

SING TO THE POWER

A Tapestry of Faith Program for Children

Grades 4-5



BY REV. LYNN UNGAR

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

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Tapestry of Faith Core Team

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PREFACE

Our Unitarian Universalist tradition has long placed an emphasis both on our human capacity to change the world and our moral obligation to exercise our powers for the common good. We believe each individual, as part of our inherent worth and dignity, has power, and there are many kinds of power as well as many ways to express one's power in the world. *Sing to the Power* uses the metaphor of the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—to investigate different forms of power we each can express. Power does not belong only to adults. This program gives young people opportunities to experience and explore ways they can use their power as agents for positive change.

THE PROGRAM

I am not interested in power for power's sake, but I'm interested in power that is moral, that is right and that is good. — Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The word "power" often has a negative connotation. It may remind us of the corruption that seems inevitable when people pursue power for its own sake. We may feel overwhelmed by the power of giant institutions. But everyone has power, and the capacity to choose how and when to use it.

Sing to the Power affirms our Unitarian Universalist heritage of confronting "powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love." Participants experience their own power, and understand how it can help them to be leaders.

Sing to the Power uses a metaphor of the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—as a framework to explore different forms of power. Four four-session units explore each element. The four elements are illustrated with a large paper or fabric wall hanging begun in the first session and decorated throughout the program.

The program begins with a unit on earth and kinds of power associated with it: Connection, Roots, Growth, and Place. The second unit features kinds of power associated with air: Stillness, Presence, Silence, and Listening. The third unit centers on the powers of fire: Shine, Passion, Action, Reaching Out. The program concludes with three powers of water: Flexibility, Persistence, and Gathering. The final session honors all of the elements' power to Transform.

GOALS

This program will:

- Explore kinds of power that can be used to create positive change
- Enrich Unitarian Universalist identity with stories of people who used their power for the sake of "justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love"
- Develop participants' sense of themselves as leaders
- Promote exercising one's own powers to create positive change, even in very small ways
- Build community, with an emphasis on the power of religious community to change the world for the better.

LEADERS

Leaders should have some experience with Unitarian Universalism and the congregation. Experience or interest in peace and justice issues is important. The ideal teaching team of two adult co-leaders for each session will have some diversity, which might be in gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic class, theological beliefs and/or learning styles. If possible, leadership could include adults comfortable leading songs or providing musical accompaniment. Additional adult or youth volunteers are needed in some sessions to help facilitate small groups.

PARTICIPANTS

This program is written for fourth- and fifth-grade children. You may find it useful to think about the developmental norms for this age group. Not all children arrive at each developmental stage at the same time, but knowing what to expect overall can be helpful, especially to first-time leaders.

In her book, *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), Tracey L. Hurd lists characteristics of the older school-age child:

- Uses gross and fine motor skills, which are almost fully developed
- Enters puberty toward the end of school-age years (particularly girls)
- Is influenced by media images
- Engages in logical thinking
- Practices cognitive skills of acquiring, storing, and retrieving information
- Develops specific learning styles (auditory, visual, sensory, and/or kinesthetic)
- Exhibits domain-specific intelligence (verbal/linguistic, musical/rhythmic, local/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, or naturalist)
- Engages in gender-specific play.

Faith Development Skills

- Uses student identity and knowledge as sources of self-esteem
- Engages peers and learns through mutual friendship
- Comprehends the perspective of others

- Works on developing racial, ethnic and gender identities and seeks peers' affirmation of these identities
- Shows interest in concrete aspects of faith and religion
- "Does" religion or spirituality by participating in traditions
- Explores religious or spiritual ideas as a way of deepening faith.

Moral Development

- Interested in moral issues/ what is fair and right
- Practices figuring out what is fair when developing rules
- Moral decision making is complex
- Practices reconciling moral ideals with pragmatic realities
- Demonstrates interest in broader moral issues
- Reconciles the violence of the world with personal own moral code (e.g., violent video games)
- Interest in knowing and living out moral ideas
- Uses the Golden Rule (treat others as you would like to be treated)
- Wrestles with moral dilemmas in relationships
- Demonstrates awareness of societal moral issues and interest in helping to solve community problems
- Ponders increasingly complex moral and spiritual questions.

INTEGRATING ALL PARTICIPANTS

A group may include children with a range of physical and cognitive abilities and learning styles, food allergies, and other sensitivities or limitations. Adapt activities or use alternate activities to ensure that every session is inclusive of all participants. Sing to the Power was developed with the kinetic learner in mind, offering a variety of activities involving both small and large motor skills. Physical activities are great for participants in this age range who need to move and explore learning with their bodies. However, for children who have limited mobility of their hands, feet, or legs, some of these activities may require adaptation. Leaders should assess the physical requirements of the group early in the program and pay close attention to the sections on Including All Participants which may suggest ways to include children with mobility restrictions in an activity

without eliminating its kinetic aspects, which are integral to this program. You can also some of the alternate activities that employ musical or logical/mathematical intelligences.

FAMILIES

The loving family unit, of whatever configuration, is the primary source of spiritual nurture and religious education in a child's life. The religious education children experience in Sing to the Power is enhanced by involvement of parents or caregivers. Each session includes a Taking It Home section for you to download, customize, and share with families as a handout or email.

Taking It Home summarizes the session's content and provides questions and activities to stimulate family conversations and extension activities at home. With Taking It Home, a parent will have enough details to ask an engaging question, for example: "How do immigration laws affect people you know?" or, "What can we do as a family to reduce our carbon footprint?" Taking It Home also invites parents to share their own life experiences and wisdom with their children, for example, through a personal story about a time the parent stood up to bullying or injustice. Taking it Home also offers ideas for games, rituals, and other activities for the family.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

With the exception of the final session, each session follows the same format. Each session begins with an opening ritual co-led with a volunteer participant. The group sings a verse of the program's theme song "Sing to the Power," tailored to the element and topic for that session. Then the group shares a "power pulse," sending a squeeze of the hand around the circle.

Every session has a story which illustrates the theme of the session, primarily non-fiction examples of people exercising their power. After discussing the story, participants explore the theme through a variety of activities that involve movement and kinetic engagement. Many activities guide children to experience the type of power featured in the session.

Several sessions suggest accessing information or videos online, so it will be helpful to have a computer with Internet access and a large monitor or digital projector.

Participants also co-lead the closing ritual for each session, and each child adds a bead to a bracelet that is created over the course of the program as an ongoing symbol of the kinds of power the children are gathering.

In keeping with the leadership development theme, Faith in Action projects are planned, developed, and executed by participants. Each four session unit is an opportunity to enact a project that fits with the elemental power featured in that unit. Participants choose a project in the first session of the unit, plan the project in the second session, do the project around the time of the third session, and reflect on the project in the last session of that unit. The program assumes that Faith in Action brainstorming, planning, projects, and reflection take place outside the hour-long sessions.

Quote

A quote introduces each session. You may choose to read a quote aloud to the group. However, the quotes are primarily for leaders who may like to discuss them while preparing for a session, to feel grounded in the session theme.

Introduction

Each session Introduction identifies the session topic, describes the story and activities, and may alert you to special preparations needed.

Goals

The Goals state the desired outcomes for the session. Keep the goals in mind as you plan the session, to make the experience a meaningful one for the participants and to help you connect the session's content and methodologies with the four strands of Tapestry of Faith: ethical development, spiritual development, Unitarian Universalist identity development and faith development.

Learning Objectives

These are the intended outcomes, expressed as the learning and development participants will gain by doing the session's core activities.

Session-at-a-Glance

This is a timed list of the session activities in a suggested order. It includes the core activities from the Opening through the Closing for a 60-minute session. The table also shows the Faith in Action activity, which will need additional time. Finally, it lists alternate activities, with their estimated times.

Spiritual Preparation

Each session offers a short Spiritual Preparation exercise to center yourself within the session's purpose and your own related experiences. This exercise will prepare you to be present with the children and provide the best possible learning experience.

Session Plan

The Session Plan provides clear directions for the leaders, for every activity from the Opening to the Closing and Alternate Activities. It includes all the resources you need to lead all of the session activities. If you are reading Sing to the Power online, you can move as you wish among sessions' elements—e.g., stories, activities, handouts. Each element occupies its own web page. You can click on "Print this Page" at any time. However, if you click on "Download Entire Program" or "Download Session," you will have a user-friendly document on your computer that you can customize as you wish, using your own word processing software. Once you decide which activities you will use, format and print only the materials you need.

Opening: Each session begins with a chalice-lighting and sharing of opening words. (For safety, you may wish to use LED/battery-operated lights.) Feel free to shape an opening ritual that suits the group and reflects the culture and practices of your congregation.

Activities: Activities are designed to activate prior knowledge; pique interest; engage children in experiential learning; and encourage them to process and apply their new knowledge. A variety of activities address different learning styles.

Materials for Activity: A checklist tells you the supplies you need for the activity.

Preparation for Activity: Review this "to do" list for each activity at least one week ahead of a session to see any advance work you need to do, from securing parent permissions for an off-site walk to downloading leader resources. **Description of Activity:** Each activity provides detailed directions. Read the activity during your planning process so that you understand each activity and its purpose. Later, when you are leading the group, use it as a step-by-step manual.

Including All Participants: Adaptation to include all participants should always be part of your plan. Some activities use "Including All Participants" to suggest specific modifications—for example, for children with mobility or dexterity limitations—or alternatives, to make the activity accessible and safe for all children who may be in the group.

Faith in Action: An important component of the program, Faith in Action activities give children the opportunity to live their Unitarian Universalist values in the congregation and the world. They often engage leaders, participants, families, and other congregants in social action and service, strengthening faith development and multigenerational bonds.

Devise short- or long-term Faith in Action activities to implement beyond the 60-minute core session plan.

Take advantage of the expertise of congregants, the Internet, and opportunities for service and education in the community.

Taking It Home: Taking It Home helps parents share in their children's religious education experiences. It may include games, conversation topics, ideas for Unitarian Universalist rituals in the home, or book or online sources families can explore. Customize Taking It Home to reflect the actual session activities the children have experienced. Copy it for children to bring home, or send it as a group email.

Alternate Activities: You can substitute alternate activities for a core activity, add one to the session if you have time, or use alternate activities to extend the program for additional weeks. Alternate activities may require more or less time than a core activity; may be simpler or more complicated than core activities; or may be particularly suited for children with developmental or ability differences.

Stories, Handouts and Leader Resources: Following the session's Alternate Activities, you will find the stories and all other resources you need.

Find Out More: This section may offer books, DVDs, websites, audio links, and background information to further explore session topics. Explore them before a session to ground yourself in the session topic.

MATERIALS

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket, and a basket
- Symbol of earth, such as a rock, bowl of dirt, crystal, etc
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

LEADER GUIDELINES

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

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

Preparing with co-leaders is very important. Set up the meeting room, ensure that the materials and equipment are ready, and be very familiar with the session. Do the Spiritual Preparation together, or take a moment before children arrive to share briefly about your expectations for the session.

Share with co-leaders what you know about particular children's family situations and personal sensitivities as they are relevant to a session's topics. For example, if a child's family is facing homelessness and the story for the day centers on a UU community's actions to combat homelessness, both you and the child may encounter an unintended learning experience. Communicate with the other leaders on your team and be ready.

IMPLEMENTATION

These sessions can be used at any time of year. It is recommended they be used in sequence. The order of sessions and activities are designed to help participants with diverse backgrounds and learning styles deepen their learning in community. Because the program is organized in units, significant change to the order of sessions is likely to lead to confusion.

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

Schedule the program around your congregation's holiday traditions. Being part of the life of the congregation is as important for children as attending religious education sessions with their peers.

BEFORE YOU START

This chart provides a snapshot for long-range planning.

Session	Central Story	Faith in Action Activity
1 The Power of Earth	Creation from the Dreamtime: Australian Aboriginal Creation Story	Exploring Ways to Exercise Earth Power
2 The Power of Roots	Where I'm From... : Southern Writer Jo Carson	Planning Our Earth Power
3 The Power of Growth	Putting Dreams into Action: Mark Covington's	Acting on Our Earth Power

	Community Garden	
4 The Power of Place	Harvesting Hope: Partnership with Transylvania	Reflecting on Our Earth Power
5 The Power of Air	Henry David Thoreau and the Still, Small Voice	Exploring Ways to Exercise Air Power
6 The Power of Presence	The Presence of Angels: A Peaceful Protest	Planning Our Air Power
7 The Power of Silence	One Square Inch of Silence	Acting on Our Air Power
8 The Power of Listening	Building a Beacon: Don Robinson and Beacon House	Reflecting on Our Air Power
9 The Power of Fire	A Sea of Pink: Standing Up to Bullies	Exploring Ways to Exercise Our Fire Power
10 The Power of Passion	The Power of Half: Hanna Salwen	Planning Our Fire Power
11 The Power of Action	Taking the Heat: 350.org and Action to Fight Climate Change	Acting on Our Fire Power
12 The Power of Reaching Out	Standing on the Side of Love: Immigration	Reflecting on Our Fire Power
13 The Power of Water	The Creation of the Grand Canyon	Exploring Ways to Exercise Our Water Power
14 The Power of Persistence	Phebe Hanaford Gets the Vote	Planning Our Water Power
15 The Power of Gathering	Water Justice Tours	Acting on Our Water Power
16 The Power to Make Change	The Four Creations: A Hopi Creation Story	Reflecting on Our Water Power

RESOURCES

[*Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=706) by Tracey L. Hurd (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005)

[*The Gift of Faith*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=10): *Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children* by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar *Second Edition* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2003)

[*Welcoming Children with Special Needs*](#) (at www.uuabookstore.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=756): *A Guidebook for Faith Communities* by Sally Patton (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2004)

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2005)

The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book by Bob Greyson (Torrance, CA: Frank Schaffer Publications, Inc., 2001)

includes more than 100 group projects, games and activities. These include activities for multiple intelligences and a variety of learning styles. All games are easy to play, require little or no preparation, are adaptable to a variety of situations and skill levels, and provide step-by-step instructions.

Junkyard Sports by Bernie DeKoven (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, 2005) offers 75 innovative, creative demonstration games that foster leadership, compassion and cooperation as participants adapt games to suit a wide range of ages and abilities. Games are based on six traditional team sports including soccer; baseball and volleyball yet use nontraditional approaches.

The Arts and Spirituality

Tapestry of Faith offers two online supplementary resources to enrich the teaching and learning experience: [Spirituality and the Arts in Children's Programming](#) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/resources/arts/index.shtml) by Dr. Nita Penfold and [Making Music Live](#) (at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/makingmusic/index.shtml) by Nick Page. The first provides

guidance for using arts in creative, spiritual ways, and the second demonstrates how to incorporate music into religious education, including how to teach songs even if you are not a musician.

Scribble Art: Independent Creative Art Experiences for Children by Mary Ann F. Kohl, 2nd revised edition (Bellingham, WA: Bright Ring Publishing, 1994) includes many media: drawing, painting, assemblage, printmaking, collage, sculpture and crafts. It contains open-ended projects suitable for a wide age span. Each page presents one project and is illustrated with line drawings. Each project is coded to show at a glance how much time and preparation are needed and what age or experience levels are appropriate.

Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

There are seven [Principles](http://www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml) (at www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml) which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism draws from many [Sources](http://www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml) (at www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml):

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

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

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

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

Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation:

Number of Participants:

Age range:

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

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

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

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

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

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Name of Program or Curriculum:

Congregation or group:

Your name:

Overall, what was your experience with this program?

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

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

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

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

SESSION 1: THE POWER OF EARTH

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. — Rachel Carson, 20th-century environmental activist

This program uses the metaphor of the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—to look at ways we can exercise our power in the world. It encourages participants to explore their sources of strength and to think and act as leaders who affect change.

An Australian Aboriginal creation story introduces the power of earth and the power of song. The children learn a theme song for this program. They explore the concept that the power of earth is the power of grounding and connection. Activities help participants get to know one another better; finding their connections deepens their sense of earth power. Participants create a graphic image of the four elements as four quarters of a circle, to use for the duration of this program.

Alternate Activity 1 in every session is an opportunity to include Joys and Sorrows in your Opening ritual.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce concepts and rituals of the program
- Nurture connections among participants
- Explore the sometimes surprising ways that we are connected
- Link the first and seventh Unitarian Universalist Principles, by affirming that in valuing each one of us, we build connections among all of us.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn the Sing to the Power theme song and Opening and Closing rituals
- Discover ways everyone is grounded in their own life and location
- Discover connections that tie people together
- Understand the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) by creating a graphic representation

- Articulate that power has many forms, and that each of us can choose to exercise many kinds of power.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Creation from the Dreamtime	10
Activity 2: Song — Learn "Sing to the Power"	5
Activity 3: Personal Interviews	10
Activity 4: Building a Web of Connections	10
Activity 5: Circle of Elements Mural	15
Faith in Action: Exploring Ways to Exercise Earth Power	35
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Personal Connections Poster	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- In what ways, metaphorically and literally, does the earth connect you to other life, in the human and non-human world?
- What helps you feel grounded? What undergirds your sense of self?
- Where in nature do you experience the sacred?
- What sources of your own power are you most aware of at this moment?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Leader Resource 1, [Opening Words for Basket](#) (included in this document) , and a basket
- Symbol of earth, such as a rock, bowl of dirt, crystal, etc
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- Print Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket. Cut apart the short readings and place them in the basket. (Feel free to add additional readings throughout the program.)
- Print extra copies of Leader Resource 1, so you will be able to invite children to choose a reading in advance to read aloud in a future session's Opening. Keep some copies on hand throughout the program.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment. Explain that today you will lead the opening circle, but in future meetings, members of the group will serve as leaders.

Select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Then, place the earth symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of earth, the ground on which we all stand together." Light the chalice.

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we will focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we will send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person on the left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person their left, followed by each person in rapid

succession, sending the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse, while still holding hands. Ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Participants who are uncomfortable being touched may be given the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — CREATION FROM THE DREAMTIME (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Creation from the Dreamtime](#) (included in this document) "
- Optional: Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions and choose ones that will best help these children interpret the story and relate it to their own lives.
- Optional: Print the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources so you can refer to them during this activity's discussion.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable. You might say:

We just heard a creation story, one of many from Australian Aboriginal cultures in different parts of the continent. Of course, other cultures and other religions have creation stories, too. You may have heard the creation story from the Hebrew Bible of how God created people by

breathing life into the nostrils of a person shaped out of dirt. Both these stories share a sense that people are directly connected to the land, that we are grounded in the earth we came from.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- Are there places in nature that feel special or sacred to you?
- What activities or practices make you feel connected to the earth?
- The Australian Aborigines believe sacredness is alive in the natural world around them. Many of their other beliefs are grounded in that important belief. What are some of the important beliefs—the big ideas—our Unitarian Universalist beliefs are grounded in? [Examples: Our first Principle, which affirms the inherent worth and dignity of all people, is an important grounding for UU beliefs. The Sources section of our Principles and Sources statement gives many examples of what Unitarian Universalism is grounded in, including wisdom from our Jewish and Christian heritage, scientific thought, and earth-based spirituality.]

