upon the theories of Erikson's Psychosocial Development, Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development and Fowler's Stages of Faith in addition to her own experience as a developmental psychologist and former staff member in the UUA's Faith Development department. Grounded in current research and theory, this book

defines the typical progression in physical, cognitive, social, emotional, moral and spiritual growth for each phase of development from infants to young adults.

### [The Life Cycle Completed \(Extended Version\)](#)

This expanded edition of Erik Erikson's final work explores the challenges and opportunities of the various psychosocial theories of his: such as the young adult stage of intimacy vs. isolation or trust vs. mistrust of infancy. His theories explore how we confront the various challenges of the lifecycle and either engage in a healthy resolution which allows one to confidently move on to the next challenge or, if something hinders this process, the person may continue to struggle with the unhealthy results of not resolving the challenge.

### [Identity and the Life Cycle](#)

This edition contains three early papers that -- along with his *Childhood and Society* -- is considered among the best of Erik Erickson's theories of psychosocial development. This book concentrates primarily upon the stages we classify as "growing up" and does not cover the entire lifespan.

### [Childhood and Society](#)

This book has been called the landmark work on the social significance of childhood and it vastly changed much of what was understood to be the process of psychosocial human development. His now famous concepts of identity, growth and the life cycle altered the way we perceive ourselves and is essential reading for Psychology 101 students.

### [Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg](#)

In this book, a group of international scholars explore the strengths and weaknesses of Lawrence Kohlberg's research into the development of morality over the lifespan. This collection examines his theories from a number of different perspectives, including philosophical, psychological, religious and educational.

### [Moral Development: A Guide to Piaget and Kohlberg](#)

Although published in 1975, this book provides a comprehensive overview and comparison to the two most prominent theorists in the area of how the concept of morality develops in children. While this book explores moral development, it does not provide an understanding for how people learn what is right and what is wrong so much as it explains how and why people determine societal rules and why people follow them. The first section covers Jean Piaget's research on how children start by considering the rules of games sacred and unchangeable and then eventually develop an understanding of how rules can be changed as long as everyone agrees. The second section focuses upon Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development which starts with rigid adherence to following the rules because of reward and punishment and moves on to following the rules that we have agreed upon as a society so that all runs smoothly.

### [The Moral Judgment of the Child](#)

This seminal book by Jean Piaget (considered by some to be the most important developmental psychologist) chronicles the evolution of children’s moral thinking from preschool through adolescence. He explores the way morality develops and how what children’s idea of fairness changes over time, including the brain changes that allow children to understand the idea of motivation and intention (which young children do not take into account when considering whether or not something is “good” or “bad”) and how the concept of fairness expands from what’s fair for the self (“I want that ball”) to what’s fair for others who think the same way they do (“We all want balls” like that) to a true understanding of justice (“She’s never had a ball to play with, so she should get it”).

## **Session 2: Developing Unitarian Universalist Identities**

### **Is there One Unitarian Universalist Identity?**

#### [Black Pioneers in a White Denomination](#)

This book tells the stories of pioneering black ministers in Unitarian Universalism, why they identified themselves as Unitarians or Universalists and their struggles to be accepted by the UUA even as they worked tirelessly to spread the good news of Unitarian Universalism with others.

#### [Essex Conversations: Visions for Lifespan Religious Education](#)

More than thirty essays are compiled together in one essential resource that shares a common vision for lifespan religious education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Spanning such topics as Youth Groups as Models for Transformative Ministry, Religion as Relationship and the Principle Beyond the Principles, this guide lays the foundation for the philosophy and theory of modern Unitarian Universalist religious education. The Dan Harper essay which is part of the reader for this module, “Learning Types and their Needs,” was excerpted from this book.

#### [Full Circle: Fifteen Ways to Grow Lifelong UUs](#)

Written by a third-generation Unitarian Universalist, Katie Erslev, this book explores the importance of embracing a Unitarian Universalist identity, offering opportunities for all ages to live our Unitarian Universalist values as well as celebrating founders, lifers and our heritage. Her ideas grew out of informal surveys and interviews with lifelong Unitarian Universalists – encouraging them to share both the positive and negative aspects of growing up in our faith and what helped to shape their identity as an adult Unitarian Universalist after growing up in our congregations.

