

Worship Renaissance Module – Handouts

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Handout 1
A COVENANT FOR THE MODULE

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 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: We will remember to speak loudly and clearly.

SEVENTH READER

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

ALL: We agree to honor this covenant while we are together. So may it be for all of us.

Handout 2
SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS AND TOPICS

SESSION 1 (3 hours)

Activity	Time
Welcome and Covenant	20
Orientation	30
Worship: What We Know	30
Worship: Stretching the Definition	60
Worship: Why It Matters	15
Closing	25

SESSION 2 (3 hours)

Activity	Time
Opening	5
Multigenerational Worship: What It Is	25
Multigenerational Worship: Why It's Important	30
Multigenerational Worship: Introducing the Congregation	20
Multigenerational Worship: Tips for Success	30
Rites of Passage	20
Children's Worship	30
Worship: Empowering Youth	10
Worship Assignments	10

SESSION 3 (3 hours)

Activity	Time
Opening	5
Worship Leaders	15
Worship Service Plan	20
A Word about Words	20
Practical Considerations	15
Borrowing from Other Cultures	20
Decentering Whiteness in Worship	15
Project: Team Planning	60
Closing	10

SESSION 4 (3 hours)

Activity	Time
Opening	10
Our Stories, Our Selves	25
Story Repertoire	15
Story Practice	35
Homily	25
Worship Team Project Planning	60
Closing	10

SESSION 5 (3 hours)

Activity	Time
Opening	10
Worship Team Projects and Feedback	150
Closing	20

Handout 3

Intro 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 ministers, seminarians and lay leaders). The Renaissance program is a major component of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) [Religious Education \(RE\) Credentialing program](#). These modules 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 History (online only)
- Unitarian Universalist Identity
- Unitarian Universalist Theology (online only)
- Worship

Similar to Renaissance modules, these other trainings are specifically geared towards staff teams of religious professionals, and can be used in the RE Credentialing portfolio:

- Family Ministry training
- Innovation for Shared Leadership training (expected in Spring 2019)

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

Preparing for the Module Evaluation

Here is the link to the Renaissance Program Participant Online Evaluation Form.
<http://www.uua.org/careers/re/renaissance/277437.shtml>

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. It may be useful to know the specifics in advance so that you can take notes as you go along in order to submit a more thoughtful and constructive evaluation.

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

Reflection Questions

Session 1

- How does my personal “story” regarding worship influence and inform my ability to plan and offer worship experiences for others?
- How has my understanding of the term “worship” been affirmed, challenged, widened, deepened?

Session 2

- How has my understanding of the viability of multigenerational worship increased or changed?
- How has my competency as a leader or co-leader of multigenerational worship increased or deepened?
- How has my understanding of rites of passage increased or changed? Is there a ceremony or celebration I would like my congregation to add?
- How has my knowledge of worship opportunities increased or been refined?

Session 3

- How does the worship team function in my setting? How might the team be strengthened?
- How might I articulate and increase the religious educator’s role in the worship life of my congregation?
- How has my competency in structuring and evaluating a worship service increased and deepened?
- How has my fluency with the language of faith been challenged or confirmed?
- How has my understanding of cultural appropriation expanded?

Session 4

- How has my understanding of the value of including story in worship been challenged, increased or deepened?
- What are my strengths as a storyteller and what are my areas to build or improve?
- How might I apply my learning about the power of stories and storytelling techniques to my work as a worship leader?
- How has the session affected my thoughts about and skills in homily writing?

Session 5

- How have my skills improved or deepened as a result of creating, presenting and evaluating several worship services during our module?
- In what way has my knowledge of the range of possibilities to create effective worship grown or been refined?
- This module advocates for the inclusion of a religious educator in the worship life of a congregation. What is one action I will take to live/promote this strategy with my congregation, the minister, and/or others who plan worship?

Handout 6

Worship Quotes and Definitions

Worship means many different things to people. As stated by the 1982 UUA Commission on Common Worship: “Worship is a human activity. Though it is often defined as an activity to placate and get in touch with divine powers, it need not have any supernatural implications. The origin of the word ‘worship’ is in the Old English *weorthscipe*, meaning to ascribe worth to something, or even to shape things of worth. We worship, then, whenever we ascribe worth to some value, idea, object, person, experience, attitude, or activity, or whenever we give form or shape to that which is of worth.”

“Worship should speak to our experiences in life, challenge us to develop deeper relationships, and connect us to things that are beyond ourselves—be that in human relationships, struggles for justice, or a connection with nature or God or any other profound mystery.” ~ from the UUA Worship Web section on contemporary worship

“The building of strong souls and strong communities requires strong rituals – occasions that both link us to our ancestors and speak in a language that is fresh and challenging.” ~ Matthew Fox

“Each night a child is born is a holy night/
A time for singing/
A time for wondering/
A time for worshipping.” ~ Sophia Lyon Fahs

“There is more widespread recognition in UU congregations of all sizes that worship is the engine that drives the health of a church and the most important place where the congregation tells its story to members and newcomers alike, face to face. Without compelling worship that moves people towards lives of wholeness, service and joy, a church community is at best self-sustaining and

ingrown, and at worst a slowly dying artifact of a passing era.” ~ from the introduction to *Worship That Works*, by Wayne Arnason and Kathleen Rolenz

“Let us worship not with closed eyes and bowing down, but with opening all the windows of our being.” ~ Kenneth Patton

“The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Worship is a deliberate shaping, ordering, or recalling of the things of worth which we experience individually at various moments in our lives.

Worship occurs when the horizontal and the vertical—the mundane and the transcendent—suddenly intersect for us.” ~ 1982 UUA Commission on Common Worship

“When every hope is gone, 'when helpers fail and comforts flee,' I find that help arrives somehow, from I know not where. Supplication, worship, prayer are no superstition; they are acts more real than the acts of eating, drinking, sitting or walking. It is no exaggeration to say that they alone are real, all else is unreal.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

*Many of us come to worship because we are hungry for an experience of wholeness. We hope that through worshipping together we might feel a deeper connection to God, the sacred, each other, or simply our own true selves. When we feel our selves as more whole and as part of a greater whole the effect can be transformative. We may find that in being more connected to our true selves we are able to be more true in the world, to those we love, to strangers, to friends, and to the earth. We may find ourselves reorienting our lives toward our deepest values. We may find ourselves living with more compassion and with a deeper awareness of the sacred. From *A Good Telling* by Kristin Maier*

Handout 7

Worship Leaders Give a Voice to Multigenerational Worship

Unitarian Universalist Rev. Greg Ward:

“One of the most important aspects church shoppers is looking for are vital, creative, responsible and caring approaches to including children in the life of the church and helping to teach values and important lessons in memorable ways.”

Unitarian Universalist religious educator and author Michelle Richards (*Come Into the Circle*)

“When worship services are designed to meet their needs, children can experience ritual, expand their faith development, connect with their peers, and understand the intimacy necessary to learn spiritual techniques....Welcoming children into the primary worship service invites children into the heart of a congregation.”