ACTIVITY 2: SONG — LEARNING "SING TO THE POWER" (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 2, "[Now Let Us Sing](#) (included in this document) ," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2 and learn the song so you will be able to teach it from memory. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). If you wish, invite a guest song leader to help teach the song.
- On newsprint, copy the words to the song, from Leader Resource 2. Leave space to add new phrases throughout the program, then add the first one: "earth below."

Description of Activity

Participants learn the Sing to the Power theme song.

Begin by asking, "Do you think singing has any special power?" Prompt by reminding participants of the important role of singing in the Civil Rights Movement and other movements for social change. Ask if they can remember a time they sang together with a group, such as in your congregation, at a birthday party, or in a chorus at school, and how that felt. Then say:

In singing, everyone's voice can be heard at the same time; we are all leaders together. Singing with others involves putting yourself out there in the world. It also involves listening. These are two forms of power we will talk about more.

Sing to the Power has a theme song which will be part of our opening ritual each time we meet. It is a two-part song, and once we learn to sing both parts, some of you might volunteer to lead one part.

Point out that this is a "zipper" song, in which a single word is changed each verse. Say that in the future the children may suggest additional words to "zip" into the song. Explain that the first "zipper" will be to swap in the words "earth below" in place of "faith (hope, joy, love) within," because today we are talking about earth power.

Teach the song by singing one phrase at a time and having the participants sing the phrase back to you, then put the phrases together as a whole song. If you are singing the song in two parts, it helps to have a strong leader (child or adult) for each part. If your group has difficulty singing the song in two parts, you may choose to focus on the upper part first, and teach the lower part once the first part is very familiar.

Save the newsprint with song lyrics, for future sessions.

ACTIVITY 3: PERSONAL INTERVIEWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Questions for Interviews](#) (included in this document)
- Bell or chime

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Questions for Interviews, for all participants.

Description of Activity

Participants find out more about who each are, their sense of place, and their connections to one another.

Form pairs. Give each pair a copy of Handout 1 and invite the partners to interview one another. Suggest they start with the questions on the handout, then think of more questions to find out what they have in common. Say that anyone may pass, or say "I don't know," to any question—they are sure to find enough items they can then share about each other with the group.

Allow three minutes for each partner to interview the other. To make sure that there is time for both people, ring a bell or chime after three minutes and ask the partners to switch roles.

After the second interview, join together again as a group. Invite participants to reflect on the experience. Did they learn things they hadn't known about someone they knew well? What new connections do they feel with their interview partner, after sharing information? Did they prefer asking the questions or giving the answers? What helps them feel connected to another person?

ACTIVITY 4: BUILDING A WEB OF CONNECTIONS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Large ball of yarn

Description of Activity

This activity makes visible and tangible some of the web of connection that unites us. Have all participants sit in a circle. Acknowledge that they may have created a yarn web in the past. Tell them this time they will use the information they gathered in their interviews. Say:

Let's think of this web of yarn not so much as a spider's web, but rather as a web of roots, like the roots below the ground that connect plants together below the ground. All of us are grounded in the particulars of our own lives, but all of us have roots that intertwine with the roots of others. These interconnected roots give us strength, support and a sense of belonging that empowers us to act in the world.

Wrap the end of the yarn around your wrist. They will then share one fact they learned about their interview partner. (Example: "Judith has a dog.") Anyone else for whom that fact is also true will raise their hand, and the ball of yarn is tossed around to each of them. Each person who receives the ball of yarn will wrap the yarn around their wrist before using the other hand to toss the yarn to another person who shares that trait in common. If no other person shares that trait, the person holding the yarn may choose another person in the circle to whom to throw the ball of yarn. This person will share a fact they learned about their interview partner, and the game continues. Make sure every person has a chance

to share a fact about their partner. If you have time, share multiple facts.

Including All Participants

If any participants have impaired vision or coordination the yarn can be rolled or carried to and from them.

ACTIVITY 5: CIRCLE OF ELEMENTS MURAL (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 3, [Circle of Elements Mural Instructions](#) (included in this document)
- Paper, poster board, or fabric
- Paper or fabric and appropriate drawing tools (crayons, markers, permanent markers, or fabric paint), and tape or glue sticks
- Optional: Magazines to cut up, scissors (including left-handed scissors), and glue sticks
- Optional: Found objects that might represent earth, such as dried leaves or pebbles, and a hot glue gun

Preparation for Activity

- Using Leader Resource 3, plan how you will create and display a graphic mural to represent the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water:
 - Identify a wall space or easel you can use for the duration of this program. You will need enough wall space to post, over the course of the program, 16 six-inch circles in a circle. In the middle area, you will post four circle quadrants—one for each element. The children will decorate a new quadrant in each session that introduces a new element. This session introduces earth. Session 5 introduces air; Session 9 introduces water; Session 13 introduces fire.
 - Obtain materials for the mural and for drawings/decorations the children will create and post on the mural. You might use large sheets of paper or poster board, or a fabric such as canvas to make the mural. You can cut the paper or fabric into four quarters of a large circle. Or, you can draw a circle with four quadrants on one very large sheet. As Leader Resource 3 shows, the mural takes the shape of a circle with a cross marking the quarters. The bottom left

quarter will represent earth; the top left quarter, air; the top right, fire; and the bottom right, water. Make all four quarters now. You may wish to display all four quarters beginning with this session. Or, reveal it gradually, adding a new quarter at each session that introduces a new element.

- Set out materials on work tables for children to prepare drawings or decorations to post in the "earth" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural.
- Optional: Set up a station where an adult can guide participants' use of a glue gun.

Description of Activity

This activity introduces the graphic representation of four kinds of elemental power we embody (earth, air, fire, and water) which the group will build as the program proceeds. At the beginning of each four-session block, the children decorate a quadrant of the circle-shaped graphic to illustrate the new element. At the end of each session, the children add a small circle to the border of the quadrant they are exploring. Each quadrant has four circles with words that lift up aspects of that element's power; today's circle frames the word "connection," a part of earth power.

Tell the group:

We'll have chances to explore four kinds of power in this program: earth power, air power, fire power, and water power. Today we'll start a mural by decorating the bottom left area with symbols of earth power.

Distribute paper or fabric and markers, magazines and scissors, and found objects or other decorations you have obtained. Invite the children to decorate a piece which you will then help them attach to the "earth" section of the mural. Explain how you will help participants use the glue gun, if you have one.

Save several minutes to engage the group in clean-up.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Opening Words for Basket](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 3, [Circle of Elements Mural Instructions](#) (included in this document)
- Leader Resource 4, ["Connection" Circle](#) (included in this document) , and tape
- Leader Resource 5, [Closing Words for Basket](#) (included in this document) , and a basket

- Circle of Elements mural from Activity 5
- For beads: Elastic cord, large beads in earth-tone colors (one for each participant, plus a few extra)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 4 on green or tan paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Connection" circle, by referring to Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- Print Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket. Cut apart the short readings and place them in the basket. (Feel free to add additional readings throughout the program.)
- Print an extra copy of Leader Resource 5, and make sure you have an intact copy of Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket. You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies of Leader Resource 1 and Leader Resource 5 on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).
- Cut elastic cord into bracelet lengths—approximately 6 inches, one for each participant plus a few extra. At one end of each length, make a knot large enough to secure a bead.
- Decide where you will keep the bracelets between sessions. The bracelets are used in every Closing, so we suggest you keep them in your religious education space rather than sending them home with the children. You might use the Closing Words Basket to hold the bracelets-in-progress.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to first clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "connection" circle (Leader Resource 4) outside the "Earth" quadrant of the

Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Leader Resource 3. Say:

Earth power connects us, like roots that weave together under the ground.

Explain that over the course of this program the children will create bead bracelets that represent the different kinds of elemental power. Invite each participant to take a bead and a length of string, and, as they take the items, to share one connection they have with someone else in the room.

Choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it in closing.

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

Invite participants to put the bracelets they started in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute Taking It Home. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXPLORING WAYS TO EXERCISE EARTH POWER (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Stickers or adhesive dots

Preparation for Activity

- Research groups in your area that do justice or service work that connects with the theme of "earth power"—for example, any organization that deals with food, such as a food pantry or soup kitchen, any organization that connects people with the earth, such as a community garden or nature preserve; or, using "earth power" as a metaphor, any organization that helps people become grounded in their place and heritage, such as a local history museum.

Description of Activity

In keeping with this program's theme of building leadership, the Faith in Action projects help participants build skills in identifying, planning, executing, and reflecting on work for the common good. Rather than offering a detailed project for each session, Sing to the Power provides structured ways for participants to voice their interests and follow through on their commitments.

Faith in Action projects are presented in four-session blocks, in keeping with the four-session units for each element.

An action project begins with identifying a need. Begin by explaining that the group will create and carry out a Faith in Action project based on the theme of "earth power." Offer, and write down on newsprint, examples of local groups or individuals whose work connects with earth power. Invite participants to share any other examples of people working with earth power that they can think of. Record these contributions. Then ask participants to brainstorm ideas of projects they might be able to do within a month (or, the time frame of the earth power sessions). Write down all suggestions (including any ideas you might have).

Give each participant three stickers or dots. Ask them to vote for the suggestions they like best using their dots. They may put all three dots on one idea, or distribute them among up to three ideas. When voting is complete, identify the three ideas that got the most votes.

Now lead a discussion about what it would take to successfully complete each of the "top three" projects. What would be involved? What resources would you need? How much time would it take, and when would you spend that time? Who would you connect with? What might you learn? How might you contribute to the world?

When you have discussed all three projects, give each participant one more sticker/dot. Have them vote by placing their dot by the project they prefer. The project with the most votes will be your Faith in Action project for the month.

Including All Participants

Make sure you encourage quieter/more shy participants to share their views. Do not allow children who think the quickest or speak the loudest to dominate the discussion.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. — Rachel Carson, 20th-century environmental activist

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard an Australian Aboriginal story of the creation of the world from the dreamtime. We introduced the idea that the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—represent different kinds of power that each of us can use to make the world a better place.

We explored the earth power of connection by interviewing one another and identifying the many ways we are connected.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about the various ways members of your family are connected. What interests do you have in common? What friends do you have in common? How are you all connected to your neighborhood, your congregation, your city, and your country?

EXTEND THE TOPIC TOGETHER. How are you connected to the earth? As a family, spend time on an earth-based activity: Pull weeds in a garden, plant herbs in pots, dig for worms, or build a sand castle.

FAMILY RITUAL. When Moses encounters God in the form of a burning bush, God tells him: "Take off your shoes, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." Invite your family into a sacred moment by taking off your shoes and feeling the ground under your feet. Imagine that your feet are growing roots, spreading out under the earth. Imagine that your roots entangle with the roots of the trees and plants around you, joining you in an underground web of connection. End your ritual by thanking the earth for holding you and the plants for supporting you.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes

out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private, especially since this is the first time the group is doing this activity. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS POSTER (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Drawing paper, 11x17-inch
- Plain pencils and color pencils

Description of Activity

Participants understand the connections that surround and ground them, by creating a visual depiction.

Distribute paper and set out pencils for children to share. Invite children to write their own name in the center of a sheet of paper. Then ask them to use a plain pencil to write the names of as many people as they can think of who matter in their life. This might include family members, friends, teachers, members of their sports team, scouting group, or band, people who work at shops they frequent, congregation members, neighbors, etc. Encourage children to spread the names all across the page and leave as much room as possible between names. Once you see most of the children have written many names, ask participants to use color pencils to draw lines to connect the names of everyone who knows one another. Mention that every name on the page will need a line to them (the person making the poster). Tell children to also draw lines between their family members, between their friends who also know one another, between neighbors who know one another, between congregation members who know one another, etc.

Encourage the children to take their artwork home and post it where it will remind them of the connections that ground them.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 1: STORY: CREATION FROM THE DREAMTIME

Adapted from an Aboriginal creation story from Australia.

When the earth was new-born, it was plain and without any features or life. There were no rivers or mountains, no trees, no grasses, only flat red earth as far as the eye could see—except that there were no eyes for seeing. Waking time and sleeping time were the same. There were only hollows on the surface of the Earth which, one day, would become waterholes. Around the waterholes were the ingredients of life.

Underneath the crust of the earth were the stars and the sky, the sun and the moon, as well as all the forms of life, all sleeping. All the tiniest details of life were present, yet not awake or alive: the head feathers of a cockatoo, the thump of a kangaroo's tail, the gleam of an insect's wing, the rustle of eucalyptus leaves in the wind.

A time came when time itself split apart and sleeping time separated from waking time. This moment was called the Dreamtime. At this moment everything started to burst into life.

The sun rose through the surface of the Earth and shone warm rays onto the hollows, melting ice which became waterholes. Under each waterhole lay an Ancestor, an ancient man or woman who had been

asleep through the ages. The sun filled the bodies of each Ancestor with light and life, and the Ancestors began to give birth to children. Their children were all the living things of the world, from the tiniest grub wriggling on a leaf to the broadest-winged eagle soaring in the blue sky.

Rising from the waterholes, the Ancestors stood up with mud falling from their bodies. As the mud slipped away, the sun opened the Ancestors' eyelids. They saw the creatures they had made from their own bodies. Each Ancestor gazed at their creation in pride and wonderment. Each Ancestor sang out with joy: "I am!" One Ancestor sang "I am kangaroo!" Another sang "I am Cockatoo!" The next sang "I am Honey-Ant!" and the next sang "I am Lizard!"

As they sang, naming their own creations, they began to walk. Their footsteps and their music became one, calling all living things into being and weaving them into life with song. The ancestors sang their way all around the world. They sang the rivers to the valleys and the sand into dunes, the trees into leaf and the mountains to rise above the plain. As they walked they left a trail of music.

Then they were exhausted. They had shown all living things how to live, and they returned into the Earth itself to sleep. We don't see them, but they are still present in every sacred place, and their music still hums through the world. In honor of their Ancestors, the Aborigines still go Walkabout, retracing the steps and singing the songs, connecting this waking time to the Dreamtime.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 1: HANDOUT 1: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

Where were you born?

Where do you live? Have you always lived there? If not, how many times have you moved?

Do you have siblings?

Do you have pets?

When did you begin coming to this congregation?

What is your favorite ritual or celebration in this congregation?

What hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

What is your favorite thing to do outside?

Do you like to hike or camp? If so, where is your favorite place to go?

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 1: OPENING WORDS FOR BASKET

The authors of these readings have given approval for their use.

We gather this hour as people of faith
With joys and sorrows, gifts and needs
We light this beacon of hope, sign of our quest
For truth and meaning,
In celebration of the life we share together.

Christine Robinson, Reading 448, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Life is a gift for which we are grateful. We gather in community to celebrate the glories and the mysteries of this gift.

Marjorie Montgomery, Reading 452, *Singing the Living Tradition*

May the light we now kindle
Inspire us to use our powers
To heal and not to harm,
To help and not to hinder,
To bless and not to curse,
To serve you,
Spirit of freedom.

from a Jewish Passover Haggadah, Reading 453, *Singing the Living Tradition*

We are Unitarian Universalists
With minds that think (hands tap head lightly)
Hearts that love (hands tap heart lightly)
And hands that are ready to serve (hands outstretched).

David Herndon (from *Rejoice Together*)

We light this chalice to celebrate the love within us, among us, and all around us.

David Herndon (from *Rejoice Together*)

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 2: "NOW LET US SING"

Hymn 368 Singing the Living Tradition. Author unknown.

Now Let Us Sing

368

The musical score is written for a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 116. The lyrics are: "1. Sing to the power of the Now let us sing, sing, faith with-in. Sing to the power of the sing, sing. Now let us sing, sing, faith with-in. Lift up your voice, be not a - sing, sing. Lift up your voice, be not a - be not a-fraid, sing to the power of the faith with-in. afraid, now let us".

2. Sing to the power of the hope within. . . .

3. Sing to the power of the love within. . . .

4. Sing to the power of the joy within. . . .

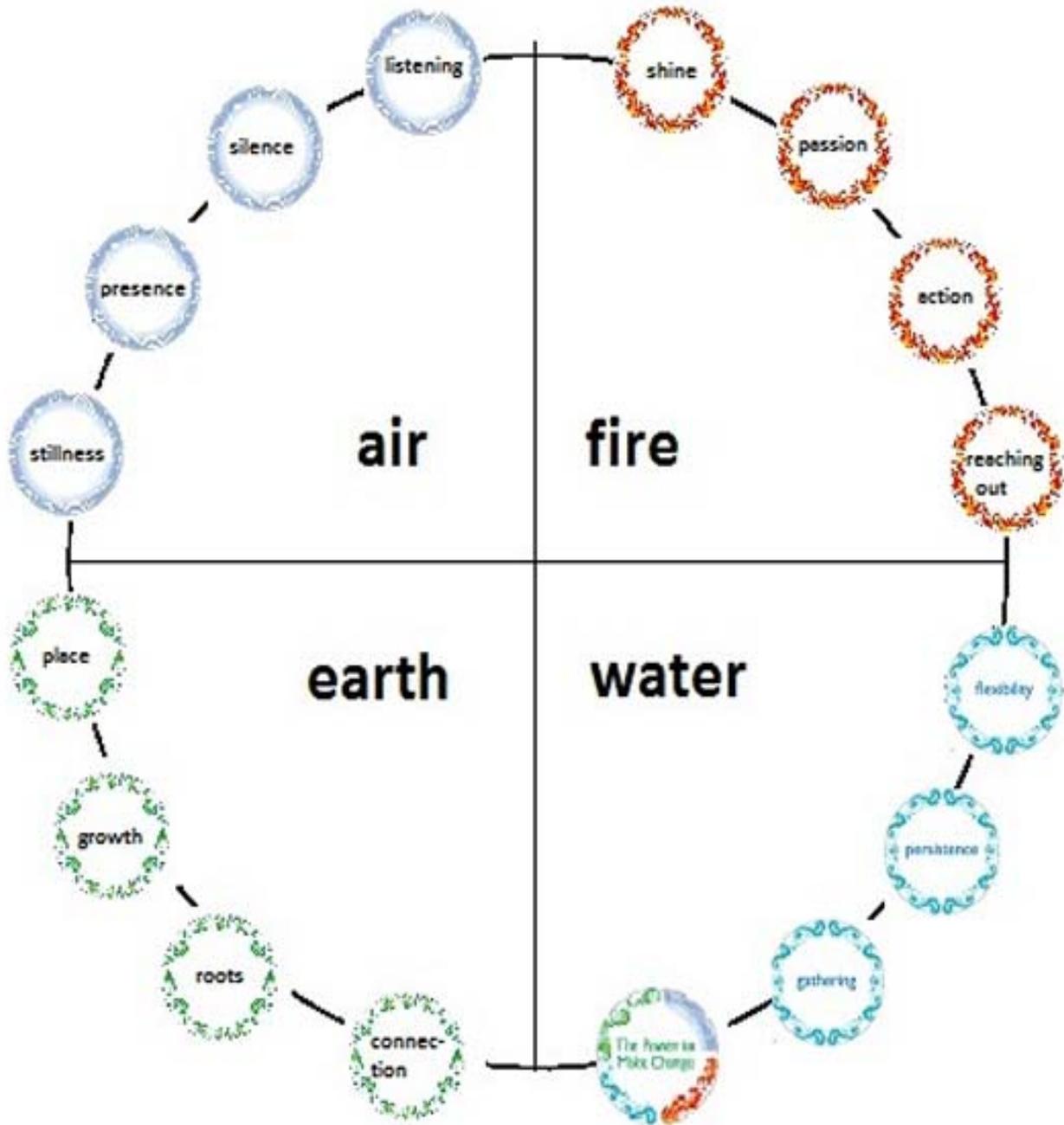
Words & music: Anonymous

ROBESON
Irregular

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 3: CIRCLE OF ELEMENTS MURAL INSTRUCTIONS

Create four quarter-circles, in a large size, using easel paper, canvas, poster board, or another material. Display as a circle-shaped mural in your meeting space, following this model. The group will decorate one quarter during each session that introduces an element: Session 1 (Earth), Session 5 (Air), Session 9 (Fire), and Session 13 (Water).