#### [Growing Up Absorbed](#)

How long does it take to grow a soul, to love and be loved, and to help repair the world? One lifetime, so it is best to be totally engaged in the process, says author Richard S. Gilbert. *Growing Up Absorbed* follows the journey from cradle to grave through an education focus.

### [Come Into the Circle: Worshiping with Children](#)

This comprehensive how-to guide for creating meaningful religious experiences for children written by Michelle Richards helps to build Unitarian Universalist identity not only by exploring the Principles and Sources through specially selected chalice lightings, meditations, and stories but by assuming that children should be a part of worship services in our Unitarian Universalist congregations – not merely as observers but participants and learners.

### [Tending the Flame: The Art of Unitarian Universalist Parenting](#)

In this essential guide to Unitarian Universalist parenting, mother and experienced religious educator Michelle Richards encourages a practical and intentional approach to raising children with a Unitarian Universalist identity. With chapters on each of the Seven Principles, parents can explore meaning and discover questions about the core issues of our faith with their children during their formative years. Also covering those “big questions” such as death, grief, divinity and sacred books of various faiths, this Unitarian Universalist approach to parenting has Unitarian Universalist identity at its heart. Discussion guide available [here](#).

### [Buddhist Voices in Unitarian Universalism](#)

This book shares the insights of 17 ministers and lay leaders – Unitarian Universalists who have become Buddhists while maintaining their UU identity and Buddhists who have found a spiritual home within Unitarian Universalism.

### [Jewish Voices in Unitarian Universalism](#)

These twenty essays explore the blessings and challenges of Jewish Unitarian Universalist identity and creating community. Edited by Leah Hart-Landsberg and Marti Keller. Also available as an eBook in the [Amazon Kindle Store](#) and on [Google Play](#).

### [Different is Normal](#)

Blog post on celebrating Unitarian Universalist identity rather than teaching our children to “blend in.” One of the best ways to empower our child and teens to embrace their differences and UU identity is “by helping them to understand that your family is not the only “different” family around. Giving them chances to interact with other Unitarian Universalist children, youth, or families encourages them that being different is good and uniqueness should be treasured.”

## [The Reality Wall](#)

Blog post on how a Unitarian Universalist identity can be challenging, particularly during the adolescent years when fitting in with peers is of utmost importance.

## [10 Things I Wish Everyone Knew About Unitarian Universalism](#)

In this blog, the Rev. Galen Guengerich shares what Unitarian Universalists actually believe, why they've come to those beliefs and how those beliefs impact our lives: including the concept that freedom is a consequence of belonging, our name refers to historic heresies that still matter today and our ethic of gratitude calls us to serve a broken world.

## [Becoming: A Spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood](#)

This wonderful resource is full of carefully selected poems, readings and music, plus original reflections by Unitarian Universalist young adults is designed for those times when our faith should be there for us even when our faith communities might not be. Created with the constant transition of young adults in mind, and the awareness that change is a constant for adults of all ages, the readings, meditations and songs were selected to deepen meditation, prayer, reflection or worship experiences.

## [Our World: An Interdependent Web](#)

This Huffington Post Religion column was written as part of a series for teens to dialogue about how their faith or wisdom tradition influences their life's big questions. In this article, contributing writer and 10<sup>th</sup> grader Anna Zimmer explains how she developed her Unitarian Universalist identity and how that calls her to protect the environment because our own well-being is deeply connected to the health of our world.

## [Living Mosaic: A UUA Blog for Youth and Young Adults of Color](#)

The purpose of this blog is to provide a spiritual community for Unitarian Universalist youth and young adults of color (Latino/a and Hispanic, Multiracial/Multiethnic, Native American, Asian, Arab, African descent, trans-racially adopted and bi-racial) to connect with each other and post information related to Unitarian Universalism. The blog is no longer being updated, but it will exist as an archive for resources. New updates will be part of the Youth and Young Adult Ministries blog at [Blue Boat](#).

## **Honoring Both Unitarian & Universalist Roots of Identity**

### [Unitarian Universalism: A Narrative History](#)

UU Identity Module – Handouts

This book by David Bumbaugh makes centuries of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism accessible to readers. It is particularly useful for offering a big picture overview of UU history if you are unfamiliar with it.