Christian author Catherine Stonehouse (*Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*)

“...deep bonds often form between adults and children who experience worship together...When young and old in the community of faith...journey together in the commitment to one another...(a) beautiful, enriching spiritual formation occurs for all. When children are included as respected, active participants in the community of faith, they draw us back into the story of our faith and help us reactivate our imaginations to experience the story anew.”

Unitarian Universalist Revs. Wayne Arnason and Kathleen Rolenz (*Worship That Works*)

“The foundational idea that changed our approach to multigenerational worship services was this: Everything that makes your worship service more accessible and inviting to children makes the service more accessible and inviting to adults as well. Despite the stereotype that our congregations are filled with sophisticated people with affection for the rational and the intellectual, there is still something of the childhood learner within each of us that makes us appreciate a well-paced service that tells a story clearly, briefly, and vividly.”

Handout 8
Why Do We Have Intergenerational Services?
Rev. Greg Ward

We need intergenerational worship for the following reasons:

1. One of the most important aspects church shoppers are looking for are vital, creative, responsible and caring approaches to including children in the life of the church and helping to teach values and important lessons in memorable ways.
2. Families where parents are busy (like most families in the UU demographic) are looking for ways to spend meaningful time with their children that will spur them to further sharing and conversation.
3. Intergenerational worship often provides one of the only avenues for interaction and integration between older and younger members of a community.
4. Intergenerational worship works phenomenally well at introducing/integrating new members into a congregation as well as providing ways for older, harder to get to know members to become more accessible and more part of the growing, changing social life of a community. It can also provide ways for a congregation to get to know board members in a more engaging, more social way.
5. It is one effective way to help younger members experience the liturgy of your congregation so that they know what UU liturgy is when they talk to their friends.
6. It gives younger members an experience of seeing what adults do when they worship (something they are very curious about) and offers an example of reverence and respect for worship they can later emulate.
7. It helps provide opportunities for ministers and other program staff to interact with the younger members in a worshipful way.
8. Effective intergenerational worship is often one of the most common characteristics shared by our fastest growing churches.

9. Intergenerational worship provides an opportunity for young and old alike to enjoy, together, one of the fundamental elements of all religions—storytelling.
10. Our mandate as religious educators calls us to create environments where our children have trusting relationships to the people around them – people of all ages.
11. Our movement strives to help younger members understand our UU values and articulate them—Learning, especially for the young, is more effective in experiential settings and through stories.
12. Being able to worship in the main worship room in the church—for the whole service—is often an important clue to our younger members as they figure out what our religion is about.
13. We need to be providing opportunities for the younger members to become familiar and understand our liturgy, values and norms within worship so that when they see other religious styles they will recognize the differences.
14. Intergenerational worship can be fun, memorable and meaningful.

More information and complete worship scripts: www.uuintergenerational.org

Handout 9

Skit – Worshipping Together

Scenario: A congregation is in the middle of a building and renovating project. The sanctuary and classrooms for Grades K-8 will be under construction and closed for three months. The worship leaders have decided to offer multigenerational worship in the fellowship hall for those twelve Sundays. Previously, all-age worship was limited to 2-3 times a year, connected to holidays, and there was no weekly Time for All Ages.

Elder: I've been hearing and reading about children being in worship services this fall, the **whole** time, and I'm concerned. I don't think this is going to work, especially with babies and toddlers. Why in the world would we do this?

Religious Educator: Thanks for asking me. I appreciate your efforts to stay informed. This coming fall we will have a multigenerational service each month. Our school age children and youth will be joining the adults in the fellowship hall. We will provide childcare for our youngest children, ages infant to pre-kindergarten. The minister, music director and I believe this might be a great opportunity to practice the multigenerational faith community this congregation says it is. We can model for our children what it means to worship, to accept and celebrate our differences, to show our children we value them and what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist.

Elder: I see. One of my key reasons for attending this church is the intellectual challenge of the sermons and readings. With children attending the worship service, won't the sermon be geared for a younger, less sophisticated audience?

Religious Educator: No. The sermons and liturgy will not be geared toward any particular age group. The components of the service are meant to have multigenerational appeal. You should sense layers of meaning, from simple to complex, in the service's sermon, music, stories and meditation. And while we

UUs like to flex our intellectual muscles, we also need to experience worship that addresses the whole person—mind, body and spirit—and that will be integrated into our fall services.

Elder: Hmm...Well, I'm afraid I won't be able to hear the service when the children become restless and noisy. What are **you** going to do about that?

Religious Educator: I appreciate your concern and agree noise is distracting during the quieter times of the service, whether the noise is coming from a restless child or a coughing adult. I think the better question is, what are **we** going to do about this, if this happens. We convey our respect by stepping out to avoid disturbing others and by understanding when someone needs to do so.

Elder: You know, I think I just don't like change. It's hard, risky, and I just like things the way they are.

Religious Educator: You're not alone in thinking that, and you're also not alone experiencing this particular change. From the worship leaders, to parents, to the first-time visitor, we will all experience quite a change this fall. Did you know that a congregation may be one of the very last places where a rich community of several generations can be found? This summer visitors have been checking us out. We have a chance to reach out, to young, old and in between in brand new ways. And, keep in mind, this change in our worship service is not permanent. We'll learn as we go and decide next spring, once we have full use of our building, if multigenerational services are right for us.

Elder: I do want to try. This congregation means so much to me. You know, it would be nice to have my granddaughter sit right next to me during service. I guess it's worth a little change on my part.

Religious Educator: I'd say it's worth a little change on **everybody's** part!

Handout 10
“Worshipping Together” Pamphlet

Adapted from similar pamphlets by Unitarian Universalist churches

Introduce yourself and your child to people sitting near you.

- Review the order of service and help the child understand what will be happening.
- Share the hymnal and order of service at the child’s eye level. Line words with your finger to help the child follow along.
- Feel free to whisper instructions to help children learn “worship etiquette.”
- Encourage the child to participate in the Story for All Ages and other appropriate “action responses.”
- At any time, feel free to take a child’s activity box, available at the entrance of the worship area.
- Do talk about worship at home; look for opportunities to relate the Sunday worship theme to something that happens during the week.

Worshipping Together

West Shore Unitarian Universalist
Church
Sunday Service at 11:00
Hilliard Boulevard
Rocky River, OH
www.wsuuc.org

Message to Members, Friends and Guests:

During this fall season West Shore will engage in multi-generational worship in Baker Hall. This is a big change for us, and not without risk and some discomfort. This is also a wonderful opportunity for us to explore different styles of liturgy and to grow in community.

The purpose of this document is to acknowledge the importance of worship, the time set apart to consider things of worth and value, for all of us, the young, the old, the in-between, and to offer suggestions for how we can each contribute to a successful worship experience.

Worship is a time of gathering for our congregational family, a time set apart to lift up what is worthy, a time to feel at home. Worship is more than a Sunday service. It allows us to live our religious principles by appreciating and encouraging each other's free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Worship is a part of everyone's religious education. As we share our joys and concerns, our gifts and vulnerabilities, our loving and respectful responses ensure that we grow together as a worship community.