For each session, print the theme word circle provided as a Leader Resource, and during the Closing position the circle along the perimeter of the Circle of Elements mural, as shown.



**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 1:
LEADER RESOURCE 4: "CONNECTION" CIRCLE**



SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 1: LEADER RESOURCE 5: CLOSING WORDS FOR BASKET

The authors of these readings have given approval for their use.

After downloading, add closing words commonly used in your congregation or other readings you like. Print out and cut into slips

Deep peace of the running wave to you.

Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the infinite peace to you.

Adapted from Gaelic Runes, Reading 681, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Be ours a religion which, like sunshine, goes everywhere;

its temple, all space;

its shrine, the good heart;

its creed, all truth;

its ritual, works of love;

its profession of faith, divine living.

Theodore Parker, Reading 683, *Singing the Living Tradition*

The blessing of truth be upon us,

the power of love direct us and sustain us,

and may the peace of this community preserve our going out and our coming in

from this time forth, until we meet again.

Duke T. Gray, Reading 684, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.

Those who look into the perfect law,

The law of liberty, and persevere,

being not hearers who forget, but doers who act—

they will be blessed in their doing

Christian scripture (James I), Reading 709, *Singing the Living Tradition*

The circle is open, but unbroken.

Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again.

Traditional Pagan

This we know:

The earth does not belong to us;

we belong to the earth.

This we know.

All things are connected

like the blood which unites one family.

Chief Seattle (Noah Sealth) Reading 550, *Singing the Living Tradition*

May the atmosphere that we breathe

breathe fearlessness into us... .

May fearlessness surround us

above and below!

Hindu sacred text (Atharva Veda XIX)

You shall go forth in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Hebrew scripture (Isaiah 55:12)

May we move like water: flexible, unresisting, without rough edges or harshness. May we move like water: unstoppable, unceasing, capable of carving the hardest stone.

Author unknown

Each of our lives is a flaming chalice, burning for justice, shining with truth, warming the world with our love.

Author unknown

FIND OUT MORE

Online, read an [introduction to Aboriginal mythology](http://www.gondwananet.com/aboriginal-mythology.html) (at www.gondwananet.com/aboriginal-mythology.html) and explore [a variety of Aboriginal myths and legends](http://www.sacred-texts.com/aus/mla/index.htm) (at www.sacred-texts.com/aus/mla/index.htm). The [Crystal Links](http://www.crystalinks.com/dreamtime.html) (at www.crystalinks.com/dreamtime.html) website and the website [Up from Australia](http://www.upfromaustralia.com/dreamabstoro.html) (at www.upfromaustralia.com/dreamabstoro.html) tell more about Aboriginal stories and beliefs.

The Marge Piercy poem "[Connections Are Made Slowly](http://www.panhala.net/Archive/Seven_of_Pentacles.html) (at www.panhala.net/Archive/Seven_of_Pentacles.html)" is directly related to the topic of this session. An excerpt appears as Reading 568 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

SESSION 2: THE POWER OF ROOTS

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

All things must come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted. — St. Theresa of Avila

The power of the earth is the power of roots—the power that comes from a sense of history and connection to our origins. Participants learn that we are grounded in all that has shaped our lives, from our own memories back through the experiences of our ancestors, and including the features of the place where we live—its geography, ecology, and history.

The children hear how Southern writer George Ella Lyons came to write a well-known poem describing her roots. They write their own "I am from..." poems, and use their memories to draw floor plans of their homes and add words or pictures that describe important events that happened there.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore where participants come from and demonstrate how their roots help to create the people they are
- Honor the diversity of our roots and heritages
- Connect memory, story, and images to honor the forces that have shaped participants
- Affirm the Unitarian Universalist "goal of world community" (sixth Principle) as rooted in our literally sharing the same planet.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider the ways their roots and heritage ground them and shape who they are
- Describe where they are from—the places, stories, and people that have shaped them—and create poems using these images
- Express, in words and pictures, meaningful events that took place in their homes

- Consider how their roots and heritage may, and may not, shape their future.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Where I'm From	10
Activity 2: "I am From... ." Poems	20
Activity 3: Roots Geography Game	5
Activity 4: Living Space Memory Plan	15
Faith in Action: Planning Our Earth Power	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Research Congregational History	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- How would you complete the phrase "I am from... .?"
- What aspects of your heritage do you consider to be gifts? What aspects of your heritage do you consider to be burdens?
- In what geographic location are you most rooted?
- Where are you rooted theologically?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of earth, such as a rock, bowl of dirt, crystal, etc.
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2). Add the words "roots that hold" for this session and leave space to add new phrases in future sessions.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath, release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the earth symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of earth, the ground on which we all stand together."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from the previous session ("earth below") and add today's zipper words, "roots that hold."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we will focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we will send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — WHERE I'M FROM (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Where I'm From](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate the story to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

You might say:

The story of this poem is not only a story about grounding—knowing where you are from—it is also a story about connection. The poem comes out of the connection between the people that Jo Carson listened to and the poems she wrote, and the connection between Jo Carson and George Ella Lyons, and the connection all these people felt to their families, their ancestors, and the places where they grew up.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- How much do you think the place where you are being raised shapes who you are? Why?
- Are there places your family has been connected to over generations?
- Does your family have any rituals or traditions, such as ways of celebrating holidays, that have gone on for many years?
- Do you know any family stories that go back to when your grandparents were young (or earlier)?
- What is something you have learned from a grandparent or another older relative?

Including All Participants

Some children may know a lot about their family's heritage, while others may have little information. Some

may be easily able to create a floor plan of their current living space, while others may have difficulty—perhaps they have not lived in their current home very long; perhaps visualizing and sketching a living space as a floor plan is difficult for them. Be sure to use language that includes all participants, particularly any who may be adopted or living with a foster family. Offer one-on-one help, as needed.

ACTIVITY 2: "I AM FROM... ." POEMS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Writing paper and pencils
- Optional: Clipboards

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Find more detailed instruction for using "I am from... ." as a writing prompt on the [Scribd website](#) (at www.scribd.com/doc/5563771/Where-Im-From-poems) and on [Fred First's blogsite](#) (at www.swva.net/fred1st/wif.htm).
- Optional: If you do not have table space for everyone to sit and write comfortably, be ready to offer clipboards.

Description of Activity

Introduce this activity in these words or your own:

We are going to write our own "I am from... ." poems. Poems work best if they have concrete images—things, people, or events that the reader can picture in their mind. An example is the glistening dirt that tastes like beets in the poem we heard.

Before you start writing your poem, you might want to do what George Ella Lyons did. Write some notes about the things, people, or events that stand out in your memory and help to make you who you are. Then, on another piece of paper, write your poem, beginning with the words "I am from... ."

Optional: If you have found some online, offer additional guidance for writing the poems.

Allow about 12 minutes of writing time. Then, invite volunteers to share aloud what they have written. Acknowledge that the time may not have been enough to complete the poems. Encourage children to spend more time on their poems at home and bring them back to share again, if they wish.

Including All Participants

Participants with learning disabilities or limited coordination may do better dictating their notes and poems to a co-leader, rather than writing them out.

ACTIVITY 3: ROOTS GEOGRAPHY GAME (5 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Find a large, open space to use for this activity—ideally, outdoors.

Description of Activity

Gather the group in a large, open space. Tell the children to imagine the space as a map. Invite participants to think of themselves as pins they will stick in this map indicating the place where they were born. If all participants were born in the same county, state, or region, the map can represent that local area. Adjust the map if any participants were born in other countries. Participants will almost certainly need help identifying a location in the space that roughly corresponds to their birthplace.

If you have time, you might wish to repeat this game, with participants standing in a location that represents the birthplace of one of their parents, or one of their grandparents.

Including All Participants

Acknowledge that the map will be very approximate, so no one should worry if they do not know exactly where they (or other family members) were born. Encourage all participants to make as good a guess as they can.

If you play this game with the birthplace of parents, make sure you invite all the children to choose one parent. Suggest a mother, a father, a birth parent, or an adult who has been an important part of raising them.

ACTIVITY 4: LIVING SPACE MEMORY PLAN (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Graph paper, 11x17-inch
- Pencils with erasers, and color pencils or crayons
- Optional: One or more architectural-style residential floor plans

Description of Activity

The place where we live creates and holds our memories and our sense of rootedness. Participants draw their home as best they can, in an architectural

floor plan style, then decorate the floor plan to show how they are rooted in the place where they live.

Distribute graph paper and pencils with erasers. Invite the children to sketch, as best they can, a floor plan of the place where they live. Explain that a floor plan shows how a building looks if you were in an airplane above and the roof had been removed. If you have brought sample floor plan drawings, show them to the group.

Emphasize that it is difficult to imagine and create a building as a floor plan. No one should worry if their plan does not come out looking like an architect's drawing. The point of this activity is for participants to visualize where they live as vividly as possible. Acknowledge that the place where a person lives now might not be the place that holds the most significant memories for them; participants are free to draw the living space which is most vivid or meaningful to them.

When participants have sketched out the floor plan, invite them to write or draw inside the rooms any particular memory they have associated with that room. For instance, the kitchen might say "smell of waffles on Saturday morning" or the living room might say "wrestling with my brother."

Give participants about ten minutes to work on their drawings. Encourage them to share with one another. Then, invite reflection with these questions:

- How long have you lived where you are now? Does it hold most of your memories, or is there another place that means more to you?
- Do you feel rooted in the place you live? What does being rooted feel like?
- What do you think someone can gain from being connected to one place for a long time? If you have not lived in the same place for a long time, what makes you feel rooted in the place where you live?
- How does living in the place where you live now shape your life?
- How does living in the community you are in shape your life?
- How does living in America shape your life?

Including All Participants

This exercise may bring up painful associations from children who are or have been homeless, children who have been abused in their homes, or children who have moved one or more times. Be sensitive to the level at which children wish to share, and turn to your religious

education director or minister if you sense that any child is experiencing significant emotional pain at home.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 1, "[Roots](#)" Circle (included in this document) and tape
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in earth-tone colors
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1 onto green or tan paper and cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Roots" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, and then to clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "roots" circle (Leader Resource 1) outside the "Earth" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Earth power springs from our roots, and helps us to honor and understand where we come from.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, to briefly finish the statement "I am from... "

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of earth for the centering space, as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets they started in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute Taking It Home. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: PLANNING OUR EARTH POWER

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to continue the activity begun in Session 1. Research the project the group selected in the previous session. Prepare to share information about the needs, opportunities, and possible logistical arrangements for the project.

Description of Activity

This Faith in Action activity follows the Session 1 Faith in Action activity, Exploring Ways to Exercise Earth Power, as the second step in a four-session process that leads the group through (1) *identifying* a way to exercise earth power, (2) *planning* how to exercise earth power, (3) *engaging* in the planned activity, and (4) *reflecting* on the experience. After selecting an earth power activity, the next step is to plan exactly how the project will take place: Who will take part? Who needs to be invited, and

who will invite them? What supplies will you need? How much time do you anticipate the project will take? When is the best time to work on the project? Who needs to be contacted for the project to move forward? What resources do you have available? What resources will you need to bring in?

Define the steps to bring the project to completion. Make plans as a group. Identify and assign action items for co-leaders or participants to complete before the next session.

After the session, follow up with your religious educator to determine how to communicate the project details to families and, if needed, the wider congregation.

Including All Participants

Make sure that the plan is as inclusive as possible of the differing needs and abilities in your group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

All things must come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted. — St. Theresa of Avila

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard about the poet George Ella Lyons who was inspired by a friend's describing a deep sense of place and roots to write the poem "Where I'm From." They explored their own sense of roots and place through writing their own "I am from..." poems and drawing a plan of their living space, noting special memories that belong to different rooms.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Talk about your family roots. This might mean sharing stories about your ancestors or stories of different places you have lived. With children who have been adopted it might also mean talking about their domestic or international place of origin and talking about their birth families, even if it means offering guesses to fill in places where your family lacks information.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Visit a place you associate with your family's roots. Possibilities include not only places where you have lived previously or where older relatives live, but also stores, restaurants, or cultural events associated with some part of your family's ethnicity or a place where a family member is buried. Online, search a family homeland on Google Maps.

FAMILY RITUAL. At a quiet time, such as before bed, gather in a circle as a family, and take turns around the circle completing the sentence "I am from..."

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl halfway with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: RESEARCH CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Historical items or documents from your congregation
- Optional: A large roll of paper, washable markers, and tape
- Optional: Note paper or thank you cards

Preparation for Activity

- Determine a productive source of information about the history of your congregation. This might be a long-term member whom you invite to speak to your group. Or, you may have access to a book or online document about the history of your church, or archives containing old documents.
- Plan to have the group write a thank-you letter to any guest speakers.
- Optional: Begin a time line of the congregation's history on a long sheet of paper. Plan how the children can build, and perhaps display, the time line using information they will learn from a guest speaker and/or archive documents.

Description of Activity

Institutions as well as individuals have roots, and understanding these roots can be a source of power for the group and the individuals in it. Just as each person is shaped by their own personal history, organizations are shaped by the events of their past. Understanding important events in the history of a congregation can illustrate strengths of the group moving forward and can help in understanding what old assumptions might be standing in the way of the congregation expressing its power. One excellent way to explore the roots of your congregation is to bring in a member who has studied (and, even better, experienced) your congregation's history. Have the group prepare for this visit by brainstorming questions about the congregation. You may also wish to bring in historical items from your congregation, such as a membership book, old newsletters, photographs, etc. You may wish to create a time line of the congregation by writing significant dates and events on a long sheet of paper marked with the years your congregation has been in existence, and adding photographs or illustrations if you have some.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 2: STORY: WHERE I'M FROM

Poem by George Ella Lyons, used with permission of the author.

Jo Carson is a Southern writer with deep roots—in her case to the town and even the house in East Tennessee where her grandparents lived before her. Her sense of place and roots led her to write a book of poems based on conversations she overheard around her. Jo Carson's friend George Ella Lyons was inspired by one of these poems. She jotted down her own images of where she came from, and then made the poem "Where I'm From." Since then, the poem has been used around the world as a writing prompt, helping both adults and children write poems made up of images of where they are from.

Here is the poem "Where I'm From:"

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember

as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.

I'm from the know-it-alls

and the pass-it-ons,

from Perk up! and Pipe down!

I'm from He restoreth my soul

with a cottonball lamb

and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,

fried corn and strong coffee.

From the finger my grandfather lost

to the auger,

the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box

spilling old pictures,

a sift of lost faces

to drift beneath my dreams.

I am from those moments —

snapped before I budded

leaf-fall from the family tree.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 2:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "ROOTS" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

George Ella Lyons' [website](http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html) (at www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html) offers ideas for using her poem "Where I'm From" as a writing prompt, and shares an "I am from... ." poem by an eight-year-old author.

Find templates for writing "I am from" poems on the [Scribd website](http://www.scribd.com/doc/5563771/Where-Im-From-poems) (at www.scribd.com/doc/5563771/Where-Im-From-poems) and on [Fred First's blogsite](http://www.swva.net/fred1st/wif.htm) (at www.swva.net/fred1st/wif.htm).

SESSION 3: THE POWER OF GROWTH

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Only in growth, reform, and change, paradoxically enough, is true security to be found. — Anne Morrow Lindbergh

The power of the earth is the power to bring forth new life and nurture growth. In an individual, growth power can foster change in oneself and in the wider world. The story of Michael Covington, who created a thriving community garden in his economically depressed Detroit neighborhood, illustrates the link between earth power, personal growth, and the growth of community. Participants consider the sources of their food and acknowledge how easy it is to become disconnected from the earth as the source of our sustenance. By decorating pots and planting herbs, children reconnect with the earth as the medium for growth. They create an herb garden or pot for someone else, to remind them that part of their own growth is reaching out to others.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate that food comes from the earth and encourage intentional choices about what to eat
- Offer strategies for ethical eating
- Develop participants' self-concepts as people with gifts to share
- Connect our seventh UU Principle to choices around eating.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Respond to a story about a man who is transforming his economically depressed Detroit neighborhood with a community garden
- Explore the sources of their own food and consider the impact of locally versus globally produced food
- Experience tangible connection to earth, through planting herb seeds in clay pots

- Appreciate how their gifts can connect them to others
- Understand that there are many kinds of growth, from the literal growth of plants to the growth of one's identity as a leader and the growth of community through joint action.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Putting Dreams into Action	10
Activity 2: "On a Good Day" Music Video	5
Activity 3: Tracking the Journey of Food	15
Activity 4: Decorating Pots and Planting Herbs	20
Faith in Action: Acting on Our Earth Power	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Exploring Food Desserts	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- Where are your own personal "growing edges"?
- What nourishes you spiritually? What nourishes you literally?
- In what ways does a connection with the earth promote your growth?
- How do you promote growth in your communities?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Symbol of earth, such as a rock, bowl of dirt, crystal, etc.
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2). Add the words "growth within" for this session and leave space to add new phrases in future sessions.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the earth symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of earth, the ground on which we all stand together."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing the song "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "growth within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we will focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we will send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — PUTTING DREAMS INTO ACTION (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Putting Dreams into Action](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

You might say:

The story of Michael Covington and the Georgia Street Community Garden is still continuing today. They are still busy expanding the site and the gardens, and holding craft days and holiday dinners for the people of their neighborhood. What's more, they're only one example of urban gardening in Detroit, a city where people have been suffering for a long time from a lack of jobs. Because of the community gardens, more and more people dream of turning Detroit into a place that is a model of farms giving life to the inside of a big city. And they're putting those dreams into action.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- What personal gifts and talents do you think Michael Covington drew on in putting his dream of a community garden into action?
- Many low-income neighborhoods may not have a grocery store where people can get healthy food right in their neighborhood. A neighborhood like this is called a "food desert." How does a city garden help solve this problem in Detroit?
- How does the garden invite other community members to share their gifts? What are different ways people contribute to the activities of the garden?