### [The Premise and the Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association](#)

This book, by Warren R. Ross, details the process of the consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. It tells the important story of how these two faith communities came together, and how our UU identity was forged throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### [The Unfulfilled Dream](#)

This essay in UU World by David Bumbaugh explores ways in which Universalism's promised legacy has not been fulfilled in the 50+ years since the UUA formed. Bumbaugh examines how Universalist history and theology have been ignored and looks for a center to make Unitarian Universalism cohesive.

### [Birthright Unitarian Universalist](#)

This sermon by Rebecca Benner calls to mind both the Unitarian Universalist Roots of Identity and the process by which she herself has come to identify with her birthright faith.

## **Session 3: Unitarian Universalist Identities: Then and Now**

### **How the Principles and Sources Became a Part of Unitarian Universalist Identity Formation**

#### [Shared Values: How the UUA's Principles and Purposes were Shaped and How They've Shaped Unitarian Universalism](#)

Article in the UU World about the development of the UUA's Principles and Purposes. It offers an overview of the historical predecessors of the Principles and Purposes. The article also reviews the history of the people and process surrounding the adoption of the Principles and Purposes.

### [Key Moments in UUA History](#)

This timeline gives a quick overview of the history of the UUA from consolidation to its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2011. It provides a longer view and context for the adoption of the Principles and Purposes.

### [Sources of Our Faith: Inspirational Readings](#)

Kathleen Rolenz's collection of inspirational readings from many cultures and times provides a real sense of the six Sources of Unitarian Universalism. Also available as an eBook in the [Amazon Kindle Store](#) and on [Google Play](#).

### [With Purpose and Principle: Essays About the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism](#)

A short history of the Principles and Purposes followed by essays from present-day UU leaders including John Buehrens, Marilyn Sewell, Earl Holt and Barbara Merritt. Excellent for use in new-member classes, as well as for those seeking insight into this essential piece of our living tradition. Also available as an [eBook](#) in the Amazon Kindle store and in the [Google Bookstore](#).

## **Social Media Resources**

### [Messaging the World: Social Media](#)

This blog post explores how social media presents a new opportunity to communicate with people in the larger world and effective strategies for getting your message heard by the people you most want to reach.

### [Tips for Getting Started Using Social Media in Your Congregation](#)

Guidelines from the UUA regarding the use of social media in congregations. It includes best practices for both effectiveness and ethics. It will guide you in using social media to communicate generally and around identity development.

### [The Ultimate List of Social Media Policies for Churches & Ministries](#)

This resource offers many different examples of both congregational and denominational guidelines around the use of social media. Issues of boundaries, safety, and professionalism must be addressed with regard to social media. This list of resources will guide you in your use and implementation of social media.

## **Session 4: The Complexity of Unitarian Universalist Identity**

### **Best Practices for Honoring Unitarian, Universalist and Unitarian Universalist Ancestors**

#### [David Robinson, The Unitarians and the Universalists \(1985\)](#)

This book presents Unitarian and Universalist history in a way that focuses on the biographies of individuals who were significant in that history. Use it as a resource when working to include famous historical Unitarians and Universalists in the work of identity development. The book is rather expensive, so one option is to check with other religious professionals in your congregation or area to see if you can borrow a copy.

#### [Who Really Said That?](#)

Article in UU World. This brief article explores two quotes commonly attributed to Francis David and John Murray. The author debunks the myths around the quotes and, in doing so, provides valuable lessons for anybody using Unitarian, Universalist, or Unitarian Universalist ancestors in their religious education or worship materials.

#### [Everything Changes](#)

Column in UU World. This column by UUA President Peter Morales addresses how our history can be “either a springboard or a prison.”

#### [Universalists and Unitarians in America: A People’s History](#)

Beyond presenting Universalist and Unitarian history in America as more than a list of luminaries, author John Buehrens weaves a historical tapestry rich in color and meaning that will serve to deepen the faith of modern Unitarian Universalists.