Some Ways to Enhance Our Shared Worship

- Wear your nametag and introduce yourself to people of every generation.
- Be mindful of our reduced space; take a seat towards the left of Baker Hall, so the area on the far right can be used for latecomers and those who may need to step out during the service; close the single seat "gaps."
- Model "worship etiquette;" children notice and will emulate your lead.
- Respond to children as participants in worship; they can be sensitive to laughter, often misunderstanding the intent.
- Understand when someone, of any age, needs to step out of the service and into the hall
- Be open to doing worship a little differently

Tips for Parents

Get settled with your child as early as possible and consider sitting near the front, where they can see what is happening and feel more involved. You may also consider sitting on the right side, as you enter Baker Hall, to facilitate stepping out, if needed.

Handout 11
Wonder Box

Wonder Box: Time for All Ages

Rev. Christina Leone, UU Church of Annapolis, Maryland
cleone@uuannapolis.org

Wonder:

Noun: A feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable.

Verb: Desire or be curious to know something

As Unitarian Universalists, we cherish wonder as a feeling and as an action. We honor in our principles the free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and encouragement to spiritual growth.

The Wonder Box is:

Multigenerational - Involves all ages in worship through story or lesson.

Interactive - Allows for interaction of children in worship, and spontaneous conversation with all ages in the congregation. Doesn't patronize or put anyone on the spot.

Multiple Learning Styles - Visual/ tactile/ verbal, with the possibility for more!

Connected - Supports the theme of the service; well-planned; a forethought.

Story:

Write your own, take a spin on an old favorite, or tell an existing story!

As much as possible, TELL the story, don't read. Use voices, dramatic pauses, hand gestures.

If you MUST show pictures, project them on a screen. Don't show from book.

Use familiar hooks, "Once upon a time," "And the story goes," "Stories are powerful."

Lesson:

Have a "conversation" with the congregation about a topic.

Use examples that all ages can relate to (or offer several examples). Remember elders!

Invite spontaneous answers from the congregation. Don't put anyone on the spot unless they have been "cleared" in advance.

Tips and Tricks:

Make it your own!

Use songs, poems, ritual, call-and-response, interaction, etc. to liven things up!

Work closely with the worship leader to ensure the Wonder Box supports the service.

Choose a beautiful box (or container). Doesn't need to be expensive to be pretty.

Call for volunteer, or choose ahead of time (especially if box contains something very unexpected or weird). You can have more than one volunteer sometimes!

Honor the volunteer by using their name and thanking them before they sit back down.

Honor the Wonder Box moment with dramatic and respectful introduction.

Wrap up the Wonder Box time with a familiar closing, like, "Help me remember."

It is okay (good, in fact!) to challenge the congregation with difficult, sad, or scary topics. Be sure to tread carefully, and remind them of their community, safety, and/or role in creating justice now.

Focus on emotions rather than specific details.

Handout 12

Ten Good Ideas for Multigenerational Worship

*Excerpted from an October 2008 workshop by the Mid-America Staff Group
of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

Keep It Simple. Rev. Tamara Lebak said this best at a GA workshop a few years ago: “I would continually ask myself: What’s the \$10 word for? What do I want to say, and how can I say it so that it is relevant to everyone?” Also applies to music. Consider using easier arrangements of familiar hymns. *Come Sing a Song with Me: A Songbook for All Ages*.

<http://www.uuabookstore.org/Come-Sing-a-Song-with-Me-P17015.aspx>

Be Concrete. Importance of readings, meditations, stories/sermons being concrete, not abstract (toothpaste worship rather than sermon on how we can’t take back our words once they are out).

Keep It Moving. Participation by whole the whole person and the entire congregation at worship (calling out responses, sharing thoughts, adding objects to worship table or other central gathering place). Also includes pacing. Run through the service at least once with participants to avoid awkward moments.

Explain Each Part of the Service. Be attentive to transitions. “Now we’re going to...”; “this is why we...”; “For Unitarian Universalists, it’s important that we...” (good for newcomers as well). Use introduction to hymns as an example. “Now as we prepare ourselves for a moment of silence and reflection, let us ask the Spirit of Life to move in our hearts by singing one of the best-loved hymns in Unitarian Universalism.” *Between the Lines: Sources for Singing the Living Tradition*

Keep it Short. (The sermon, that is). The briefer the better when it comes to sermons. If you must have longer elements, think in terms of chunking them/breaking into smaller segments. Think homily rather than sermon.

Consider How We Learn. Multiple learning styles, add visuals, connections between people,

engaging all five senses. (Review learning styles: Intelligences include visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, inter- and intrapersonal, linguistic, logical-mathematical, naturalistic, and spiritual.) <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/index.html>

Avoid a Need to Read. When it comes to participation, avoid parts which require reading ability (helpful to both oldest and youngest members of congregation plus many in between). Use litanies or call-backs instead of responsive readings. Use familiar songs with words which are easily picked up.

Think Layers. Offer elements with multiple levels of meaning on your theme, like the layers of an onion which can be peeled away, adults will be able to get at the very “heart” of it, while children may only graze the surface. A great example of this was worship at the UUA General Assembly, where between verbal presentation of ways the “Golden Rule” appears in various religious traditions, this song was sung: “Many windows, one light, many waters, one sea—all lifted hearts are free.”

Use Different People of All Ages. Involve people of all ages in different elements of the service: chalice lighting, offering, etc.; consider who is seen and whose voices are heard; ways of sharing beyond joys and concerns. A family choir is a great way to get folks of all ages in front of the congregation.

Provide Tools for Parents. Include some reflective questions in the order of service to take home (and perhaps time in service for parents to explain); questions for adults and for children of varying ages, to stimulate discussion, perhaps within the context of the sermon (appeals to the interpersonal learning style).

Handout 13

The Functions, Purpose, and Meaning of Rituals

By Mark Morrison-Reed, used with permission

Ritual...

- Lifts up moments and makes one mindful of them.
- Provides the structure we need to mark the cycle of the year and seasons of our lives, especially the transitions.
- Acts to embody our beliefs by imprinting our values on our souls.
- Gives moral structure to chaotic lives.
- Holds up that which we prize so that we can offer it our loyalty.
- Structures our social interactions with one another and the holy.
- Makes us more at ease when we enter unfamiliar situations where we do not know the rules and are uncomfortable.
- Is an affirmation of intention.
- Retells the narrative of which our lives are a part; that is, it contextualizes our lives.
- Breaks through the sense of isolation prevalent in modern society and reinforces feelings of belonging, solidarity and community.
- Enables one to act on behalf of the good and be its representative.
- Is a form of “participation mystique,” in which one attaches one’s identity to objects, people and actions greater than one’s self.
- Is how we somatically and emotionally transmit our story and the value embedded in it to our children and subsequent generations.

Handout 14
The Lion and the Mouse
A Fable by Aesop

A small mouse crept up to a sleeping lion. The mouse admired the lion's ears, his long whiskers and his great mane.

"Since he's sleeping," thought the mouse, "he'll never suspect I'm here!"