- Beyond fruits and vegetables, what else do you think is growing at the Georgia Street Community Garden? How do you think the garden helps individuals and the community to grow?

ACTIVITY 2: "ON A GOOD DAY" MUSIC VIDEO (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access
- Optional: Digital projector and large monitor or projection screen

Preparation for Activity

- Set a laptop or desktop computer where participants can gather around it. Find the [YouTube clip](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_w95cjw40s) (3:50) of the British band Above and Beyond's music video featuring the Georgia Street Community Garden. Set the video display on full screen so the group will be able to see the video image larger and be unable to see potentially offensive comments under the video display window.
- Preview the video. Look for Michael Covington, a large African American man with a bright smile, who is visible throughout the video and is at the center of the final shot.

Description of Activity

Tell the children:

A British band, Above and Beyond, heard about the good work going on at the Georgia Street Community Garden. They decided to help and featured the cooperative in a music video. You will see the group creating a park with a greenhouse, which is now a part of the community garden.

Show the video. Point out Michael Covington to the children.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- What did you think of the song? Why do you think the band chose to connect this song to people building a community park?
- What have you done that "feels like [you] on a good day"?
- Do you think the people in the video felt powerful or powerless? Why?

ACTIVITY 3: TRACKING THE JOURNEY OF FOOD (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Reusable grocery bag, filled with a variety of grocery items
- Maps of the U.S. and the world
- A pad of small sticky notes
- Optional: Magnifying glass

Preparation for Activity

- Shop for a grocery bag's worth of food items. Include produce and boxed and/or canned goods. Include at least one item with a "fair trade" designation on its label. Only bring in meat/fish products if they can be handled safely, such as in a can. Chick peas, kidney beans, and cheese are alternate foods which provide protein.
- Post maps on a wall where they will be easy to view and access.

Description of Activity

This activity raises ethical issues about food by examining how far our food has traveled to get to us.

Tell the group, in these words or your own:

Growing, processing, and transporting food contributes very significantly to climate change, and pollution and misuse of our air, water, and earth. The farther food travels, the more fossil fuels are consumed in transportation, the less control we have over the conditions involved in producing that food, and the less connection we have with the people and land originally connected with the food.

Food that travels around the world is a very profitable business. However, the people who actually produce the food do not always get paid fairly.

Now show the grocery bag of food. Unpack it, handing an item to each child. Ask them to try to identify where their item comes from. A produce item often has a sticker that tells the country of origin; canned or boxed goods will be labeled with fine print information on the producer and distributor. Point out that an item with more than one ingredient may be labeled with the location of the company that sold the food, but may not provide information on where each ingredient originated.

Move to the maps. Invite children to call out the places the food originated. Attach sticky notes to the locations the children name.

Lead a discussion with these questions:

- How many miles in total do you think the food that was in this bag might have traveled?
- What connection (if any) do you have to any of the sources of this food?

Invite the group to brainstorm questions they might wonder about how and where the food was produced.

Prompt:

- I wonder what chemicals, such as pesticides, were used in producing the crops?
- I wonder how many hands have touched this [name one of the items]?
- What were the conditions for the farm workers who raised the crop? Did they work on land they owned, or on land owned by someone else or a corporation? How hard did they work and how well they were paid?
- Did the farm workers have any way of seeing that they got a fair price for what they produced?
- For prepared foods: Did the people who mixed the ingredients taste the results? Is the food they would eat at their homes like the food they prepared for us, or different?

Ask the children, "Who has an item marked 'fair trade'?" Have that participant tell what food they have and where it originated, and show others the fair trade label. Explain that a "fair trade" designation means the growers of the product (say, coffee or chocolate) worked directly with the buyers to negotiate a fair amount of money for their work.

Including All Participants

Provide a magnifying glass to help participants read fine print on labels.

ACTIVITY 4: DECORATING POTS AND PLANTING HERBS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Clean, dry terra cotta pots (optional: matching saucers)
- Potting soil
- Packets of herb seeds, or herb plants ready to be transplanted

- Acrylic craft paint and paintbrushes
- Optional: Hot glue gun, hot glue, and smooth stones, "gems" or other waterproof decorative items
- Optional: Newspaper to protect work surface

Preparation for Activity

- Spread newspaper over work surfaces—this is not a tidy activity!
- Set materials on work surfaces.
- Optional: Research options for herb seeds or seedlings. The Consumer Horticulture website has [information on growing herbs indoors](http://consumerhorticulture.psu.edu/files/growing_herbs_indoors.pdf) (at consumerhorticulture.psu.edu/files/growing_herbs_indoors.pdf) that will help you choose.

Description of Activity

Participants decorate pots, then plant herbs in them and plan to give them to someone as a gift. Potted herb plants symbolize the growth power of earth, and invite participants to connect with the earth year-round.

Show the group the seeds or plants you have brought. Explain that the herb plants will have a pleasant scent, and their leaves can be used to add fresh flavor to food. As the plants grow, they will remind participants how important the soil is to our food. Furthermore, when you pinch back an herb plant to use its leaves, the plant not only keeps growing, but gets stronger—like our human spirit, the more we use it, the healthier and stronger it becomes.

Give each participant a terra cotta pot (and saucer, if you have them) and invite them to paint it. Tell them to paint thinly, so it will dry quickly and leave them time to plant the seeds or seedlings. The top inch or two of the inside of the pot will be visible once the pot is in use, but there will be no point to painting further inside the pot. If you wish, allow participants to attach flat stones, small tiles, plastic "gems," etc. with hot glue.

When decorations are dry, fill pots with potting soil and plant herb seeds according to the directions on the packet, or gently plant the seedlings you have brought.

As participants are working, mention that the potted herbs make excellent gifts. Engage participants to discuss how they might share them as gifts.

Invite reflection with these questions:

- Have you ever grown your own food? If so, did it taste different than what you've gotten from a store? Did you feel differently eating it?

- Where does your family shop for food? Why do you think the adults in your family choose to buy groceries where they do?
- When Michael Covington started the Georgia Street Community Garden he decided that the produce grown there should be available free for anyone who wanted to come pick it. The garden is a gift from the community to the community. Who might you want to give your finished potted herb to? What effect might your gift have? Is there a way that you could give all of your pots together as a garden?

Including All Participants

Participants with fine motor limitations will have an easier time with larger brushes for painting.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 1, "[Growth](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in earth-tone colors
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1 onto green or tan paper and cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Growth" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- If needed, print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose

and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, and then to clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "growth" circle (Leader Resource 1) outside the "Earth" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Earth power encourages us to grow, and to support others in growing.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on an elastic and, as they do so, to share some way in which they would like to grow.

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1 Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of earth for the centering space, as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXERCISING EARTH POWER

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Digital still and/or video cameras

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to implement the project planned in Sessions 1 and 2. If your earth power activity requires travel beyond your congregation, recruit volunteers to provide transportation. Get signed permission slips from all participants' families for any off-site activity.
- Optional: Recruit volunteers to photograph and/or videotape the project; obtain appropriate permissions from people who appear in photos and video.

Description of Activity

By this session, the group should have identified a project and planned the elements needed in order to complete this project. This session, then, is when the group will actually do the activity that expresses their own earth power.

Including All Participants

Make sure your transportation plan is accessible for all participants, and that all will have full access at any off-site location.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Only in growth, reform, and change, paradoxically enough, is true security to be found. — Anne Morrow Lindbergh

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard about Michael Covington and the Georgia Street Community Garden, an urban gardening and community center in Covington's home neighborhood in Detroit. We explored the earth power of growth by decorating pots and planting herbs, and we investigated the journeys our food takes on its way to us. We learned about the impact that producing, transporting, and selling food has on our environment and communities.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. How does your family make ethical choices around food? Are there foods you won't eat for ethical reasons? Are there places that you shop, or don't shop, because of ethical considerations? How difficult is it to find fresh and healthy food near where you live? Are there neighborhoods you can think of where finding fresh food is more difficult?

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Go on an ethical food-shopping trip. This might mean a trip to a farmers' market or a store that offers local, organic produce. It might mean buying food to share with a food pantry or a neighbor, or shopping at a store whose labor practices you approve of. It might mean buying eggs from free-range chickens or milk from cows that have not been given rBGH. Talk about one change your family might make to bring some aspect of your eating in line with your values.

FAMILY RITUAL. Before you begin a meal, take a moment to consider the food and where it originated. Thank the plants, animals, farm workers, and cook(s) who allowed you to eat this meal.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl halfway with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence; it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING FOOD DESERTS (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- A computer with Internet access, and a large monitor or a digital projector and screen
- The address of your congregation

Preparation for Activity

- Test Internet connection.
- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

Participants learn about "food deserts" and explore local conditions using the USDA's [Food Desert Locator](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FoodDesert/) (at www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FoodDesert/).

Say, in these words or your own:

The Georgia Street Community Garden is one project in one city working to address the problem of food deserts.

Ask participants if they know what a food desert is. Write their ideas on the newsprint. Explain, in these words or your own:

A food desert is an area where the people lack enough grocery stores that they can easily walk to, if they do not have a car or public transportation. The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) defines a food desert as a low-income community where a substantial number of residents live more than a mile from a grocery store (or 10 miles in rural areas).

Ask for a volunteer to open the [Food Desert Locator](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FoodDesert/) (at www.ers.usda.gov/Data/FoodDesert/) website and click on "Enter Locator." A map of the United States will appear with food desert areas highlighted in pink. Ask for another volunteer to click on "Find Address" and enter the congregation's address in the designated space. Allow time to have everyone view the map and locate landmarks such as where they live or go to school (use the zoom in/out navigation bar on the left side of the map). Once everyone has viewed the map, solicit responses:

- Are there food desert areas near our congregation?
- Are you surprised by how many or how few there are?

- What are some things our congregation could do about food deserts?

Post another sheet of newsprint. Brainstorm ideas and discuss action steps to find out which ideas are feasible and how the group might do them.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 3: STORY: PUTTING DREAMS INTO ACTION

In early 2008, Mark Covington was out of a job—a very common problem in his native city of Detroit, where unemployment rates are some of the highest in the country. Large sections of many neighborhoods have been abandoned as people have fled Detroit, looking for jobs and a better life somewhere else. Lots of people have just given up on Detroit, but Mark has a different way of looking at life. As he hung out in the neighborhood surrounding his grandmother's house, Mark couldn't help but notice the mess filling the three vacant lots at the end of his block. But he did more than notice. Looking to do something productive with his time, Covington started clearing out rubbish, where locals had beaten a diagonal path over to the low quality groceries and liquor stores along Harper. At first, he only intended to take on the lot's litter and garbage. But as he cleared away the corner, bigger dreams began to form in his head, and in his heart. Mark became inspired to make a community garden.

Fast forward just a couple of years, and the path through the garbage and broken glass is now green and growing, filled with vegetables and flowers. And it doesn't stop there. The abandoned store on the corner is now a community center and library where kids can be with their friends in a safe environment. Adult mentors work with neighborhood kids to tend the garden, building relationships as well as providing fresh food in a place where grocery stores rarely sell fresh produce. Events at the garden and center provide everything from backpacks full of school supplies for neighborhood kids to hosting free community dinners

where people can get to know one another better as well as enjoy bounty from the garden.

It was hard at first. In Mark Covington's words: "I was preaching to the neighborhood. It was hard to get people to come out. They were used to a lot of people talking about things, but nothing being done. I just thought, 'I'll start doing it.'" Given the condition of the lots, early predictions for the project were grim. Some locals, Covington says, thought "people would steal from it, that we'd need a big fence. But we don't need a fence. I just strung a rope around it. Nobody takes anything, and we leave tables and chairs out there. Now if you put up a fence and try to control something, people would want to fight that."

Indeed, nobody took so much as a bean from the garden, and in December, Covington hosted a neighborhood dinner. That night, Georgia Street attracted 80 people. Not only did they eat much of the harvest, they brought so much food they had plenty left over to donate to Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries.

The project keeps growing. The garden now includes *five* lots on Georgia Street, including a fruit orchard with apples, plums, cherries, peaches and pears, as well as raspberries and strawberries.

But fruits and vegetables aren't the only things that are growing in this Detroit neighborhood. Friendships are growing as children and adults from the neighborhood work and play with each other, and with volunteers who come from surrounding cities to work in the garden. Respect is growing, as people see what they can accomplish together. Hope is growing, not just on Georgia Street, but around Detroit as others like Mark Covington imagine and create a new Detroit full of urban farms, rather than urban desolation and abandonment.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 3:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "GROWTH" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

The [Georgia Street Community Collective \(GSCC\) website](http://www.georgiastreetcc.com/) (at www.georgiastreetcc.com/) offers an up-to-date picture of the organization's activities, and a [blog](http://georgiastreetgarden.blogspot.com/) (at georgiastreetgarden.blogspot.com/). [This 2011 article](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/jul/11/detroit-urban-renewal-city-farms-paul-harris) (at www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/jul/11/detroit-urban-renewal-city-farms-paul-harris) from the British periodical The Guardian describes GSCC and the urban gardening movement in Detroit.

A [study guide](http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/ethicaleating/121903.shtml) (at www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/ethicaleating/121903.shtml) for the 2008-12 UUA study/action issue on ethical eating helps connect our eating choices with our Unitarian Universalist values.

Learn more about fair trade at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee website](http://www.uusc.org/fairtrade) (at www.uusc.org/fairtrade) and take the "[Compassionate Consumption](http://www.uusc.org/ccc)" pledge (at www.uusc.org/ccc).

SESSION 4: THE POWER OF PLACE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Charity begins at home, and justice begins next door. — Charles Dickens

The power of the earth is the power of place. Children discover how connection to one's location allows reaching out to others in the particularity of their location. In the story of a connection between a Unitarian Universalist congregation in Oakland, California and a Unitarian church in Ok'land, Transylvania participants see effective justice work based on all parties honoring the unique perspectives, gifts, and needs that arise in a particular location.

If your congregation has a partner church, you may wish to use Alternate Activity 3.

GOALS

This session will:

- Honor connections both to our particular locations and to people who live thousands of miles away
- Investigate responsible social justice work that is rooted in the gifts and needs of all participants
- Demonstrate a practice of hospitality
- Examine how "the use of the democratic process" (fifth Principle) is rooted in deep listening as well as speaking freely
- Optional: Introduce the congregation's Partner Church.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Explore the power of place in a story of Project Harvest Hope, an organization created by and for UUs/Unitarians to promote economic development in Unitarian villages in Transylvania
- Practice skills of communication and listening/observation through a game
- Understand their own particular location through exploring the gifts they offer as individuals and as a congregation
- Celebrate and connect the motto of the Transylvanian Unitarian churches and a

personal religious statement of their own, by making a poster that includes both

- Understand that creating positive change with others requires effective listening, effective communicating, and a sincere effort to understand the particular connections all parties have to their home locations.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Harvesting Hope	10
Activity 2: Adverbs Game	10
Activity 3: "Our Place" Brainstorm	10
Activity 4: Ege Az Isten Posters	20
Faith in Action: Reflecting on Our Earth Power	20
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Baking Biscuits	20
Alternate Activity 3: Learning about Our Congregation's Partner Church	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- How does your connection to where you live sustain you?
- What do you have to offer the world that springs from your particular location?
- Have you spent time in an unfamiliar culture? What did you learn from the experience?
- What factors make it difficult for you to listen to others? What factors make it easy?
- What factors make it difficult for you to speak to others? What factors make it easy?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Symbol of earth, such as a rock, bowl of dirt, crystal, etc.
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2). Add the words "place we love" for this session and leave space to add new phrases in future sessions.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the earth symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of earth, the ground on which we all stand together."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing the song "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "place we love."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we will focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we will send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — HARVESTING HOPE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Harvesting Hope](#) (included in this document) "

- Optional: Information about your congregation's partner church relationship

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Find out if your congregation has a partner church. If so, gather information about the partnership to share with the children. If you have time, consider using Alternate Activity 3, Learning about Our Congregation's Partner Church, to explore the partner relationship further.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

You might say:

The people of Oakland, California and Ok'land, Transylvania live in very, very different places. But the people in the big city in the U.S. have managed to connect and share with the folks in small farming towns in ways that have changed lives on both sides of the ocean. Their shared Unitarian heritage linked them together, and learning both to listen and to speak meant that everyone was able to contribute in ways that changed lives for the better.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- How do you think the situations of the Oakland and Ok'land Unitarians were different? How were they similar?
- What gifts did the UUs in the U.S. have to contribute to the relationship? What gifts did the Unitarians in Transylvania have to contribute?
- What would you need to know about your own place and community in order to be in a helping relationship with another community?

If your congregation has a partnership with another church, tell the group about it now.

ACTIVITY 2: ADVERBS GAME (10 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Identify a space where participants can sit in a circle and one person at a time can move out of sight and hearing range.
- Arrange chairs, pillows or mats in a circle that leaves room inside the circle for movement.

Description of Activity

One of the most important skills for helping people, particularly people outside your community, is learning to listen. This game is a fun way to stretch our skills of paying attention when we might not know what is going on, and watching for the cues that others give us.

Have the group sit in a large circle. Choose one person to be "it," the person who will guess. Have the person who is "it" go out of hearing/seeing range of the group and wait while the group chooses an adverb to act out. Explain: An adverb is the kind of word that describes how an action is done, and adverbs usually end in "-LY," such as quickly, elegantly, brutally, sloppily, bravely, or carefully.

Have the person who is "it" return. Tell them they may request members of the group to perform certain actions in a way that expresses the adverb. For instance, the guesser might ask one person to walk across the circle, another to read aloud, another to pick up a piece of paper. Each person who is invited to act should perform the action in a way that expresses the adverb. The guesser attempts to identify the adverb based on the other's actions. You may wish to limit the game by setting 5-8 actions per adverb; then, have the group announce the word to the guesser, and choose a new person to be "it."

After the game, ask participants:

- Was it more obvious how the actions expressed the chosen word when you knew the word, than when you were guessing?
- Have you ever tried to explain something to another person, and they just couldn't get something that seemed obvious to you?
- What do you think are helpful steps in communicating with someone whose perspective might be very different from yours?

Including All Participants

If any individuals might have a particularly difficult time guessing an adverb or performing actions to demonstrate an adverb, have children work in pairs.

ACTIVITY 3: "OUR PLACE" BRAINSTORM (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

We can most effectively help others when we have a clear sense of our own gifts and resources. This activity invites participants to brainstorm what it is that they might have to offer based on their individual and group knowledge and talents, and the resources available in their congregation.

Use the prompt questions provided below. Write down the answers participants give, or invite a volunteer to serve as recorder.