### **Growing Edges**

#### [A Unitarian Universalist “Black Lives Matter” Theology](#)

Kenny Wiley, religious educator and UU World contributor, explores how his UU identity calls him to be a racial activist yet raises serious doubts “because of the hateful and/or ignorant comments some Unitarian Universalists have sent my way since I joined the racial justice movement.” His blog post points out the hypocrisy so often witnessed by youth growing up in Unitarian Universalist congregations.

#### [Voices from the Margins](#)

Comprised of meditations, poems, prayers, and reflections from folks within Unitarian Universalism with marginalized identities, this book offers a starting point for spiritual reflection on Unitarian Universalism's growing edges.

### [Can Unitarian Universalism Change?](#)

In Paul Rasor's 2010 article in UU World, he explores the reality that, "despite our efforts to become a truly multiracial, multicultural religious movement, we are changing much more slowly than the society around us, if we are changing at all." This article is a useful reflection on how our theology and culture must adapt in order for UUs to grow along our growing edges.

### [We Must Change](#)

In a companion essay to Rasor's article, Rosemary Bray McNatt, president of Starr King School for the Ministry, says, "We must admit that Unitarian Universalism has a specific, sometimes alienating culture, and we must change it."

### [Coffee Hour Caution](#)

This PDF poster offers simple strategies along one of our growing edges – welcoming young adults during coffee hour.

### [Emerging Ministries Grow from UU Roots](#)

In this blog post, Annie Gonzalez Miliken explores the future of our faith and the idea of emerging ministries which can take many different forms. See also the [Emerging Ministries web pages](#).

## **Session 5: Living Our Unitarian Universalist Identities**

### **Promoting Unitarian Universalist Identities in our Congregations**

#### [Discussion Guide: A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism](#)

This six session program can be used as part of adult religious education programs or discussion groups to explore what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Designed to accompany the reading of the book, A Chosen Faith, this study guide offers more than enough activities to fill sessions of 1 ½ to 2 hours, exploring the material through a combination of individual responses and group interaction.

## [Tapestry of Faith](#)

Tapestry of Faith programs and resources for all ages are designed to nurture Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual growth, a transforming faith, and vital communities of justice and love. This project developed out of a broad series of conversations that articulated a future direction for Unitarian Universalist religious growth and learning. In use since 2008 and continually evolving, Tapestry of Faith offers a variety of resources—downloadable, printed, viewable, interactive, and more—a religious growth and learning program for the 21st century

## [Heeding the Call](#)

### [Workshop #2: The Call of Our Unitarian Universalist Heritage](#)

This workshop explores our Unitarian Universalist history. Youth learn about the social justice actions of an African American Unitarian foremother who worked to bend the arc of the universe towards justice. Youth are invited to help bend this arc as part of their UU heritage.

## [Creating Home](#)

### [Session Two: Symbols of Faith](#)

Session 2 of Creating Home will discuss the chalice in detail including the sacred circles that surround the chalice. The session also introduces the hymn "Spirit of Life" as a symbol of Unitarian Universalist communities. The children will work to design their own symbol to represent their own faith. Exploring symbols of faith helps children develop the ability to articulate and define what they believe. This ability to define what we believe as Unitarian Universalists is an important skill for children to acquire.

## [Love Surrounds Us](#)

### [Session 16: Our UU Principles](#)

This session reviews the Principles and celebrates their application in all the Beloved Communities participants can name. Home, school, neighborhood, and faith community all provide places for kindergarteners and first graders to affirm their Unitarian Universalist identity and faith by acting in accord with the Principles.

## [The New UU](#)

### [Workshop #2: Where Do We Come From? Unitarian Universalist Roots](#)

The workshop offers a brief overview of Unitarian Universalist history, focusing on ideas and people more than on institutional and denominational structures. Participants interact with one another as they engage with the material, working in small groups to identify famous

Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists. They learn stories from our Unitarian Universalist tradition and from your congregation's history.

[Windows & Mirrors](#)

[Session 16: Choose to be UU](#)

This session presents the idea that our faith is about much more than choice; it has deep roots and religious mandates. Unitarian Universalism asks us to think about and evaluate our spiritual relationship with the Divine, calls us to be mindful of our role in the world around us and compels us to help the causes of peace and justice. Yes, our faith demands, too, that we choose it consciously, perhaps more than once in the course of our lives.