With that, the little mouse climbed up onto the lion's tail, ran across his back, slid down his leg and jumped off its paw. The lion awoke and quickly caught the mouse between his claws.

"Please," said the mouse, "let me go and I'll come back and help you someday."

The lion laughed. "You are so small! How could you ever help me?"

The lion laughed so hard he had to hold his belly! The mouse jumped to freedom and ran until she was far, far away.

The next day, two hunters came to the jungle. They went to the lion's lair. They set a huge rope snare. When the lion came home that night, he stepped into the trap.

He roared! He wept! But he couldn't pull himself free.

The mouse heard the lion's pitiful roar and came back to help him.

The mouse eyed the trap and noticed that one thick rope held it together. She began nibbling and she nibbled until the rope broke. The lion was able to shake off the other ropes that held him tight. He stood up free again!

The lion turned to the mouse and said, "Dear friend, I was foolish to make fun of you for being small. You helped me by saving my life after all!"

How might Garrido's traits of children be utilized in crafting/presenting a children's worship that includes story, song, chalice lighting, prayer/meditation?

Children...

- ...are not blank slates
- ...are drawn to what is most essential; a single word
- ...are interested in what is real
- ...are filled with wonder and awe
- ...possess absorbent minds
- ...are small in a big world
- ...respond well to both verbal and non-verbal stimuli

Handout 15

Typical Elements of Circle/Youth Worship

Adapted from *Coming of Age Handbook for Congregations*

Gathering: This can be done in many ways: asking people to gather outside the worship space and walk in holding hands and singing, or silently; allowing people to just filter into the room while music is playing and asking them to center themselves; etc. The goal of this component of worship is to create a sacred space.

Opening: This is usually done by lighting a chalice and saying a few words. The words can be simple, like "We light this chalice for love," or they can be a reading that has to do with the worship theme. This sets the tone for the worship.

Song: Songs are generally used to unite the group in a shared activity, and also to liven things up a bit. They are a way to make the worship a creation of the group, not something that can just be taken out of a box and run and then put back in the box. The best songs for circle/youth worship are usually short chants that are easily taught and can be sung without having to look at a book or a sheet of paper.

Reading: Readings are used to give participants a time to reflect and/or center themselves. Readings can be poetry, guided meditations, pieces of songs simply spoken, text from any book for children or adults, or written by anyone planning worship. The readings should have something to do with the theme of the worship.

Centerpiece: In regular Sunday morning worship services, the centerpiece is typically the sermon. In most circle/youth worship, the centerpiece is something participatory. It can be a sharing or a check-in; a dance that everyone takes part in, like a circle dance or a Sufi dance; a time to write, to breathe, or to laugh; or it can be a combination of all these. Examples of centerpieces:

- passing the chalice around and sharing a moment of awe from your past week
- passing a bowl of water and having participants dip their hands, say what they are washing off (e.g., something bad in their life, like stress), and say what they are taking in (e.g. something good, like warmth)
- having participants form two concentric circles and rotate around each other so each member of the inner circle can hold hands and make eye contact with each member of the outer circle

There are also different ways to share, depending on the size of the group.

- Small- to medium-sized groups can go around the circle and give everyone a chance to share (or to pass).
- Medium- to large-sized groups can do a "popcorn-style" or "Quaker" sharing, where people share when they want to, if they want to.
- In very large groups, participants can share with the person next to them, so that everyone gets a chance to share in-depth, but it doesn't take an excessive amount of time. This method works particularly well with a whole congregation.

Reading: Symmetry is good in worship, so it works well to round out worships with another reading and/or song.

Song: See above.

Closing: The closing brings everything together while officially marking the end of the worship. Closings are usually short. They can be brief readings (or writings), a few words like "This worship is ending, but may we continue to hold its spirit in our hearts," or even *fewer* words, like "Blessed be." These words can be followed by a closing song like "Go Now in Peace" (*Singing the Living Tradition*) or by a group hug or a hug circle.

Spirituality Development Conference Team
Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

Handout 16

Guidelines for Worship Module Project

- Product: Twenty-minute worship service for a specific audience (children, youth, adult, or multigenerational), to be presented by teams during Session 5

- Presentation: Full order of service followed by a complete worship service, or a 20-minute segment of one

- Include a story.

- Theme: [as chosen by Renaissance Module leaders]

- Team: Four participants from similar-sized congregations/RE programs; one team member to send the product to all module participants

- Planning Time: Two hours during Sessions 3 & 4

Handout 17

Components of Worship

By Rev. Barbara Pescan, "Components of a Traditional Worship Service" from the Unitarian Universalist Association Spirituality Development Conference Manual (2005); used with permission.

- **Gathering** - Marks the intentional gathering of religious community for the purpose of common worship.
- **Opening** - Opening words, lighting the flame in the chalice. This indicates the opening of the sacred time we have chosen to spend with one another. The music and words heard, sung, and spoken here, the flowers and vestments, the flame of our heritage, are hereby lifted up and vested with special meaning. If we touch each other in greeting, it is sacramental touch. If we look upon each other in acknowledgment, it is sacramental seeing. If we partake of food, the elements are more than they would ordinarily be, because we have declared ourselves to be a community and because we intend to be changed by all these things of which we partake.
- **Acknowledging** - Welcome, covenant, morning song, greeting each other, greeting the children. By this we are open to putting ourselves in the stream of our history, partaking of it; and we acknowledge that we are part of the present company, its values, and its aspirations; its children are our children, its elders are our elders. In this association we will unfold through moments like this, because we wish it so, and because we will act to insure it.
- **Giving** - Offertory, announcements, milestones. By this we participate in the life of the religious community - by the gifts of our physical substance, and by our willing presence. We also address the bounty shared here into the larger community, and its needs and concerns touch us here and demand response from us.
- **Centering** - Prayer or meditation, reflection. This invites a centering down to be aware of what may arise from within or enter from outside us all of the time.

- **Receiving** - Readings, sermon, dance, poetry, visual art. This inspires, informs, deepens, declares the possibilities, encourages, comforts, disturbs. This part may include discussion, talk about. Never a “talk back,” in the sense of argumentation disputation. There are more appropriate forums for these outside of worship.
- **Acknowledging** - Song, responsive reading. This is the congregational response to the end of the service. We who have gathered are about to disperse. It has been good to be together. Let us praise! Let us rejoice in each good and what we have done here.
- **Closing** - Benediction. This marks the end of the sacred time and is an invitation to take what has been shared, strengthened, quickened in this time and place and community out into the rest of life.
- **Dispersing/Postlude** - Benediction. Re-entering the world refreshed, enlivened, touched, changed, challenged, exalted. Doing this to music adds the dimension of moving into the ordinary to the rhythms of the sacred.