- What do you think is special about our congregation?
- What things do you think you could teach someone else to do?
- What do your friends like best about you?
- What challenging things have you accomplished?
- What challenging things has our congregation accomplished?

You may wish to leave this brainstorm list posted on the wall as a reminder for future sessions or as inspiration for possible social justice projects.

Including All Participants

Make sure that those who need time to respond or are shy to jump in have a chance to be heard.

ACTIVITY 4: EGY AZ ISTEN POSTERS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 1, [Transylvanian Art](#) (included in this document)
- Large sheets of drawing, construction, or poster board paper
- Drawing and coloring implements: color pencils, color markers, crayons
- Scissors, including left-handed scissors, and glue sticks

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1, Transylvanian Art for all participants.
- Write "Egy Az Isten" in large letters on newsprint, and post.
- Set out materials so that all can easily access them.

Description of Activity

Tell the group:

"Egy Az Isten", pronounced "Edge Oz Eeshten," is the motto of the Transylvanian Unitarians. It means "God is One." We are going to create posters with this saying on it, surrounded by traditional Transylvanian designs. Your poster should also include a personal religious motto of your own. Take a few moments to consider what your own, personal Unitarian Universalist motto might be. This is a way to pair your own words with those of our Unitarian sisters and brothers in Transylvania.

Indicate the art materials. Distribute Handout 1 and suggest participants color the designs, cut them out and glue them to their posters, or simply use the designs as inspiration for their own drawing.

When the posters are completed, or as participants are working, ask questions such as:

- What do you think of the motto "God is One?" What does it mean to you?
- What do you think Unitarians in another country might think of your motto, if you translated it for them? How would you explain your motto to them?

Including All Participants

Participants with coordination or vision limitations may need larger paper and markers. Be ready to help to participants who need assistance in writing or spelling.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 1, "[Place](#) Circle" (included in this document), and tape
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5) and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants

- Large beads, one per person, in earth-tone colors
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1 onto green or tan paper and cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Place" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- If needed, print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, and then to clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Place" circle (Leader Resource 1) outside the "Earth" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Earth power encourages us to honor both the place we are from and the different places that others are from.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, to share something they love about the place where they live.

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the

volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of earth for the centering space, as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket.

Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: REFLECTING ON OUR EARTH POWER (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

This activity is designed to help the group process a Faith in Action activity begun in Session 1.

An important but often neglected part of any social justice activity is the opportunity to reflect on the experience.

Use the prompt questions provided below. Write the answers participants give, or invite a volunteer to serve as recorder.

- What do you think worked best about this project? What was frustrating?
- Who was the most memorable person you met?
- Did your view of the world change in any way? What did you learn?
- Did you feel your gifts were welcome? Were you able to welcome the gifts of others in your group? What about the gifts of the people you met?
- What will you remember about this experience? How do you think your actions changed the world (even if in small ways)?
- How did you draw on earth power (being grounded in who you are and where you come from, building connections, sharing your particular gifts and talents with others, paying attention to the different places and backgrounds other come from)?

Summarize the feedback (or, invite a parent volunteer to do so). Share the summary with the director of religious education, and use it to help plan future Faith in Action projects. You may wish to share with this information with the Social Action committee or other volunteers in the congregation as well.

Variation

To develop leadership skills, invite the children to help write a newsletter article about their experience. Be sure to get appropriate permissions to share the information and any pictures from the project on the congregation's website. You might also create a scrapbook of Faith in Action projects.

Including All Participants

To make sure children who process their thoughts more slowly are heard, invite everyone to reflect on a question in silence for a couple of minutes before asking for responses.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Charity begins at home, and justice begins next door. — Charles Dickens

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard about Project Harvest Hope, a UU organization which promotes economic development in Unitarian villages in Transylvania (ethnically Hungarian Romania). This project, which was started as a partnership between the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Oakland, California and the Unitarian church in Ok'land, Transylvania, shows earth power in honoring both our own location and the different locations that are dear to others. The children played a game to practice skills of communication and attention, brainstormed about their own gifts and the gifts particular to their congregation, and made posters with both the motto of the

Transylvanian Unitarian church (Egy Az Isten) and their own religious motto.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. What are the particular gifts of your family's location? What do you love about the neighborhood where you live? What are the particular gifts of your family? What do you have to share with the world?

FAMILY GAME. The children played a game which requires both creative communication and active attention. To play it as a family, choose one person to be "it," the person who will guess. Have that person leave the room and the others choose an adverb—a word ending in "ly" that describes how an action is done (quickly, elegantly, carefully, etc.). When the guesser comes back to the circle, they may ask members of the family to perform certain actions in a way that expresses the adverb. For instance, the guesser might ask one person to walk across the room, another to read aloud, or another to pick up a piece of paper. Each person who is invited to act should perform the action in a way that expresses the adverb. The guesser attempts to identify the adverb. Play a few times, then talk about what was easy or hard about the game.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. What places other than where you live are important to your family? Some possibilities might be grandparents' homes; favorite vacation spots; a favorite park, restaurant, or community center; places where parents worked or went to school when they were younger; or a relative's gravesite. Make a visit together to a place that holds significant memories. Share stories of experiences that tie you to the place.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: BAKING BISCUITS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 2, [Biscuit Recipe](#) (included in this document)
- Ingredients: Flour, baking powder, salt, sugar, shortening or butter, and milk
- Baking equipment: Mixing bowl(s), measuring cups and spoons, rolling pin(s), large round cookie cutter(s) or juice glass(es)

Preparation for Activity

- Arrange to use a kitchen with counter space for preparation and a stove for baking.
- Make sure children have no food allergies or restrictions which would prohibit their handling ingredients or eating biscuits.

Description of Activity

The first major project for Project Harvest Hope was the creation of a bakery, which would provide the village with bread, the staple food of the area, as well as jobs. Making yeast bread takes longer than most sessions will permit, but quick-rising biscuits are an easy alternative. Follow the instructions in Leader Resource 2 for making biscuits, having children take turns with the various steps, including measuring, pouring, rolling, and cutting.

While the participants are working, discuss what it would be like to live in an environment in which you knew the people who grew the wheat and ground the flour for your baking. What do we gain from living so far from most of our food sources? What do we lose, that a more agricultural lifestyle might offer?

Including All Participants

Consider the abilities of participants in assigning baking tasks. A child who would have difficulty measuring may well be able to stir, for instance.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: LEARNING ABOUT OUR CONGREGATION'S PARTNER CHURCH (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Photos of your partner congregation and its members, or items from that community
- Optional: Pens and a card or note paper for thank you note

Preparation for Activity

- Invite one or more guest speakers from your congregation's Partner Church Committee.

Description of Activity

If your congregation has an active partner church relationship, this activity gives participants an immediate sense of connection to a congregation overseas. Invite someone from your congregation who is active with the partner church program to come and talk about the partner church and their understanding of the relationship between the two congregations. Encourage the participants to ask questions, both about what life and worship are like for members of your partner church, but also about what each faith community gains from the relationship, and why the partnership matters. Have the children write a thank-you note to any guest speakers.

Including All Participants

Make sure there is time and space for participants who are more quiet or shy to ask questions.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 4: STORY: HARVESTING HOPE

We do not need to think the same thoughts as someone else, in order to love them. So wrote Francis David, a long-ago faith ancestor of today's Unitarian Universalist movement. He wrote these words in Transylvania, where he lived and was persecuted for his unpopular beliefs. Today, his words could be the motto for a special partnership between two congregations in two very different parts of the world.

You could call it a perfect match, although in some ways they couldn't be more different. The First Unitarian Church of Oakland, California is a thriving, active congregation in a downtown setting, just blocks from a newly revitalized city center. The Unitarian church in Ok'land (*oak-LAHND*), Transylvania serves a small village of people who share the Hungarian language and culture, but live inside the country of Romania. But the churches had more in common than you might think. The Oakland church had nearly died out a few decades earlier, at a time when the neighborhood had fallen victim to the poverty and violence that are still very real issues in Oakland. The church in Ok'land, Transylvania was dwindling rapidly because fewer and fewer people could stay in the village, where there were no jobs to be found.

When Beverly Smrha, a member of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, California, met Reverend Levente Kelemen, the minister of the Unitarian church in Ok'land, Transylvania, they had an idea that great things could happen when Oakland and Ok'land partnered up. The Oakland, California congregation's members did not just want a partnership where they exchanged letters and small gifts. They wanted to make a real difference. They wanted to help the folks in Ok'land, Transylvania figure out how to bring jobs to their village, so that people could stay in the place where they and their ancestors had been born and still afford to feed their families. That history and ancestry was important to the California UUs, since Transylvania is the birthplace of Unitarianism. The folks in Oakland understood that for the Unitarians to lose their Transylvanian traditions would mean they, in California, would also lose an important part of their own heritage as UUs.

The folks in Oakland, California formed a committee. They started coming up with great ideas. Some of them owned small businesses in California, and they were eager to share with the Transylvanians their knowledge about business plans and strategies for small business start-up. But they had to take a big step back. Business

in Transylvania is just not the same as business in California. Life in a country that is recovering from years under a cruel Communist dictator is not the same as life in California, with its history of freedom and encouraging new ideas.

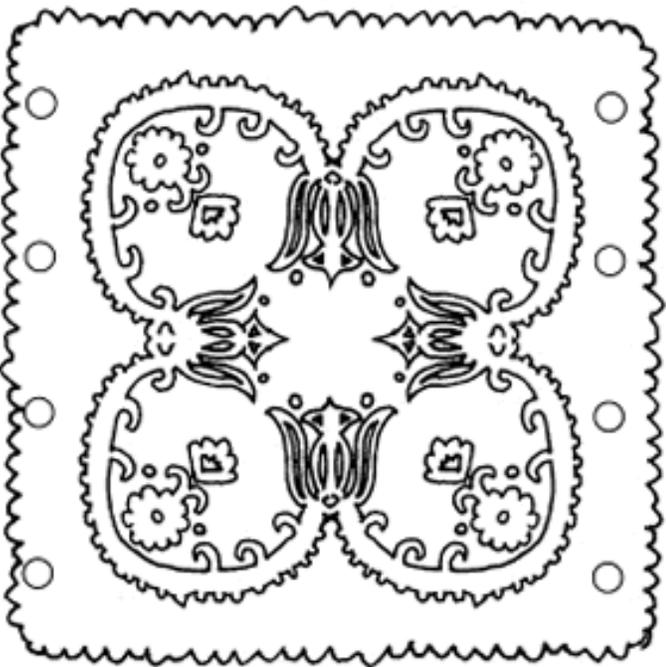
The leaders in Oakland, California needed to learn to be patient and listen to the real needs and realities of the leaders in Transylvania. The leaders in Ok'land, Transylvania needed to learn that it was safe to talk with each other, and with their new partners in the U.S. Over time, with a lot of listening and talking, the people of the Ok'land, Transylvania church decided what their town needed was a flour mill and bakery. That way the people of the town would have access to fresh bread, the main staple of their diet; the farmers would have a place to sell their grain; and there would be more jobs for people running the mill and the bakery. So the people in Oakland, California started raising money and providing support to help make the dream a reality.

Soon the project grew so big a new organization was born, Project Harvest Hope. After the flour mill and bakery were up and running, the folks in Ok'land, Transylvania decided their village needed a dairy farm that would meet the standards of the European Union, which Romania hoped to join. So Project Harvest Hope began raising money to buy the finest dairy cows. They also helped bring in experts from other parts of Europe to work with the people of Ok'land, Transylvania to meet all the complicated European regulations. It took a long time, but finally Ok'land had its model dairy farm, with fifty dairy cows in a clean, modern barn. Money from selling the milk meant the people in the village could afford to educate their children, and calves from those fifty cows went to other farmers in the area, sharing the wealth.

Project Harvest Hope continues to change and grow, finding new ways to be a part of economic development in Transylvania. On both sides of the partnership, people need to stay flexible, to keep listening and talking to one another, because life is changing quickly as modern freedoms and technologies come to Transylvania. The Unitarians there are becoming part of modern, free Europe, and at the same time rediscovering their ancient heritage and culture, which the dictator Ceausescu tried to strip away from them. Village life and folk traditions are being restored as people are able to remain in the places where they are rooted. And the Unitarian Universalists of Oakland, California and supporters of Project Harvest Hope around the US are able to connect to our faith's roots in Transylvania, where Francis David taught so many centuries ago that "we need not think alike to love alike."

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 4:
HANDOUT 1: TRANSYLVANIAN ART**

From the December 1999 issue of uu&me!, used by permission of the Church of the Larger Fellowship.



**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 4:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "PLACE" CIRCLE**



SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 4: LEADER RESOURCE 2: BISCUIT RECIPE

Quantities are for 12 biscuits.

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon white sugar
1/3 cup shortening
1 cup milk

Directions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar. Cut in the shortening until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Gradually stir in milk until dough pulls away from the side of the bowl.

Turn onto a floured surface, and knead 15 to 20 times. Pat or roll dough to one inch thick. Cut biscuits with a large cutter or juice glass dipped in flour. Repeat until all dough is used. Brush excess flour off biscuits and place biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet.

Bake for 13 to 15 minutes in the preheated oven, or until edges begin to brown.

FIND OUT MORE

Explore the [Project Harvest Hope website](http://harvesthope.uua.org/) (at harvesthope.uua.org/). The UU [Partner Church Council](http://www.uupcc.org/) (at www.uupcc.org/) has information about Unitarian churches in Transylvania and around the world, including [RE curriculum sessions](http://www.uupcc.org/re.html) (at www.uupcc.org/re.html) and games.

The [IgoUgo travel website](http://www.igougo.com/) (at www.igougo.com/) travel web site offers [Transylvania photos and travel blogs](#) (at

photos.igougo.com/pictures-l1066-Transylvania_photos.html#474399).

A [music video](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuxTeQRuVKQ) posted on YouTube by TuzesViz showss images of the geographical region which includes Transylvania and the struggle to overcome the brutal Ceausescu regime. Gain a sense of the Hungarian language from video and the YouTube comments section.

SESSION 5: THE POWER OF STILLNESS

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In stillness the world is restored. — L (at thinkexist.com/quotes/anne_morrow_lindbergh/ao Tzu

The power of air is the power of stillness, of listening and openness and breathing. The story for this session brings together Henry David Thoreau at Walden Pond with Elijah of Hebrew scripture finding God in the "still, small, voice." Participants experience the power of stillness through meditation, honor a spiritual tradition of air by creating prayer flags, and add air symbols to the Circle of Elements mural.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate ways power can be subtle and quiet
- Invite participants to practice stillness
- Honor the roots of Unitarian Universalism through a story that involves both the Hebrew Bible and Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand Henry David Thoreau's appreciation of stillness at Walden Pond
- Experience stillness through a meditation focused on breath and the power of air
- Explore the spiritual power of prayer through creating and hanging prayer flags that move in the wind
- Understand that people can create change without necessarily seeing a direct, tangible, or instant connection between their actions and the results.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Henry David Thoreau and the Still, Small, Voice	10
Activity 2: Adding Air Symbols to the Circle of the Elements Mural	12
Activity 3: Breath Meditation	8
Activity 4: Prayer Flags	20
Faith in Action: Exploring Ways to Exercise Air Power	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Moving Candle Flame	5
Alternate Activity 3: Prayer Pinwheels	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- Do you take time in your life for silence and stillness?
- How does practicing stillness make you feel?
- What does prayer mean to you?
- Try to think of a time when a very small action you did made a big difference in your life or the life of someone else.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of air, such as a feather, a pinwheel, a picture of clouds, a fan, etc
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "moving air" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders. Before you begin, ask the volunteer opening worship leader

whether they have brought an air symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath, release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the air symbol on the cloth—or invite the volunteer opening worship leader to place a symbol they have brought. Say, "I bring this symbol of air, the atmosphere which gives us life, although we never see it."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "moving air."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — HENRY DAVID THOREAU AND THE STILL, SMALL VOICE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Henry David Thoreau and the Still, Small Voice](#) (included in this document)"

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

It's easy to think of things being powerful when they are big, loud, and impressive, like tornadoes and earthquakes and riots. But sometimes big change comes from quiet forms of power. For instance, Henry David Thoreau, who so loved the quiet of nature, not only changed the way Americans thought about our relationship with nature through his writings, he also wrote an essay which introduced the idea of civil disobedience, which inspired and influenced both Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- How do you feel when everything around you is quiet?
- Do you ever choose to spend time by yourself to experience stillness? If so, where do you go?
- How does practicing stillness make you feel?
- What does prayer mean to you?
- Can you think of a time when something small or quiet that you did made a big difference for someone else?

ACTIVITY 2: ADDING AIR SYMBOLS TO THE CIRCLE OF THE ELEMENTS MURAL (12 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Paper, poster board, or fabric
- Paper or fabric and appropriate drawing tools (crayons, markers, permanent markers, or fabric paint), and tape or glue sticks
- Optional: Magazines to cut up, scissors (including left-handed scissors), and glue sticks
- Optional: Found objects that might represent air, such as feathers or dandelion or cottonwood fluff, and a hot glue gun

Preparation for Activity

- If you will be using permanent markers or fabric paint, spread out newspaper to protect work surfaces.
- Set out materials on work tables for children to prepare drawings or decorations to post in the "air" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural.
- Optional: Set up a station where an adult can guide participants' use of a glue gun.

Description of Activity

This activity adds to the Circle of Elements mural. You may have chosen to display the complete quartered circle in Session 1, or you may be adding the second, top left quarter of the circle in this session. In either case, for this activity, invite participants to decorate the top left, "air" quarter with symbols of air.

Invite participants to create their air pictures, symbols, or collages on a sheet of paper or fabric, which you can then attach to the air quarter of the mural. You may invite or assist participants to attach "found objects" directly to the mural using hot glue. Explain how you will help participants use the glue gun, if you have one.

Post participants' artwork or help them do it. Save several minutes to engage the group in clean-up.

ACTIVITY 3: BREATH MEDITATION (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Breath Meditation](#) (included in this document)

- Optional: Pillows or mats

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Consider providing pillows or mats to help everyone sit comfortably on the floor. Spread them far enough apart that participants will not be tempted to interact during the meditation.

Description of Activity

The most obvious power of air is that it moves through our bodies constantly, and we depend on it for our lives. This meditation allows participants to experience stillness and focus on the power of air.

Invite children to get comfortable, out of arms' reach of each other, on the floor, a pillow or mat if available, or on a chair. Read the meditation (Leader Resource 1) slowly, leaving pauses between sentences for participants to experience stillness and the power of air.

After the meditation, leave a moment of silence. Then, discuss with questions such as:

- Did you feel quiet inside during the meditation?
- Do you feel different now than before the meditation?
- Can you think of situations where it would help you to focus on your breathing, and the air flowing in and out of your body?

Explain, in these words or your own:

- It can be hard to keep your mind clear and still, especially if you are worried, angry or overwhelmed.
- Having a practice that helps you get still, like focusing on your breathing or clenching and then relaxing your hands, can help you focus and get in a better frame of mind.