Handout 18

Child-Friendly Hymns

Criteria

- Understandable words, related to children's experience
- Readable words
- Not too many words
- Repetition of words or phrases
- Something non-readers can join in on, e.g., "Let My People Go"
- Melodic
- Lively tune
- Interesting rhythm, but not too difficult
- Short or medium length
- Familiar from outside source or from repeated use
- Round
- Invites dance or motions

Some child-friendly hymns in *Singing the Living Tradition*

- 1 May Nothing Evil Cross This Door (one verse at a time)
- 12 O Life That Maketh All Things New (verse 1)
- 16 'Tis a Gift to Be Simple (Sufi Dance or motions)
- 21 For the Beauty of the Earth
- 30 Over My Head
- 42 Morning So Fair to See
- 52 In Sweet Fields of Autumn
- 61 Lo, the Earth Awakes Again
- 63 Spring Has Now Unwrapped the Flowers (verse 1)
- 68 Come, Ye Thankful People
- 95 There is More Love Somewhere
- 99 Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen
- 100 I've Got Peace Like a River
- 104 When Israel Was in Egypt's Land
- 116 I'm on My Way
- 117 This Little Light of Mine

- 131 Love Will Guide Us
- 154 No More Auction Block for Me (some explanation for youngest)
- 155 Oh, Freedom
- 159 This is My Song
- 162 Gonna Lay Down My Sword and Shield
- 168 One More Step
- 169 We Shall Overcome
- 170 We Are a Gentle, Angry People
- 211 We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder
- 212 We Are Dancing Sarah's Circle (I've omitted Christmas carols)
- 268 Jesus Christ is Risen Today
- 269 Lo, the Day of Days is Here
- 291 Die Gedanken Sind Frei
- 348 Guide My Feet
- 361 Enter, Rejoice and Come In
- 362 Rise Up, O Flame (more difficult as a round)
- 367 Allelu, Allelu
- 371-373 (tunes)
- 380-381 (words) Doxologies
- 395 Sing and Rejoice (an easy round)
- 396 Morning Has Come (same tune)
- 400 Shalom Havayreem (round)
- 401 Kum ba Yah (these two use other languages, which kids love)
- 402 From You I Receive (there are motions to this)
- 403 Sleep My Child
- 407 We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table
- 413 Hevenu Shalom Aleychem

Some child-friendly hymns in *Singing the Journey*:

- 1003 Where Do We Come From?
- 1007 There's a River Flowin' in My Soul
- 1008 When Our Heart is in a Holy Place
- 1009 Meditation on Breathing
- 1010 We Give Thanks
- 1012 When I am Frightened
- 1018 Come and Go With Me
- 1020 Woyaya
- 1023 Building Bridges
- 1030 Siyahamba
- 1031 Filled with Loving Kindness
- 1059 May Your Life Be as a Song

- 1064 Blue Boat Home
- 1069 Ancient Mother
- 1073 The Earth is Our Mother

Responsive Reading and Unison Affirmations are generally difficult for children. Look for (or write your own) litanies which repeat one phrase, or readings which are somewhat repetitive. Short lines (such as in poetry) are easier for beginning readers.

Some usable readings from SLT

- 430 For now the winter is past
- 512 We Give Thanks This Day
- 545 In Time of Silver Rain
- 576 A Litany of Restoration
- 577 It is Possible to Live in Peace
- 589 Peace
- 602 If There is to Be Peace
- 642 Psalm 23
- 670 The Way
- 703 Spirit of the East

Many others can be used in part, or read by a leader and repeated by the children, or the congregation as a whole.

Not every hymn or reading has to be suitable for children; none should totally exclude them.

Handout 19

Checklist for Planning Worship

Text by Rev. Jane Eller-Isaacs from the Unitarian Universalist Association Spirituality Development Conference Manual (2005); used with permission.

Within -- Among -- Beyond A time for each: going within yourself (reflection), being in community with others (participation), reaching out beyond ourselves to the wider world and/or the divine.

Ritual A theme that ties your worships together, e.g., a chalice lighting at every worship

Balance/Rhythm/Timing Balance readings, songs, reflection, participation. Make worship flow smoothly. Make sure your worship is not too long or too short.

Context, Steps of Community Building, and Crisis Who is the group for whom you're planning worship? How close a community are they? Make worship activities appropriate to the group's community building stage. If a crisis occurs, offer worship as a place to heal.

-isms Make your worships accessible to all people; try to identify and avoid any institutionalized oppressions in worship activities or worship formats.

Sight -- Sound -- Smell -- Taste -- Touch Appeal to all five senses when possible.

Visual learners -- Auditory learners -- Bodily-kinesthetic learners Balance words, images, and movement in order to reach people with all three learning styles. (Well told stories tend to work equally well with all three styles.)

Worship -- community-building and fun -- leadership -- learning -- social action -- bridging the generations

Handout 20
That Which Holds All
by Nancy Shaffer

[from UUMA Resource Collection](#)

Because she wanted everyone to feel included
In her prayer,
she said right at the beginning
several names for the Holy:
Spirit, she said, *Holy One*, *Mystery*, *God*

But then thinking these weren't enough ways of addressing
That which cannot fully be addressed, she added
Particularities, saying, *Spirit of Life*, *Spirit of Love*,
Ancient Holy One, *Mystery We Will Not Ever Fully Know*,
Gracious God, and also *Spirit of this Earth*,
God of Sarah, *Gaia*, *Thou*.

And then, tongue loosened, she fell to naming
superlatives as well: *Most Creative One*,
Greatest Source, *Closest Hope*—
even though superlatives for the Sacred seemed to her
probably redundant; but then she couldn't stop:

One Who Made the Stars, she said, although she knew
technically a number of those present didn't believe
the stars had been made by anyone or thing
but just luckily happened.

One Who Is an Entire Ocean of Compassion, she said,
and no one laughed.

That Which Has Been Present Since Before the Beginning,
she said, and the room was silent.

Then although she hadn't imagined it this way,
others began to offer names.

Peace, said one.

One My Mother Knew, said another.

Ancestor, said a third.

Wind.

Rain.

Breath, said one near the back.

Refuge.

That Which Holds All.

A child said, *Water*.

Someone said, *Kuan Yin*.

Then: *Womb*.

Witness.

Great Kindness.

Great Eagle.

Eternal Stillness.

And then, there wasn't any need to say the things
she'd thought would be important to say,
and everyone sat hushed until someone said

Amen.

Handout 21

The Best Worship Space Possible

1. It is clean, organized and cared for.

- Pew racks are straightened and reviewed with current materials and free of outdated ones
- Carpet and surfaces are vacuumed, dusted
- Organ/piano is maintained and tuned
- Technology (cords, laptops, CD players) is unobtrusive

2. It demonstrates thought and planning of the placement of chancel furniture (lectern/pulpit, chalice, altar table, piano, worship leader seating) for each worship service.

- It is appealing to the eye; furniture does not block worshiper's view
- It is placed for a reason

3. It is mindful of the arrangement and care of sacred objects.

- Chalice is clean, free of wax, spent matches and candles
- Flowers/objects are fresh or clean and attractively arranged
- Cloth, banners are clean and pressed

4. It is open to new ways of using the space.

- Chairs/pews might be rearranged
- Ways to project images can be explored
- Ways to encourage movement, with fixed pews, are possible

5. It welcomes and values all who worship there.

- It is inclusive regarding the needs of the differently abled, young children, elders, etc.
- It provides large print orders of service
- It offers hearing devices
- There are activity boxes for children; doodle pads for older children/adults
- There are hard copy hymnals for music readers
- Microphones are in place for anyone who speaks, depending on size of worship area
- The temperature is regulated and monitored
- An emergency exit plan is known and annually practiced
- There are fire extinguishers in the worship space that meet city/state code

Handout 22

Honoring and Respecting Our World's Cultures

- How much do I know about the particular tradition this worship comes from? How do I respect it and not misrepresent it?
- What do I know of the history and experience of the people from whom I am borrowing?
- Does this borrowing distort, water down, or misinterpret the tradition?
- Am I changing the meaning of this worship element to suit my service? Am I changing lyrics or words to suit my theology or my congregation's theology? Why can't the experience these words or actions convey stand for itself?
- Am I overgeneralizing this culture? (Remind yourself that any culture can be quite diverse.)
- What is my motivation for this borrowing? What is being sought and why?
- How do the "owners" of the tradition feel about pieces of the tradition being borrowed? Do I have any personal relationship with anyone who comes from the culture from which I am borrowing?

From *Worship That Works*, 2nd edition by Wayne Arnason and Kathleen Rolenz (questions adapted from the work of Jacqui James)

Handout 23

Anger – A Buddhist Story

From [Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents](#) (Skinner House Books, 2010), collected and adapted by Sarah Conover. Used with permission.

One day, the Buddha and a large following of monks and nuns were passing through a village. The Buddha chose a large shade tree to sit beneath so the group could rest awhile out of the heat. He often chose times like these to teach, and so he began to speak. Soon, villagers heard about the visiting teacher and many gathered around to hear him.

One surly young man stood to the side, watching, as the crowd grew larger and larger. To him, it seemed that there were too many people traveling from the city to his village, and each had something to sell or teach. Impatient with the bulging crowd of monks and villagers, he shouted at the Buddha, "Go away! You just want to take advantage of us! You teachers come here to say a few pretty words and then ask for food and money!"

But the Buddha was unruffled by these insults. He remained calm, exuding a feeling of loving-kindness. He politely requested that the man come forward. Then he asked, "Young sir, if you purchased a lovely gift for someone, but that person did not accept the gift, to whom does the gift then belong?"

The odd question took the young man by surprise. "I guess the gift would still be mine because I was the one who bought it."

"Exactly so," replied the Buddha. "Now, you have just cursed me and been angry with me. But if I do not accept your curses, if I do not get insulted and angry in return, these curses will fall back upon you—the same as the gift returning to its owner."

The young man clasped his hands together and slowly bowed to the Buddha. It was an acknowledgement that a valuable lesson had been learned. And so the Buddha concluded for all to hear, "As a mirror reflects an object, as a still lake reflects the sky: take care that what you speak or act is for good. For goodness will always cast back goodness and harm will always cast back harm."

Handout 24
The Promise and the Practice

Note: You may access this handout as a PDF file on the UUA website:

https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/the_promise_and_the_practice_revised_worship_guidelines.docx.pdf

**OCTOBER 2017 | REV. ERIKA HEWITT, MINISTER OF WORSHIP ARTS, UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION**



The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith

Worship Guidelines,
Components, & Service Outline

What is ‘The Promise & the Practice’?

It’s a turning moment; a choice to listen deeply to the stories in our movement that have not been heard, and taken to heart, by all Unitarian Universalists. It’s a lamenting of what our Unitarian Universalist tradition and congregations have lost by being unable – or unwilling – to center people of color (or even, at times, to merely include them). The Promise and the Practice is a celebration of our shared commitment to live into a new chapter in the story of our UU faith.

How is The Promise and the Practice Sunday different than the White Supremacy Teach-Ins?

Both events seek to draw attention to the presence and patterns of white supremacy in our UU congregations and systems. Both events also ask UUs to halt those patterns – individual as well as collective – as we build a new way together.

What’s different about The Promise and the Practice is its intention of creating a soul-deep space of feeling and experiencing the power of this moment in our UU story. These worship materials center the voices and stories of black UUs, so your entire worship service calls upon the lived experience of black religious professional as sacred text. This service invites white UUs to bear witness to that pain as a place of connection, recognizing all that’s been lost in our tradition.

Because The Promise and the Practice is an intentional centering of black voices – and in a departure from traditional “asks” – we highly encourage white clergy, preachers, and other worship leaders to decenter their own voices and identity by **not writing sermons, homilies, or other significant worship material for this Sunday.**

To reinforce the feeling, heart-centered nature of The Promise and The Practice as an opportunity for atonement and re-creation – which is both complex and sacred work – these worship materials include a ritual (or, if you like, an embodied, participatory moment of healing) as a symbolic “turning” from past to future.

Finally, we ask that The Promise and The Practice be grounded in the opportunity for every Unitarian Universalist congregation to align its finances with our theology, and to pledge at least \$10 per member to this campaign. All gifts are needed, and every gift is appreciated. If your congregation is able to reach the threshold of \$10 per member, Black Lives of UU (BLUU) [will receive a dollar for dollar match for your contribution](#). Together, we’re striving to fulfill this \$1 million match opportunity.

“We Will Story Our Own Lives”

The worship components in this packet were created specifically for The Promise and the Practice Sunday by black religious professionals who were compensated for their time, wisdom, and skills. Through dialogue and covenant, they chose to “story” their own lives – that is, to draw from their lived experience and make of it a text to be absorbed by UUs of all races and ethnicities. We’re grateful for the courage and vision offered by these writers:

- [Viola Abbitt](#)
- [Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel](#)
- [DeReau Farrar](#)
- [Adrian Graham](#)
- [Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson](#)
- [Rayla Baldwin Mattson](#)
- [Rev. Rebekah Montgomery](#)
- [Erica Shadowsong](#)

- [Connie Simon](#)

In addition to those worship resources, religious educator [Jae Pema-la Scott](#) created one-time religious exploration curricula for two age groups:

1. [Mending the Broken Chalice](#) (for K-5)
2. [Beginning Anew](#) (for Youth)

Suggested Newsletter/Website Blurb

If you're wondering how to present The Promise and the Practice to your worshipping community in advance, these may be helpful:

- What would it be like if our UU worship service centered entirely around the voices and the experiences of black Unitarian Universalists? What truths might we hear, however difficult? What might we learn? How might these black UU leaders teach us to be better allies, better siblings in faith, and even better citizens in our community?
- In our commitment to *dismantling white supremacy as a system/being anti-racist/diversity/embracing the presence and leadership of people of color* (use the language most appropriate for your setting), white Unitarian Universalists are still learning to decentering our whiteness so that people of color are brought from the margins to the center. Join us as we practice that work, and promise a new way of being together.

Worship Outline & Content

Worship Notes

More and more Unitarian Universalist congregations are making an effort to indicate, in the weekly order of service, which authors and composers are

people of color (POC). **Every writer and musician in this packet is a person of color.** Depending on how you utilize the following musical suggestions, it's possible to create an order of service that draws entirely from POC.