ACTIVITY 4: PRAYER FLAGS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Swaths of solid color fabric
- Permanent markers or fabric paint
- Stapler
- Yarn
- Newspaper

Preparation for Activity

- Choose an outdoor spot at your congregation where you can hang prayer flags, and get appropriate permissions.
- Cut or tear cloth into squares, approximately 8 inches square.
- Lay out newspaper to protect work surfaces.
- Set out markers or fabric paint for participants to share.

Description of Activity

Participants make prayer flags.

Explain, in these words or your own:

Tibetan Buddhists have a tradition of writing prayers on pieces of fabric and displaying them outside to flap in the wind. They believe each time the fabric is moved by the air, it is as if the prayer is going out to help the world. Buddhist prayers are usually wishes for peace, compassion, and happiness for all beings.

Invite participants to write or draw prayers or wishes for the world on the squares of cloth, to create their own prayer flags. When everyone is finished (if there is time, participants may make more than one), fold over the top border of each flag and staple the flag to a length of yarn. Staple the squares adjacent to one another, so the flags hang in a row.

Bring the group outside to the location you have chosen. Tie the yarn between trees, posts, or buildings so the flags can flap in the wind. While outside, invite volunteers to point out their flags and describe the prayers they offer.

Return to the indoor space. Invite reflection with questions such as:

- Does it make sense to you that Buddhists would believe the wind can carry prayers?
- Do you think that prayers change anything? If so, what can prayers change? How do they work?
- Unitarian Universalist minister Lon Ray Call once said "Prayer doesn't change things. Prayer changes people, and people change things." Do you think this is true?

Including All Participants

Participants with limited coordination or vision may need help holding down the fabric as they draw or assistance in visual expressing their prayer.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Stillness](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in white or light blue
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2. If you do not have a color printer, you might use light blue paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Stillness" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "stillness" circle (Leader Resource 2) outside the "Air" quadrant of the

Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Air power encourages us to connect with ourselves and the rest of the world, through stillness.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, to take a deep breath and then let it out.

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of air for the centering space as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXPLORING WAYS TO EXERCISE AIR POWER (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Stickers or adhesive dots

Preparation for Activity

- Research groups in your area that do good work that connects with the theme of "air power." This might include an organization that fosters people listening to one another, such as projects to record people's memories or a citywide discussion of diversity issues; or a ministry of presence, such as visiting people in hospitals or rest homes. You might include literal air power projects, such as promoting the use of wind turbines or researching whether your congregation could get more of its energy from renewable wind energy.

Description of Activity

In keeping with this program's theme of building leadership, the Faith in Action projects build skills in

identifying, planning, executing, and reflecting on work for the common good. Rather than offering a detailed project for each session, Sing to the Power provides structured ways for participants to voice their interests and follow through on their commitments. As in the "Earth" section, the "Air" sections' Faith in Action activities comprise a four-session block.

An action project begins with identifying a need. Begin by explaining that the group will create and carry out a Faith in Action project based on the theme of "air power." Offer, and write on newsprint, some examples of local groups or individuals whose work connects with air power. Invite participants to share any other examples of people working with air power that they can think of. Record these contributions. Then ask participants to brainstorm ideas of projects they might be able to do within a month (or, the time frame of the air power sessions). On a fresh sheet of newsprint, write all suggestions (including any ideas you might have).

Give each participant three stickers or dots. Ask them to vote for the suggestions they like best using their dots. They may put all three dots on one idea, or distribute them among up to three ideas. When voting is complete, identify the three ideas that got the most votes.

Now lead a discussion about what it would take to successfully complete each of the "top three" projects. What would be involved? What resources would you need? How much time would it take, and when would you spend that time? Who would you connect with? What might you learn? How might you contribute to the world?

When you have discussed all three projects, give each participant one more sticker/dot. Have them vote by placing their dot by the project they prefer. The project with the most votes will be your Faith in Action project for the month.

Including All Participants

Make sure you encourage quieter/more shy participants to share their views. Do not allow children who think the quickest or speak the loudest to dominate the discussion. Offer to place dots for a child who has mobility limitations, or have another participant place dots for them.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?

- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

In stillness the world is restored. — Lao Tzu

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard a story which connected Henry David Thoreau seeking stillness at Walden Pond with the biblical story of Elijah finding God in the "still, small voice." We talked about air power as power that comes from stillness and listening, and discussed how sometimes very small things we do can have a big impact. The children experienced a meditation which focused on breath, and created prayer flags from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to send their prayers/wishes out on the wind.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. How do members of your family feel when the atmosphere around them is quiet, with no music, TV, or talking? Are there ways members of your family seek stillness, or ways to be quiet? Are there ways you seek stillness or quiet together?

FAMILY RITUAL. Find a time during the day when your family can practice stillness together. This might be as simple as everyone closing their eyes and taking a couple of deep breaths before dinner. Or, light a candle before bedtime and spend a few minutes together watching the flame in silence.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Henry David Thoreau found inspiration sitting quietly by Walden Pond and paying attention to the natural world around him. Your family might wish to visit a nearby lake, pond, or reservoir and spend some quiet time observing what you see around you. Encourage children to bring paper and pencil, and to write notes or draw pictures describing what they see, as Thoreau did.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.

- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private, especially since this is the first time the group is doing this activity. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MOVING CANDLE FLAME (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Candle, candle holder, and saucer for each participant
- Matches or lighter

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure a candle with an open flame is allowed in your religious education space.
- Set candles firmly in candle holders. Set each candle holder on a saucer or other stable surface that will protect surfaces from dripping wax.

Description of Activity

The flame of a candle makes air visible, as it moves and bends with the slightest air movement.

Light a candle for each participant. Explain that not only do candle flames exist by burning oxygen, they also are an expression of the power of very small things. Ask participants to simply observe their flame for a few moments. Can they tell if there are drafts in the room and which way they are blowing? Then encourage participants to experiment with moving the flame by blowing on it. *Emphasize that they should not put their face directly over the flame, but blow from the side.* Instruct them to blow *very gently*; this is an exercise in the power of very small things. As they experiment, ask:

- How much air does it take to move the flame?
- How much air blows it out entirely?
- Does the flame always move the way you expect it to move? Can you control the flame better as you practice?

After a few minutes, ask participants to blow out their candles, using the least amount of air possible.

Lead a discussion:

- Did moving the flame take less air or more air than they thought?
- Did they get out of breath even when only blowing gently?
- How much difference do they think a single candle flame could make in the world? (For instance, one candle could keep a person from freezing to death, or could start a fire that would burn down a city block.)

Including All Participants

If any participants are anxious about being near live flame, or are, in your opinion, likely to be insufficiently careful, pair them with another participant or a co-leader. Encourage them to try the exercise at a slightly greater distance.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: PRAYER PINWHEELS (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Peace Pinwheel Template and Instructions](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils with attached eraser heads, and straight pins—one of each for every participant, plus some extra
- Scissors (including left-handed scissors), color pencils or markers, and glue sticks or tape to share

Preparation for Activity

- Copy Handout 1 for all participants, plus some extra. Use different colors of paper for a variety of pinwheels.
- Read Handout 1. Make a practice pinwheel, so you can confidently help children make their own.
- Optional: Watch a video online that shows [how to make a peace pinwheel](#) (at www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/movie.mov).

- Optional: Explore the [Pinwheels for Peace](http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/) (at www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/) website to learn more about this annual project.
- Optional: Invite a few adult volunteer to help with this activity.

Description of Activity

Distribute materials at work tables, including Handout 1 (peace pinwheel template) and a square of color paper for each participant. (Hold on to the pins and pencils until children are ready to assemble their pinwheels).

Invite children to decorate the pinwheels and draw pictures or write words expressing their hopes and prayers for peace. Then, help them cut out the pinwheel template and assemble their pinwheels.

After they have finished constructing their pinwheels, gather the group together, and ask everyone to blow on their pinwheels together, sending out their prayers for peace. Point out that in Hebrew, the language of the Hebrew Bible, the word *ruach* (ROO-ahk) means both "breath" and "spirit"—breath and spirit are the same. When we offer our breath to our prayers we offer our spirits. How might it change the world if we offer our breath/our spirit to prayers for peace?

Including All Participants

Children who are not able to write may dictate their thoughts to a leader or draw their hopes and prayers for peace.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 5: STORY: HENRY DAVID THOREAU AND THE STILL, SMALL VOICE

Henry sat in front of his little cabin on one of his three chairs, listening to the evening. If you were there you might have thought there was nothing to listen *to*. Certainly no television or iPod. Those wouldn't be around for 100 years or more. There was no one to talk with, no airplanes overhead, no radio coming from next door. Mr. Emerson's house, the closest thing to a next door neighbor, was over a mile away (not that he had a radio to play, in any case). Even the natural world was still. No wind rippled the pond, and the birds had stopped singing as night approached.

Still, Henry listened for the tiniest sounds: a small fish breaking the surface of the water and splashing down again, the crackle of leaves as a mouse passed by, the sound of wings as a crow passed overhead. To him, these miniature sounds were music.

Of course, most of the townspeople thought Henry David Thoreau was crazy when he decided to build a tiny cabin from used materials out in Emerson's wood lot by Walden Pond. Why would a promising writer want to move away from society to sit with birds and bugs for company? In fact, Henry enjoyed the company of Emerson and the other thinkers who shared his Transcendentalist philosophy. However, to him the quiet of the pond and the animals and plants that lived in and around it provided excellent company. Sometimes,

Henry thought, the conversation you learn the most from is the one in which the least is said.

As he watched the last rays of light glisten on the pond, Henry thought about the Biblical story about the prophet Elijah, who crawled off to a mountain cave to listen for what God wanted him to do.

While Elijah stood outside his cave, a great wind whipped around the mountains, sending boulders crashing to the ground in the fury of its passing. But God wasn't in the wind.

Then an earthquake rattled the mountain with a terrific rumbling, but God wasn't in the earthquake.

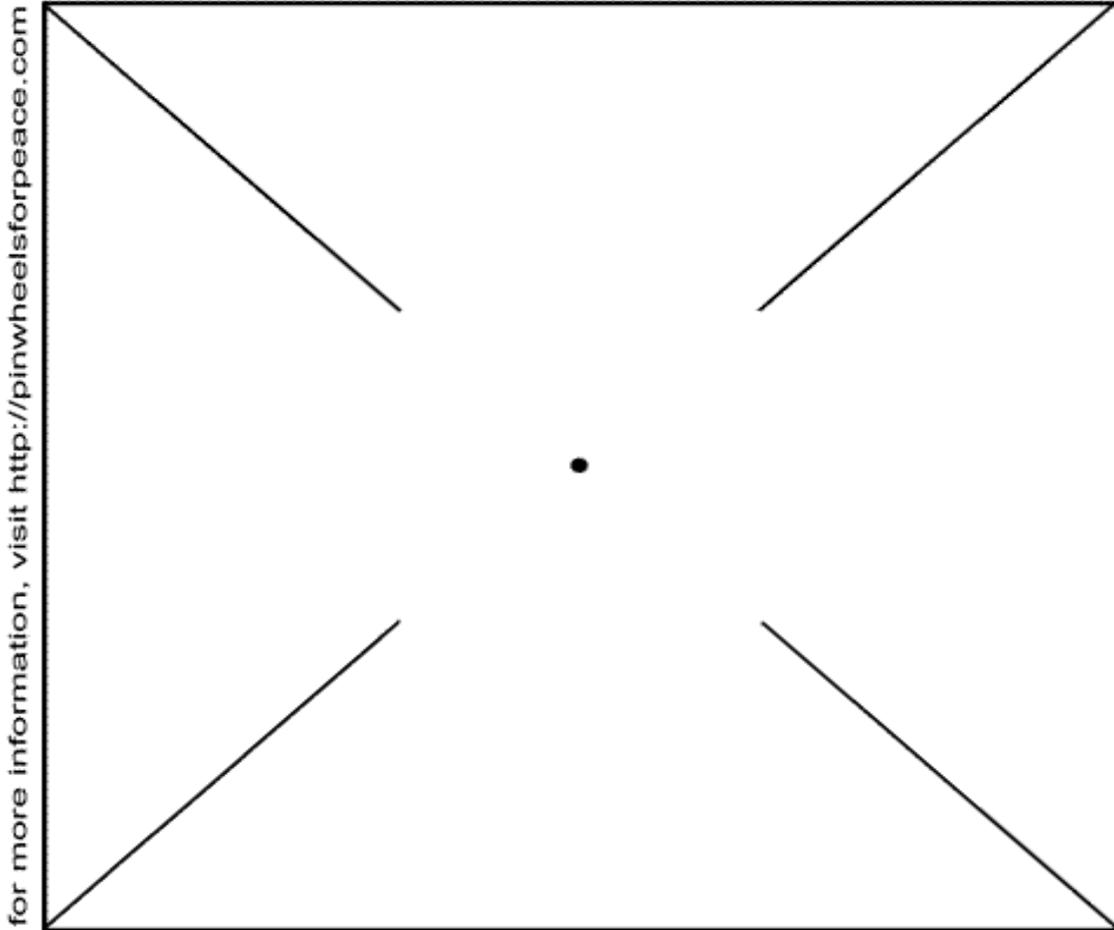
Then came a fire, sweeping across the rocks and brush outside the cave, red and roaring and grand. But God wasn't in the fire, either.

Finally, after all the roaring and crashing, everything became quiet. Elijah stood there shaking, wrapped in his cloak, just waiting. And out of the silence came the still, small voice of his God.

"I'm not at all sure," thought Henry, "that I believe in that God of the Bible, the one who chatted with Elijah. But whatever God is, I'm pretty sure I know it better out here in the quiet than I would through any ranting sermon. Maybe God is speaking to me in the small voice of the jumping fish and the rustling leaves, the still pond and the stars beginning to peek through the trees. Maybe I hear God when my heart is still and I can listen with my very smallest inner ear. Maybe... ." And his thoughts drifted off with a small breeze that came and ruffled his hair and rippled across the quiet lake.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 5: HANDOUT 1: PEACE PINWHEEL TEMPLATE AND INSTRUCTIONS

From the [Pinwheels for Peace website](http://pinwheelsforpeace.com), copyright 2005, Ayers and McMillan. Published with permission.



What you need:

Scissors
Straight pin
Pencil with eraser
Colored pencils or markers to decorate

Pinwheels for Peace

How to get started:

Cut out the pinwheel square on this page. On one side of the paper, write down your feelings about war/peace/tolerance/living in harmony. On the other side of the paper, use markers, colored pencils, paint, or other art media to visually express your feelings.

Following the lines on the template, cut in from all four corners, leaving about 2 inches of center uncut.

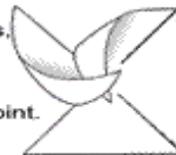
To create the pinwheel:

Gently bend (don't fold) one of the cut corners to the center point. Skip the next cut corner, and bend the next one. Skip and bend until four points meet in the center. Then stick the straight pin through all four points AND the back of the pinwheel. Stick the pin into the pencil eraser. Find some wind to test it out.

Save your pinwheel in a safe place until September 21st (which is International Day of Peace) then take it to a public place and "plant" it into the ground to send a message of world peace!



Cut out this peace sign and put it in the center of your pinwheel before you put the pin in it.



SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 5: LEADER RESOURCE 1: BREATH MEDITATION

Read aloud at a measured pace, pausing between sentences.

With your eyes closed, relax your body, starting with your head. Relax your face muscles, and then your neck, letting balance keep your head upright, rather than tension in your neck. Pull your shoulders up to your ears, and then let them drop, feeling all tension drop away. Relax your belly, your hips, your legs, your feet, letting each part of your body become still. Now bring your attention to your skin, one of the places that our bodies interact with air. We forget that at every moment air is touching our skin. Can you feel the air on your face? Your arms? Is it warm or cool?

Now turn your attention to your breath, the most important way that our bodies interact with air. For a moment, just pay attention to the rhythm of your breath entering and leaving your body. Through the air we touch everything around us. We breathe in oxygen. We breathe out carbon dioxide. The plants nurture us with oxygen. We nurture the plants with carbon dioxide.

Through the air we are connected. The air molecules in this room have been around the world many times, have passed through the lungs of sports heroes and war heroes, presidents and queens, Jesus and Mohammed and Buddha. Breathe in, and breathe in good will toward all beings. Breathe out, and breathe out forgiveness.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Offer thanks for the air, and open your eyes.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 5:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: "STILLNESS" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

Online, read quotes from Henry David Thoreau's [Walden](#) (at www.yodaslair.com/dumboozle/jimlowe/thoreau.html) and see pictures and a description of [Walden Pond](#) (at www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/walden/) today. For more background on the philosophy Thoreau developed at Walden Pond and his connections to Unitarianism, see [this article by George Wolfe](#) (at www.bsu.edu/libraries/virtualpress/wolfe/word/ThoreauTranscendentalistorUnitarian.pdf).

Share Susan Kramer's [guided meditations for children](#) (at www.susankramer.com/ChildMeditation.html), or experience, yourself, a [guided meditation on breath](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcHVRNOi4VA) led by Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield.

[Pinwheels for Peace](#) (at www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/) is an art installation project started in 2005 by Ann Ayers and Ellen McMillan, two art teachers at Monarch High School in Coconut Creek, Florida, to help their students to express their feelings about events in the world and in their lives. People around the world celebrate International Peace Day (September 21) each year by creating Pinwheels for Peace.

SESSION 6: THE POWER OF PRESENCE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

We convince by our presence. — Walt Whitman

The power of air is the power of openness, presence, and silent witness. Participants hear the story of a Unitarian Universalist who met public hatred by organizing a group to stand witness wearing giant angel wings that blocked the view of offensive signs. Although we tend to think of expressing power in terms of "doing"—pushing and acting—sometimes we express power most effectively by simply being present and bearing witness. Participants play a game in which they try to sense the presence of another. They create blankets to give someone as an offering of supportive presence.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the power of presence and silent witness
- Demonstrate ways we can make a difference with others and in a wider context through a ministry of presence
- Honor "prophetic women and men" (second Source) who have promoted justice through their actions of presence, such as civil rights workers who "sat in" at lunch counters during the Civil Rights movement
- Affirm our third Principle, "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth," through the practice of stillness and prayer.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand how a silent vigil of justice advocates wearing angel wings, planned by a Unitarian Universalist, shows air power
- Understand civil disobedience as promoted by Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Gandhi, and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King as expressions of air power
- Experience a sense of silent presence, through a game
- Prepare to give someone else an expression of supportive presence, by creating blankets

- Explore ways to practice prayer as a ministry of presence.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — The Presence of Angels	10
Activity 2: Angel Presence Game	8
Activity 3: Tied Together Blankets	25
Activity 4: Prayer as Presence — Holding in the Light	7
Faith in Action: Planning Our Air Power	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Mirroring	10

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- Can you think of a time when someone's silent presence has made a difference in your life?
- Can you think of a time when your own silent presence has made a difference?
- What does it feel like when someone is truly present to you?
- What does it look like when someone is fully present to you? What do they do/not do?
- How completely present are you to your children? Spouse/partner? Friends? Co-workers? People you disagree with?
- In what situations do you aspire to be more fully present to others?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of air, such as a feather, a pinwheel, a picture of clouds, a fan, etc.
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "our presence here" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.
- Before you begin, ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought an air symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath, release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the air symbol on the cloth—or invite the volunteer opening worship leader to place a symbol they have brought. Say, "I bring this symbol of air, the atmosphere which gives us life, although we never see it."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "our presence here."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE PRESENCE OF ANGELS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Presence of Angels](#) (included in this document) "
- Optional: Computer with Internet access and large monitor or digital projector and screen

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.
- Optional: Set up a computer with Internet access, and queue [photos of the giant angels](#) (at www.examiner.com/unitarian-universalism-in-national/angel-wings-workshop-and-silent-vigils-at-memorial-services-for-tucson-victims-picture?slide=28422051#main) Kat Sinclair and others made in Tucson, to show the group.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

If you have a computer with Internet access, show the photos.