When it comes to weaving your worship service together, be creative with these materials! Note that the worship components below are presented in an order that reflects the intent and spirit of The Promise and the Practice: to shift away from analysis into deep-hearted listening; to inspire all UUs to co-create a new way forward for our faith; and to demonstrate significant financial support for BLUU.

Rather than trying to use every worship component suggested here, read through these materials and choose those that will most strike a chord in your congregation's worship life. For example:

- Instead of choosing one reading and one homily, you might use all three readings as the text for your service
- If you choose to utilize the ritual, you might omit the litany &/or the lamentation
- If you want to create a more embodied service, you might omit the homily in favor of a longer ritual, more music, and even part of Jae Scott's "Mending the Broken Chalice" curriculum.

Suggested Music

These musical pieces have been curated by Amanda M. Thomas, Director of Music at Second Unitarian Church of Chicago, and Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, Director of Worship and Music at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor:

- **Hymns**

1. #1007, "There's There's a River Flowing in My Soul"

2. #1040, "Hush"
3. #153, "Oh, I Woke Up This Morning"
4. #1008, "When Our Heart Is in a Holy Place" (for the text: when we hear our voices in each other's words, **then** our heart is in a holy place)
5. #95, "There Is More Love Somewhere." (Dr. Rideout has also written a [reflection about this hymn.](#))

- **Choir pieces**

1. "The Storm is Passing Over" by Charles Albert Tindley
2. "The Gift to Be Free," arr. Dilworth (Dilworth is a POC)
3. "Stand by Me" Tindley, arr. Hogan (Tindley & Hogan are POC)
4. "Order My Steps" by Glenn Burleigh; "[I Don't Feel No Ways Tired](#)" by James Cleveland (Rev. Cleveland is POC; excerpt: "*I don't feel no ways tired/I've come too far from where I started from/Nobody told me that the road would be easy/I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me.*")

- **Choir pieces with a significant solo**

1. "Glory" (from "Selma") by John Legend
2. "[Make Them Hear You](#)" (from "Ragtime," about police brutality against brown folks) by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty
3. "[I Believe](#)" by Mark A. Miller (Dr. Rideout comments: "The text was found on the wall of a concentration camp after the end of WWII. Excerpt: /

believe in the sun even when it's not shining... I believe in God, even when God is silent)

4. "[I've Been in the Storm So Long](#)," arranged by Jeffreery L. Ames (Ames is a person of color)

- **Piece for Prelude, Offertory, Postlude**

1. "A Child is Born" by Thad Jones; any Rag by Scott Joplin

Suggested Words to Include in the Welcome

When you welcome people to worship, you might include any of the following:

- "Our worship service this morning is uniquely prophetic: it calls to us who identify as white to listen, humbly and perhaps with some discomfort, to the lived reality of black Unitarian Universalists in our midst. This discomfort is both a gesture of hospitality to voices that have not been heard enough, and a sign that we're growing in the right direction."
- "If you're joining us today as a guest, know that you are witnessing this Unitarian Universalist congregation doing sacred work: collectively, we will wrestle with what it means to be a majority-white faith whose anti-racist intentions have not always been borne out. We invite you to witness this moment of transparency and vision, and to join us on future Sundays for a more traditional worship service."patpk
- "We who are Unitarian Universalists often choose to make ourselves uncomfortable in the service of our meaning-making. We recognize our discomfort as evidence that we're growing. Today, if you feel discomfort arise within you – especially if you're white – we invite you to practice being curious, and to allow your discomfort to lead you to new learning."

Call to Worship

- In her [call to worship](#), Viola Abbitt reminds us that “we are here today because we are mindful of [our] past, and because we have hope for the future.”

Chalice Lighting

- Rev. Rebekah Montgomery’s [chalice lighting](#) names us as “a beloved people united in love and thirsting for restorative justice.”
- The [chalice lighting](#) written by Adrian Graham concludes by asking, “What does your heart know while beholding this holy fire?”

Story for All Ages

Educator Erica Shadowsong explored her own cultural background to provide a [story for all ages](#).

Reading

These personal reflections, each about five minutes long, are offered from the perspective of black Unitarian Universalists who have struggled to find belonging in our movement — or who have been disappointed and hurt by our UU people of faith.

- Connie Simon reflects on the fact that “when I look around on Sunday morning, I don’t see many people who look like me. In most of the congregations I visit, I don’t see anybody who looks like me. So I guess I shouldn’t be surprised that [I don’t hear voices of people who share my experience](#). But it still hurts.”

- Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel reminds us that [words matter](#) – and that when congregations fail to embody their claims to be diverse and welcoming, it’s a hurtful experience for people of color.
- Rev. Kimberly Johnson describes what [“Black joy”](#) means to her, and challenges Unitarian Universalism and Unitarian Universalists to claim Joy.

Pastoral Prayer

For what might we pray, at such a moment as this?

- Connie Simon [invites us to pray](#) “for the courage not only to speak up, but also to listen, even when the words are hard to hear.”
- [“Let us have the wisdom,”](#) prays Viola Abbitt, “to lovingly have the conversations we need to have with each other, that we must have with each other, in order to growth this faith in radical love and inclusion.”

Homily

At their core, the homilies here – each between ten and fifteen minutes – demonstrate vulnerable, bold truth-telling from the perspective of black leaders in our Unitarian Universalist movement.

- Rayla Baldwin Mattson [courageously invites white UUs to listen](#) to her painful reality of remaining silent in unwelcoming UU space.
- Rev. Rebekah Montgomery reflects on a formative experience from her young adult years, as a person of color witnessing a stumbling moment in our UU past, and why [our collective healing is not done](#).
- DeReau Farrar uses economic privilege as a springboard for his conviction that those with an excess of privilege must [denounce their privilege](#), and give it to those with none.

Litany and Lamentation

Without recognition of the wounds in our UU past, it's not possible to engage in healing. These resources are another way to lift up the tender work of finding one another in the midst of our often-clumsy efforts to be a united people of faith.

- In Viola Abbitt's litany "[The Promise That Binds](#)," the congregation is invited to remember that "we are a covenantal people, and the promise of our faith, which was enough to bring us together, should have been enough to bind us together in love."
- In [Lamentation for Two Voices](#), Rev. Erika Hewitt and Rev. Rebekah Montgomery create a dialogue between white voices and voices of color, based on the writing of Michael Eric Dyson.

Ritual

This [ritual by Rev. Carol Thomas Cissel](#) is a beginning, a starting point, a first step taken towards each other. In bringing it to life, you'll blend words, music, and movement while embracing the power of elements taken from the natural world. Our ritual creates an opportunity for our congregations and communities to *Lament* what we have lost, *Petition* for a way forward, look inward and *Confess* our hopes and fears, and then set *Intentions* which honor the past, but lean strongly into the future.

Note: if done thoughtfully, and depending on the number of people in worship (and your worship space), this ritual could easily take over ten minutes.

Call to the Offering

The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith isn't just a looking back and a turning moment before moving forward in a new way; it's also a call to extraordinary generosity: the sharing of congregational "treasure" to

support Black Lives of UU (or BLUU). We recommend that the offering be gathered, and this challenge presented, near the end of your worship service.

You may want to invite the offering by showing [the video appeal](#) made by UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and Lena Gardner, Executive Director of Black Lives of UU.

If you can't show the video, you can adapt its [transcript](#) to suit the needs of your congregation.

Benediction

We invite you to close your worship service with a reminder about our ongoing commitment:

- Rev. Rebekah Montgomery writes, "[here we are reborn – forged by a greater courage....](#)"
- Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson riffs on a gospel hymn in her "[Hush](#)" benediction.
- "[We are not perfect, but we are perfectly fitted for this day](#)," offers Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson

Questions & Feedback

If you'd like to inquire about or respond to materials here, please contact [Rev. Erika Hewitt](#). Erika especially invites you to send your reports of how these materials worked well in your setting, and how they might be improved so that other congregations can have the most meaningful Promise & Practice Sunday possible. Finally, Erika promises to forward your praise and gratitude (i.e. fan mail) to the authors in this packet.

Handout 25

Selected Resources

Skinner House books are available from the [UUA Bookstore](#). The [Worship section](#) of the UUA Bookstore has many, resources, such as Meditation manuals.

Worship Theory

Arnason, Wayne and Kathleen Rolenz. [Worship That Works, Theory and Practice for Unitarian Universalists 2nd edition](#). Skinner House Books, 2017. Includes a model for contemporary Unitarian Universalist worship. [Discussion questions \(PDF, 10 pages\)](#).

[Ideas for Worship: Spiritually Vital and Alive](#). Video from UUA Conference on Contemporary Worship. Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007

“Making Sure There’s a There There,” Judith Frediani, in [Essex Conversations](#). Skinner House Books, 2001

Richards, Michelle. [Come Into the Circle](#). Skinner House Books, 2008 and [Tending the Flame](#). Skinner House Books, 2010

Rev. Greg Ward’s website, supporting theory, advice and ready-made story frame worship services for all ages www.uuintergenerational.org

Rev. Christina Leone’s “Wonder Box” presentation <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU3es63bWSI>

Garrido, Ann, “Preaching with Children” [video](#)

Hewitt, Erika. *The Shared Pulpit: A Sermon Seminar for Lay People*. Skinner House, 2014 and *Story, Song and Spirit: Fun and Creative Worship Services for All Ages*, Skinner House, 2010

Rzepka, Jane and Sawyer, Kenneth. [Thematic Preaching: An Introduction](#), Chalice Press, 2001

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religious educators, as well)

Practical Considerations

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[Copyright Issues Related to Worship](http://www.uua.org/worship/copyright) <http://www.uua.org/worship/copyright>

Cultural (Mis)Appropriation

<http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/introduction/misappropriation/>

Perspective on Music and Cultural Appropriation from Building the World We Dream About by Rev. Jason Shelton

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/btwwda/workshop15/workshopplan/handouts/166579.shtml>

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Song information and audio clips of selected hymns:
<http://www.uua.org/worship/music/hymnals/journey/songinformation/93778.shtml>
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The Unitarian Universalist Musicians' Network (UUMN) maintains the [UUMN Index of Music for Themed Worship](#), a database of music compatible with dozens of specific worship themes.

Wake, Now, My Senses (Musicopia, 2007), featuring musicians of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland (CA); download at <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/chancelchoir2>

Handout 26

The Difference Between Heaven and Hell

Adapted by Elisa Pearmain from a Japanese and Chinese folk tale.

To tell the story dramatically, tape a spoon to a ruler so that the entire length is longer than your own arm to demonstrate how people ate in hell. When you get to the next paragraph about heaven, tape another spoon to another ruler. Give spoons to two participants. Invite them to pretend to feed each other to illustrate the way the people ate in heaven.

Long ago there lived an old woman who had a wish. She wished more than anything to see for herself the difference between heaven and hell. The monks in the temple agreed to grant her request. They put a blindfold around her eyes, and said, "First you shall see hell."

When the blindfold was removed, the old woman was standing at the entrance to a great dining hall. The hall was full of round tables, each piled high with the most delicious foods — meats, vegetables, fruits, breads, and desserts of all kinds! The smells that reached her nose were wonderful.

The old woman noticed that, in hell, there were people seated around those round tables. She saw that their bodies were thin, and their faces were gaunt, and creased with frustration. Each person held a spoon. The spoons must have been three feet long! They were so long that the people in hell could reach the food on those platters, but they could not get the food back to their mouths. As the old woman watched, she heard their hungry desperate cries. "I've seen enough," she cried. "Please let me see heaven."

And so again the blindfold was put around her eyes, and the old woman heard, "Now you shall see heaven." When the blindfold was removed, the old woman was confused. For there she stood again, at the entrance to a great dining hall, filled with round tables piled high with the same lavish feast. And again, she saw that there were people sitting just out of arm's reach of the food with those three-foot long spoons.

But as the old woman looked closer, she noticed that the people in heaven were plump and had rosy, happy faces. As she watched, a joyous sound of laughter filled the air.

And soon the old woman was laughing too, for now she understood the difference between heaven and hell for herself. The people in heaven were using those long spoons to feed each other.

Handout 27

Homily Writing Tips

Preparation:

- What sets your soul on fire? What insights do you want to explore, explain and share that will minister to the congregation?
- Draw from your own life. Homilies come from real life questions and struggles that have application to our relationships, our work and our inner growth.
- A homily is a conversation that only appears to have one *participant*. In fact, effective preaching is grounded in community and relationship.

Considerations:

- What topic/theme calls to you? If one is assigned, what aspect of it calls to you?
- Who is your audience, in terms of human/faith development?
- What is your homily's message, in a sentence, In a word?
- What sources might inspire and contribute to your homily's development?

Writing:

- Write what you know.
- Know what your conclusions will be before you begin.
- Organize your thoughts.
- Write simply and clearly; think about what you are writing.
- "Show," don't "tell."
- Give yourself adequate time to write, to give the writing time to sit, and to edit.
- Have one major message and support it with two or three main points. Not more.

Handout 28

Two Monks

A Zen Buddhist tale, retold by Jessica York

Two monks set out on a journey, one young, the other older and wiser. It was after the rains and the road was very muddy. At one point in their journey, they encountered a young woman standing before a large mud puddle. The younger monk passed her by, but the older monk offered to lift the young lady and carry her over the puddle. She thankfully accepted his offer and he carried her easily to the other side and put her down. Then the two monks continued on their way.

The farther they walked, the more the older monk noticed a change in the younger monk's behavior. He did not speak and he seemed angry. Finally, the young monk stopped in the middle of the road and confronted the older monk.

"Why did you carry that woman across the road? You know, as holy men, we are forbidden to touch any women, much less one so young and pretty!"

The older monk replied, "It is true that I broke a vow in touching the young woman. However, I put her down back on the road. Why are you still carrying her?"