Say, in these words or your own:

When people see or hear about others doing something they think is wrong, many think their choices are to ignore the problem or to fight. Kat Sinclair took a different approach, one more like the passive resistance taught by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., and Henry David Thoreau, whose ideas shaped theirs. Like those two great leaders and their followers, the Tucson protesters prepared to meet hatred with the power of simply being present and refusing to go away.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- How did the giant angels' presence help?

- Can you think of other people who used the power of presence to prevent hurt, or help justice? What did they do?
- Have you ever used the power of presence to help a friend? What did you do?
- Has anyone ever been present for you in a way that was helpful?

ACTIVITY 2: ANGEL PRESENCE GAME (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Scarves or other fabric to cover eyes

Preparation for Activity

- Find or create a large, open space to play this game.

Description of Activity

Choose one participant to be the first "angel." Have the others spread out, and stand with their hands at their sides and their eyes closed or covered. The "angel" chooses one person and quietly moves to stand behind them, stretching their arms over the person's shoulders without touching them. At any time, if a participant believes the "angel" is standing over them, they say "I feel an angel." If they are correct, they become the next "angel." If they are incorrect, the current "angel" continues. If an "angel" stands over a person for 10 seconds without being noticed, the "angel" taps that person on the shoulder and they sit down until a new person becomes the "angel." If one person remains as "angel" for too long, have that person select the next "angel." Play until everyone has a chance to be the "angel."

After the game, invite participants to reflect on the experience with questions such as:

- How could you tell when there was an "angel" present?
- Are there times when just having someone with you makes a difference, even if they don't say anything? Why do you think that is?

Including All Participants

If any participant uses a wheelchair, have everyone sit rather than stand. If a participant uses an electric wheelchair or crutches which make it impossible for them to approach silently as the "angel," have participants form a semi-circle at arms' length around the seated "angel," extend their arms, then close or cover their eyes. Instruct this "angel" to become present

to one participant by hovering their hands over the arms of the person they select.

ACTIVITY 3: TIED TOGETHER BLANKETS (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Polar fleece fabric
- Yardsticks and rulers, washable markers, and permanent markers to share
- Scissors, sharp enough to cut fabric effectively—one pair for each participant, including some left-handed scissors
- White or light colored fabric, and permanent markers
- Safety pins (one per blanket)
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Purchase sufficient polar fleece for each person to have two pieces approximately 30 inches square. If possible, obtain a variety of colors and patterns.
- Purchase white or light-colored fabric to cut into 3-inch squares. Cut squares for all participants plus some extra.
- Cut the polar fleece into blanket-size squares or rectangles. Adjust the sizes based on the width of your fabric. Ensure that each square or rectangle has a same-sized "mate."
- Make sure the scissors are sharp enough to cut fabric without frustration and that some are left-handed scissors.
- Optional: Start one blanket to use as a demonstration with the group.
- Optional: Draw a simple chalice symbol on newsprint, and post.

Description of Activity

Participants create an item to use for a ministry of presence. The polar fleece blankets created in this activity are perfect as gifts for people who are ill or in the hospital, in need of loving support, or simply beloved and far away.

Invite each participant to choose two pieces of same-size polar fleece in a color/pattern combination that pleases them. Give these directions:

1. Lay one piece on top of the other so they matches up exactly.

2. Use a yardstick or ruler and a washable marker to draw a line about 5" in from the edge of the top piece of fabric, on all four sides. How far in the line is will determine how long the fringe on your blanket is. Each person can choose the length of their fringe, but the finished blanket will probably look best if the length is the same on all four sides.

3. Make cuts from the edge of the fabric to the line. Space your cuts about an inch apart to create fringe. It is fine to make the cuts wider. The blanket will look best if they are spaced evenly apart.

4. Tie each piece of fringe on the top piece of fabric to its counterpart piece on the fabric below. As you go around all four sides, the two pieces of fabric will be attached together. Tie each knot double, to make sure it will stay. Continue all the way around, until every strip of fringe is tied to its counterpart.

Demonstrate, assist, and repeat instructions as needed.

While participants are working, invite them to decide how they might use these blankets to create a ministry of presence. Suggest they may give their blanket to someone who needs the gift of presence. Prompt reflection with questions such as:

- What does it feel like to wrap a warm, soft, blanket around you?
- Is it possible to be present for someone even if you're not actually in the room with them?
- How could the gift of a blanket feel like someone being present?
- When have you felt like you really needed caring presence?
- Who can you think of that might need to feel your supportive presence?
- How can the blanket you're making serve as a ministry of presence in the world?

Distribute small squares of fabric, and permanent markers. Invite participants to create a tag for their blanket, by writing their name and drawing a chalice symbol on the small square of fabric and attaching the small square to the blanket with a safety pin. Explain that the tag will tell the recipient the source of this present of presence.

Including All Participants

Be ready to modify the activity to accommodate participants' various levels of dexterity and patience. Some may wish to make a one-sheet blanket, and cut

fringe but not tie it. Others may benefit from assistance with cutting and tying.

ACTIVITY 4: PRAYER AS PRESENCE — HOLDING IN THE LIGHT (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Bell or chime
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Preview the YouTube clip of Kit Holmes performing her song "[I'm Gonna Hold You in the Light](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJzXZNvSmfl)" (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJzXZNvSmfl) (4:00). Adjust the volume and queue the clip so you can press "play" during this activity at the time you choose.

Description of Activity

People encounter many painful situations that are beyond our ability to fix, from friends' and family members' health and relationship issues to violence and natural disasters around the world. Children experience prayer as a way to offer compassion and care—a ministry of presence—whether or not there is any action we can take to change difficult circumstances.

Ask participants what they think prayer is. Use these questions:

- What do you do when you pray?
- Do you have to believe in God in order to pray?
- Do you pray for other people or for yourself?
- How is praying like wishing? How is it different?
- Why might a person want to pray?

Say in these words, or your own:

Prayer can be a way of expressing caring and good wishes for someone, offering your caring presence, whether you are in the room with them or not. One way of praying for a person is a Quaker tradition called "holding in the light." When you hold someone in the light you picture them in your mind and imagine that they are surrounded by a warm, glowing, healing light. You can think of this as the light of God, or the light of love, or the light of hope and good wishes.

Gather the group in a circle. Explain that you will now hold those you love in the light. Ask participants to think of someone or a group of people who might be going

through a hard time and whom we can hold in the light. Suggest: It might be a family member who is ill, a friend with a difficult family situation, or someone who has been treated unfairly. Say it is fine to choose someone we do not even know—for example, someone in another country where there has been a natural disaster or a war.

Give the group a moment. Then explain that each person in the circle will have the opportunity to say who they are thinking of. The group will then repeat together "We are holding [person's name] in the light," and then share silence in which everyone imagines that person (or their name, if they don't know what they look like) surrounded by warm, healing light.

Say that if they prefer not to say a name aloud, participants may say "Someone" when it is their turn. The group will repeat "We are holding someone in the light," then share the period of silence.

Have a volunteer begin. Lead the group to respond "We are holding (person's name) in the light." Wait 20-30 seconds, then sound the bell or chime and invite the next person to share a name, until everyone in the circle has had the opportunity to choose someone whom the group holds in the light.

To conclude, invite participants to reflect on the experience with questions such as:

- Are there times you can imagine you might want to use this practice of holding in the light? Could you do it by yourself? Do you think it is easier, or more powerful to use this practice in a group?
- Does our congregation or your family use any similar practice? What about lighting candles of joy and concern?
- Are there other ways our congregation, or members of our congregation, practice a ministry of presence?

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 1, "[Presence](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)

- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in white or light blue

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1. If you do not have a color printer, you might use light blue paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Presence" circle, by referring to Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3).
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "presence" circle outside the "Air" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Air power encourages us to be fully present to others, and to offer our support through attention and listening.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, to take a deep breath and then let it out.

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the

volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the volunteer to bring a symbol of air for the centering space as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute Taking It Home. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: PLANNING OUR AIR POWER

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to continue the activity begun in Session 5. Research the project the group selected in the previous session. Prepare to share information about the needs, opportunities, and possible logistical arrangements for the project.

Description of Activity

This Faith in Action activity follows the Session 5 Faith in Action activity, Exploring Ways to Exercise Air Power, as the second step in a four-session process that leads the group through (1) *identifying* a way to exercise air power, (2) *planning* how to exercise air power, (3) *engaging* in the planned activity, and (4) *reflecting* on the experience. After selecting an air power activity, the next step is to plan exactly how the project will take place: Who will take part? Who needs to be invited, and who will invite them? What supplies will you need? How much time do you anticipate the project will take? When is the best time to work on the project? Who needs to be contacted for the project to move forward? What resources do you have available? What resources will you need to bring in?

Define the steps to bring the project to completion. Make plans as a group. Identify and assign action items for co-leaders or participants to complete before the next session.

After the session, follow up with your religious educator to determine how to communicate the project details to families and, if needed, the wider congregation.

Including All Participants

Make sure the plan is as inclusive as possible of the differing needs and abilities in your group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did children make with each other? How was this evident? How can we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

We convince by our presence. — Walt Whitman

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard about Unitarian Universalist Kat Sinclair, who organized a peaceful protest in which participants blocked potentially hateful signs and speech by wearing giant angel wings. We talked about air power as the power of presence, our power to offer our attention and listening as well as our physical presence. In a game, the children tried to sense the presence of another person. They created blankets which can be given as gifts, to offer a tangible expression of loving presence to another person. The group also explored the Quaker practice of "holding in the light," offering prayers in the form of envisioning individuals surrounded by warm, healing light.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. In what situations it is particularly difficult to be fully present to members of your family? What are situations in which your family is best able to offer one another their gift of presence? How do members of your family offer the gift of their presence to people beyond your family? Discuss with your child who they would like to give the blanket they made, and help them arrange to get the blanket to that person.

FAMILY GAME. With at least three people, you can try a game the children played, and practice becoming keenly aware of another's presence without using one's eyesight.

Choose one member of the family to be the first "angel." Others spread out, and stand with their hands at their sides and their eyes closed or covered. The "angel" chooses one person and quietly moves to stand behind them, stretching their arms over the person's shoulders without touching them. At any time, if a participant believes the "angel" is standing over them, they say "I

feel an angel." If they are correct, they become the next "angel." If they are incorrect, the current "angel" continues. If an "angel" stands over a person for 10 seconds without being noticed, the "angel" taps that person on the shoulder and they sit down until a new person becomes the "angel." If one person remains as "angel" for too long, have that person select the next "angel." Play until everyone has a chance to be the "angel."

FAMILY RITUAL. A ritual of presence can be a wonderful grounding experience for the family. At a time when everyone can be together, such as just before dinner, hold hands while each person takes the time to catch the eye of each other person in the family. Take a deep breath and release it together. You may wish to conclude by saying "Thank you for your presence."

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private, especially since this is the first time the group is doing this activity. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MIRRORING (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Bell, chime, or other noisemaker

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how you will break the group into pairs. A leader may need to pair with a child if there are an odd number of participants.

Description of Activity

Paired participants focus entirely on one another, becoming fully present to one another in the attempt to match their movements exactly.

Form pairs. Explain that in each pair, one person will be the mover and one person the mirror. Ask the partners to sit on the floor, facing one another, with their hands almost touching. The person who is the mirror attempts to follow the movements of the hands and arms of their partner so closely that someone watching can't tell which person is starting the movement and which is following. This goal can only be achieved if the mover is choosing to move in such a way that it is possible for the mirror to reflect their movements. Both partners must be fully present and attentive to each other.

After a couple of minutes of this activity, ring a bell or chime to draw the attention of the group, and ask the "movers" and "mirrors" to switch roles.

After both members of each pair have had a turn at each role, invite the group back together. Lead a discussion with questions such as:

- Was it harder to be the mover or the mirror?
- If you were the mover, was it tempting to try to make things hard for your mirror, rather than working together for the overall effect?
- How did it feel to remain completely focused on your partner?
- Were you tempted to watch what other pairs were doing, or did you stay fully present to your partner?

Variation

If you have time, repeat the exercise with participants standing and allow full body movements, not just the hands and arms.

Including All Participants

If any participant may have difficulty standing or balancing during this activity, or if any uses a wheelchair, have all pairs do the exercise seated.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 6: STORY: THE PRESENCE OF ANGELS

It was a shock to the whole nation when a gunman opened fire on a group of people who had gathered at a supermarket to meet with their U.S. Representative, Gabrielle Giffords. In mere moments, six people, including nine-year-old Christina Taylor-Green, were killed, and many more, including Representative Giffords, were seriously wounded. Yes, it was horrifying to the whole nation. But the shock was especially terrible for the people of Tucson, Arizona, where the shooting took place.

So it's hard to even imagine how people felt when Fred Phelps, minister of the Westboro Baptist Church, said he and his followers were going to picket young Christina's funeral. Fred Phelps said Christina "was killed for your rebellion when God sent the shooter to deal with idolatrous America." Who knows what exactly that meant, or why a man known for protesting against gay people would bring his followers to hold signs at the funeral of a murdered child. But the last thing the troubled community needed to see was brutal words from a man who has made himself famous by promoting hatred.

Kat Sinclair was a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson who had seen Fred Phelps and witnessed his angry protests before. Never one to sit by and watch people get hurt, Sinclair got to work right away organizing a peaceful response to Phelps's demonstration. She knew it would do no good to reason

with Phelps and his followers, and that a shouting match would only make everyone feel worse.

No, Sinclair was ready to meet hatred with silence. Not the silence of ignoring a problem, but the silence that comes from bringing a strong presence when and where one is needed. Sinclair knew about the African Americans who had sat down at lunch counters in the South during the Civil Rights Movement, letting their physical presence declare that they had just as much right as white people to be served there. She knew about Julia "Butterfly" Hill, who had spent months sitting in an ancient redwood tree, so her presence would keep loggers from cutting that tree down. Only a few months before, Sinclair herself had been arrested for being a peaceful presence in defense of immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona. She knew about the power of presence, and she had a plan.

Before Christina's funeral, Kat Sinclair and a bunch of other folks got together a work party. They brought long poles of white PVC plastic, and yards of white fabric and used them to make [giant angels](http://www.examiner.com/unitarian-universalism-international/angel-wings-workshop-and-silent-vigils-at-memorial-services-for-tuscon-victims-picture?slide=28422051#main) (at www.examiner.com/unitarian-universalism-international/angel-wings-workshop-and-silent-vigils-at-memorial-services-for-tuscon-victims-picture?slide=28422051#main), whose wide wings would block the protestors' nasty picket signs from view. Instead of seeing cruel words on their way to Christina's funeral, mourners would pass a gathering of angels, silently offering loving support.

Fred Phelps and his followers did not show up that day. Maybe because they learned their picket signs would not be seen. But the angels were there—very human angels, with broad wings hanging from plastic poles—offering a silent ministry of presence, as they tried to bring healing to a shattered town.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 6:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "PRESENCE" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

An [article on the Examiner website](http://www.examiner.com/unitarian-universalist-in-columbus/uus-give-silent-support-to-mourners-of-tucson-victims) (at www.examiner.com/unitarian-universalist-in-columbus/uus-give-silent-support-to-mourners-of-tucson-victims) describes the Tucson angel protest and has a link to pictures of the angel wings and the people who constructed them. Listen to a [podcast](http://www.uuctucson.org/index.php/sermons/letters-from-a-phoenix-jail.html) (at www.uuctucson.org/index.php/sermons/letters-from-a-phoenix-jail.html) (approximately 25 minutes) of Kat Sinclair speaking at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson about the night she spent in jail for protesting on behalf of immigrants in Phoenix.

Unitarian Universalist Dr. Nick Gier, professor emeritus at University of Idaho, has posted an article ["Three Principles of Civil Disobedience: Thoreau, Gandhi, and King."](http://www.class.uidaho.edu/ngier/civil.htm) (at www.class.uidaho.edu/ngier/civil.htm) which draws connections among three philosophies of resistance through non-violent presence.

SESSION 7: THE POWER OF SILENCE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Let us be silent, that we may hear the whispers of the gods. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

The power of air is the power of silence, of clearing away the buzz of constant distractions so that we can listen to what is truly important both inside us and around us. In this session participants hear about acoustic ecologist Gordon Hempton, who, in the process of recording the sounds of nature, has become an activist preserving silence — places where there are no human-made sounds. Through both practicing silence themselves and by listening intently to the sounds around them and sounds drawn from nature, participants learn about the cost of the incessant noise of our modern world and how we can create spaces of peaceful silence.

GOALS

This session will:

- Cultivate an awareness of the potentially damaging effects of constant exposure to media
- Develop strategies for creating quiet time for reflection and concentration
- Affirm that "encouragement to spiritual growth" can happen through creating a quiet place in which we can listen to the promptings of the spirit.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Respond to the story of Gordon Hempton and the One Square Inch of Silence project
- Notice sounds that are present in their everyday environments
- Test their ability to identify sounds drawn from nature
- Experience creating a personal "square inch of silence" through meditation.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — One Square Inch	10
Activity 2: Sound Observation	14
Activity 3: Nature Sounds	12
Activity 4: Square Inch of Silence	14
Faith in Action: Exercising Air Power	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Distraction Experiment	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- What sounds can you hear where you are sitting? How many are human-made and how many are from nature?
- What kinds of media play in your household and how often? How much of a presence is the television, computer, video games, music devices, etc.?
- What environments feel restful to you?
- What environments promote your best work?
- What strategies do you have for finding peace and quiet in your life?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Symbol of air, such as a feather, a pinwheel, a picture of clouds, a fan, etc. Ideally, this will be provided by the young worship leader of the day.
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "silent space" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Place the air symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of air, the atmosphere which gives us life, although we never see it." As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing the song "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words "silent space."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we will focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we will send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person on the left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person their left, followed by each person in rapid succession, sending the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse, while still holding hands. Ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Participants who are uncomfortable being touched may be given the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — ONE SQUARE INCH (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[One Square Inch](#) (included in this document) "
- Optional: Computer with Internet connection, and large monitor or digital projector and screen

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.
- Optional: Preview YouTube videos featuring Gordon Hempton, [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROWI0eh9BLo&feature=related) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROWI0eh9BLo&feature=related) and [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0xHfFC_6n0&feature=related) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0xHfFC_6n0&feature=related); consider showing these to the group.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say, in these words or your own:

When we think about pollution in our environment we generally think about trash, or water pollution, or air pollution, or greenhouse gases. We do not often think of noise pollution, but there is plenty of it around. The sounds created by cars, refrigerators, power tools—all our technology—mean our world is noisier, more frantic, and more distracting than the world of our ancestors hundreds of years ago. Our human sounds also affect the animals around us. Blue whales used to be able to communicate across 1,000 miles of ocean. Now, they only hear one another for 100 miles. Our world is growing louder. Quiet places are getting harder and harder to find.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- When you are doing something that requires concentration, like your homework, what sounds do you notice in the background? (e.g. television, music, phone, computer game, kitchen appliances)
- What are some of the noises heard in our congregation? During worship? In this group?
- Do you ever seek out quiet? Where do you go or what do you do when you want silence?

- Have you ever been someplace where you couldn't hear any human-made noise? How did it feel?

ACTIVITY 2: SOUND OBSERVATION (14 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers (red, green, and blue), and tape
- Clipboards, paper, and pencils for all participants

Preparation for Activity

- Set up a clipboard with paper and a pencil for each participant.
- Plan to walk through a variety of both indoor and outdoor spaces, together or in small groups, each with a co-leader. Check in with leaders of any groups participants might visit while searching for sounds.

Description of Activity

Participants tune in to noises that fill a variety of spaces yet might ordinarily escape attention.

Tell the group they will go on a listening project. Tell them where, how, for how long, and with whom they will walk. Say:

Your task is to identify as many sounds as possible in each environment you visit, for example, a car, a light switch, a voice, a scratching sound, a bird call. Classify the sounds you hear: Mechanical/electronic? Human? Or non-human?

Give each participant a clipboard with paper and pencil. Emphasize that in order to hear as many sounds as possible, participants will themselves need to be silent.

Make the listening tour. Then, return to the meeting space.

Post blank newsprint. Have participants read aloud the sounds they noted, and record this information on newsprint. Capture all the sounds everyone heard. Sounds heard by multiple people only need to be written once.

Then, ask the group to classify each sound: Was it mechanical/electronic, human, or non-human? Make a red dot next to each technological sound, a blue dot next to each human-made sound, and a green dot next to each non-human sound.

Engage the group to reflect with questions such as:

- Did you hear more natural sounds or technological sounds?
- How might this balance differ in different environments (home, school, playground, beach, woods, back yard, front steps)?
- If you had not been deliberately listening for sounds today, which ones might you not have heard?
- How might your mood be affected by the different kinds of sounds you are exposed to during the day?
- How might your concentration be affected?
- How might your energy level be affected?

Including All Participants

If any member of your group has significant hearing loss, you may wish to choose a different activity.

ACTIVITY 3: NATURE SOUNDS (12 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Preview the [Nature Songs website](http://www.naturesongs.com/) (at www.naturesongs.com/), and select sounds to play for the group. Find more nature sounds you can download to your computer, [here](#) (at www.partnersinrhyme.com/soundfx/Ambience.shtml). Find a wide variety of bird songs [here](#) (at www.birdjam.com/learn.php).
- Make sure the computer is set up where you can easily access it, and that the volume is adjusted so the sounds you will play are clearly audible, but not overwhelming. Internet access is not available, make an audio file you can play on the computer or another music player.

Description of Activity

This activity encourages a sense of connection with the non-human neighbors we hear around us, by directing participants' attention to natural sounds they may not notice in everyday life and inviting them to guess the sources of the sounds.

Invite the participants to sit comfortably, and to close their eyes. Play sounds, one at a time. After each sound, ask the participants to describe what they heard and try to identify the sound.

Share as many sounds as time allows. Then, invite participants to reflect on the experience with questions such as:

- Were you surprised by how hard it was to identify the sounds? How easy it was?
- Can they name or imitate any bird calls you can recognize when you are outside?

Point out that it is hard to understand and appreciate a sound or its source, if we are not willing to really pay attention to it. Listening to nature and learning to identify its sounds reminds us that we share this world with many other beings, and that we need to make sure that there is a place for each one.

Including All Participants

Provide headphones for participants who may need to hear sounds at a higher volume.

ACTIVITY 4: SQUARE INCH OF SILENCE (14 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Meditation — Square Inch of Silence](#) (included in this document)
- Bell or chime
- Optional: Pillows or mats

Preparation for Activity

- Optional: Distribute pillows/mats so participants can sit out of arms reach of one another, to minimize the temptation to disrupt the quiet.

Description of Activity

Participants create a personal "square inch of silence," and reflect on situations in which they might like to try it.

Say in these words, or your own:

We are going to see what it might be like to create our own "square inch of silence"— a moment of retreat and reflection. In times of anxiety, anger or simply distraction, it is an excellent skill to be able to find a calm, still center inside oneself.

Invite participants to get comfortable, out of arms reach of one another, on the floor, a chair (or, on a pillow or mat). Read the meditation in Leader Resource 1 slowly, leaving pauses between sentences for participants to experience their square inch of silence. Ring a bell or chime at the end of the meditation and invite participants to open their eyes.

Guide participants to reflect on the experience, with questions such as:

- Was it hard to remain silent?
- When are times during an average day when you experience like silence? How about "almost" silence?
- At your home, what noises would you need to silence, in order to create a quiet space?
- Is it possible to practice this mediation in situations where there isn't quiet around you? How could you do it?
- In what situations would it be helpful to know how to create a small space of silence inside yourself?

- Download and adapt Taking It Home and copy for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Including All Participants

Participants who tend to be physically active may benefit from having a quiet, manipulable item, such as Silly Putty or clay, to engage their hands during the meditation.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Silence](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in white or light blue
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2 onto white or light blue paper and cut out the circle.
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, and then to clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "silence" circle (Leader Resource 1) outside the "Air" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Air power is the power of silence, of removing distractions and extra noise so that we can be fully present.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on an elastic and, as they do so, to take a deep breath and then let it out.

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1 Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of air for the centering space.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket.

Distribute the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXERCISING AIR POWER

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Digital still and/or video cameras

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to implement the project planned in Sessions 5 and 6. If your air power activity requires travel beyond your

congregation, recruit volunteers to provide transportation. Get signed permission slips from all participants' families for any off-site activity.

- Optional: Recruit volunteers to photograph and/or videotape the project; obtain appropriate permissions from people who appear in photos and video.

Description of Activity

By this session, the group should have identified a project and planned the elements needed in order to complete this project. This session, then, is when the group will actually do the activity that expresses their own air power.

Including All Participants

Make sure your transportation plan is accessible for all participants, and that all will have full access at any off-site location.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How can we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Let us be silent, that we may hear the whispers of the gods. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard about Gordon Hempton's One Square Inch of Silence campaign to preserve spaces in which the only sounds are the sounds of nature. We toured our surroundings, listening for every sound we could hear, and categorized sounds as mechanical/electronic, human, or non-human. We talked about how the sounds around us affect us. We tested our familiarity with the sounds of nature by trying to identify particular sounds. We practiced creating our own square inch of silence, in a meditation.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. What kind of ambient noise is there typically in your household? Do

children do homework with music, television or videos playing? Do you generally have music, television, or videos playing during meals, or when people are simply relaxing together? Do you have times when you silence as much background noise as possible? If so, when and why?

What kinds of noise come into your home from outside? Which are sounds of nature? Which are sounds of technology, or other human activity? Choose a time when your chances are good, and work together to consciously create silence in your home. Then discuss how it went.

FAMILY GAME. As the children did in this session, your family might want to take a silent tour around your home and yard. What sounds do you hear? Make sure everyone listens for small sounds, such as the hum of a computer or refrigerator, as well as more obtrusive sounds. If you go outside, how long can you go before you hear a human-generated sound?

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Take a trip to a forest preserve, park or rural area to listen for the sounds of nature. Perhaps, like acoustic ecologist Gordon Hempton, family members will want to record the sounds they hear. Take note of how long you can go without hearing a human-made sound, such as an airplane or car.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl halfway with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence; it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: DISTRACTION EXPERIMENT (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Hand-held video game device(s), such as Game Boy, DS, or iPod Touch
- Music, and a music player
- Stopwatch

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure the video game device you will use has a game loaded that is (1) appropriate in content for the age level, (2) not too difficult for someone who hasn't played the game before, and (3) complex and/or fast-paced enough to require players' active concentration. If you have access to multiple video game devices, you will be able to have multiple participants doing the same challenge at once, and the activity will take less time. They need not all play the same game.
- Select music that is likely to distract a concentrating person—for example, songs with lyrics, or rhythm or key changes. You might even prepare a medley of distracting tunes.
- Set up the music player and queue the music you have brought.
- Post a sheet of newsprint. Draw a line down the center. Title one column "With Noise" and other column "Without Noise."
- Optional: If using a video game system is not feasible, adapt this activity so participants try another challenge "with noise" and "without noise," such as counting backwards by sevens or reciting the alphabet backwards.

Description of Activity

Participants experience the effect of everyday, environmental noise on their ability to engage in tasks that require concentration.

Tell the group they will try an experiment. Each person will have two timed chances to play a video game. The first chance will be while the room is quiet. The second

will be while there is music playing and other participants are talking or making noise.

If you have more than one video game device, divide the group into smaller groups to share each device. Post a separate scoring sheet (newsprint, divided into two columns "With Noise"/"Without Noise" for each group.

For each round, designate a timekeeper. Show them how to use the stopwatch to "start" and "stop" a round. Decide how long a round will be—e.g., one minute, three minutes etc.—based on how much time you have for the activity and how many rounds you will need to have so that every participants gets to play twice,

Encourage the group to keep silent during the "Without Noise" rounds and to chatter or otherwise make noise during the "With Noise" rounds. For each round, record the score that the player got.

Once every child has received one score in the "With Noise" column and one score in the "Without Noise" column, put away the game devices and gather the group. Look together at the scores. Discuss, using these questions:

- Were there significant differences in the scores people got with the noise and without it?
- How might background noise affect people's ability to do complex tasks?
- How many of the participants habitually have music or the television on while they are doing their homework? If you are not paying attention to these sounds, could they still be interrupting your concentration?
- Is it helpful or harmful to have background noise? What do the results of our experiment suggest?

Variation

If you have time, play more rounds to explore how different kinds of noise affect the scores people get. For instance, does just having music playing make a difference? Does the volume make a difference? Does it matter whether people are talking in the background or talking to the person who is playing the game? If engaging in conversation appears to reduce players' scores, what might this say about the effect of talking on the phone while driving?

Including All Participants

Be sure to choose a challenge task every participant has the ability to accomplish. If any students have fine-motor challenges, look into adaptive technologies and modified devices; parents may know of electronic game-playing devices their children are able to use.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 7: STORY: ONE SQUARE INCH

On a moss-covered log, in the middle of the Hoh Rain Forest, in Olympic National Park in Washington State, there's reddish, square-ish stone. This stone may be the smallest, least noticeable marker ever for a really big idea. This stone marks one square inch of silence.

To understand this unique yet ever-so-ordinary marker, you have to understand Gordon Hempton, the man behind the project that is One Square Inch of Silence. Hempton is an acoustic ecologist—that is to say, he travels around the world recording the sounds of nature. Here's what he said in an interview with *Newsweek* about how he came to such an odd career:

I was driving from Seattle to Madison, Wis., and decided to sleep in a cornfield for the night. I didn't want to pay for a hotel. As I lay there I heard crickets, and rolling thunder in the background, which captivated me. The thunderstorm came, and I truly listened. The storm passed on, and as I lay there, drenched, the only thought in my mind was, how could I be 27 years old and never have truly listened before? I then took my microphone and tape recorder and went everywhere, obsessively listening—freight trains, hobos—it was a flood of sensation. I realized how we need to hear to survive.

For Gordon Hempton, silence isn't the complete absence of any sound. It's natural quiet, undisturbed by any mechanical, human-made sounds, so that all you hear is the natural world. When Hempton started trying to identify quiet places in 1984, he found just 21 places where you could go for 15 minutes without hearing a

single human-made sound. In 2007 he could find only three.

One of those three places is the square inch of silence marked by the little red stone. Hempton and other volunteers are trying to preserve the silence of that small spot, knowing that keeping it completely undisturbed by noise pollution can protect 1000 square miles around it. They are trying to get airlines to agree not to fly over the park, and are trying to get the National Park Service to recognize quiet as a feature of our national parks that needs to be preserved.

Why bother to try to preserve this natural quiet? This is how Hempton put it, in the introduction to the book *One Square Inch of Silence*:

Silence is not the absence of something, but the presence of everything. ... It is the presence of time, undisturbed. It can be felt within the chest. Silence nurtures our nature, our human nature, and lets us know who we are. Left with a more receptive mind and a more attuned ear, we become better listeners not only to nature, but to each other... .Silence can be found, and silence can find you. Silence can be lost, and also recovered. But silence cannot be imagined, although most people think so. To experience the soul-swelling wonder of silence you must hear it.

If you sat on the log by that stone, you wouldn't hear the sounds of your everyday life. You wouldn't hear cars or leaf blowers, or the hum of computers or refrigerators. But you might hear wind moving the leaves of trees 300 feet above you, or the distant call of an elk, or the hollow knock of a woodpecker searching for bugs, or the patter of rain sifting through branches. And maybe you would experience the soul-swelling wonder of silence.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 7: LEADER RESOURCE 1: MEDITATION — SQUARE INCH OF SILENCE

Please close your eyes, and place your hands, palms open, in your lap. Shrug your shoulders up toward your ears. Push them up as high and tight as they will go, and then let your shoulders drop and relax. Imagine that you are sitting on the mossy log next to the stone that marks the One Square Inch of Silence in the Hoh Rain Forest in Olympic National Park.

Listen. Around you there is only the sound of birds, and of wind moving through the trees. Still yourself, to match that quiet. You are simply a piece of the silence. You are as large as the great trees above you. You are as tiny as the raindrop caught on the tip of a leaf. Make your ears large, your mouth small. Just for a moment, for one square inch of time, become still, become silent.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 7:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: "SILENCE" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

Visit the [One Square Inch of Silence website](http://onesquareinch.org) (at onesquareinch.org). Read an [article about one person's visit with Gordon Hempton](http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/3627) (at www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/3627).

SESSION 8: THE POWER OF LISTENING

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

So when you are listening to somebody, completely, attentively, then you are listening not only to the words, but also to the feeling of what is being conveyed, to the whole of it, not part of it. — Jiddu Krishnamurti

We tend to think of power in terms of "doing"—pushing and acting. Yet sometimes we express our power most effectively with focused, open-hearted listening. The power of air is the power of listening, of not only hearing what others have to say but also factoring their experience into our world views and choices. Participants hear the story of Unitarian Universalist minister Don Robinson, who partnered with community leaders in Washington, D.C.'s inner city to create Beacon House Community Ministries, an after-school program that responds to the needs of children and youth. Participants practice intent listening in a whole group counting exercise and by listening to a partner talk about a pet peeve. Constructing "I'm All Ears" hats provides a fun way to remind themselves and family members to listen fully and deeply when the "air power" of listening can help.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the power of non-judgmental listening
- Promote and build skills for active listening
- Demonstrate that helping others begins with listening to learn their abilities as well as their needs
- Affirm that "justice, equity and compassion in human relations" (second Principle) begins with active listening.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Hear the story of Unitarian Universalist minister Don Robinson, who created Beacon House Community Ministries for children and youth, in partnership with members of the Washington, DC community in which it is located
- Practice deep attention and listening through an exercise in which the group counts to ten

- Experience the power of listening and presence, by listening to a partner rant about a pet peeve
- Create "all ears" hats as a reminder to listen actively and deeply.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Building a Beacon	10
Activity 2: Counting Circle	8
Activity 3: Rant — A Listening Exercise	10
Activity 4: "I'm All Ears" Hats	22
Faith in Action: Reflecting on Our Air Power	20
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Recording Oral Histories	30

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- Can you think of a time when someone's willingness to listen made a difference in your life?
- Can you think of a time when your own non-judgmental listening has made a difference?
- How do you feel when someone truly listens to you?
- How completely do you feel you listen to the people in your life? Your children? Spouse/partner? Friends? Co-workers? People you disagree with?
- What do you do when you listen most effectively?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Symbol of air, such as a feather, a pinwheel, a picture of clouds, a fan, etc. Ideally, this will be provided by the young worship leader of the day.
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "listening ears" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Place the air symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of air, the atmosphere which gives us life, although we never see it." As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing the song "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words "listening ears."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we will focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we will send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person on the left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person their left, followed by each person in rapid succession, sending the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse, while still holding hands. Ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Participants who are uncomfortable being touched may be given the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — BUILDING A BEACON (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story "[Building a Beacon](#)" (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Review the discussion questions and choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

One of the most valuable things we can learn as human beings and as Unitarian Universalists is the desire and readiness to help others. But it's important that we listen carefully to learn what the people we want to help really need and want, and how we can help them reach their own goals. It's much easier to think we know what someone else needs, and just do it and expect them to be grateful. But really being of service in the world starts with listening, so we can move into partnership relationships with the people we hope to help.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- Has anyone ever tried to help you, without finding out what you really wanted or needed first? How did it feel?
- Have you ever felt like someone was really, truly listening to you? How did that feel?
- What are some situations in which it's more important to listen than to be heard?
- When you are really listening intently to a friend, rather than focusing on what you want to say next, what do you do?

ACTIVITY 2: COUNTING CIRCLE (8 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Clear an area for participants to gather in a circle.

Description of Activity

Participants are challenged to pay extremely close attention to the rest of the group. In this game, they may

speak only when their voice will not interrupt someone else.

Gather everyone in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

The objective of the game is simple: With everyone in a circle, individuals call out sequential numbers. For instance, Alyssa says "one," Kyle says "two," Nara says "three," etc. However, any time a person speaks over another person, the count starts over. Do not try to plan the order in which people will speak, and do not try to divvy up roles. Instead, try to pay such close attention to everyone in the group that you sense when there is empty space into which you can speak.

Challenge the group to count to ten in this fashion. If the group accomplishes this goal quickly, try the game again, this time with all participants closing or covering their eyes.

After the game, invite reflection with questions such as:

- Did you contribute more to the success of the game by speaking, or by remaining silent?
- Was there any way to tell when it was a good time to speak? How?
- Was it easier or harder to get to ten than you anticipated? What made it easy or hard?

ACTIVITY 3: RANT — A LISTENING EXERCISE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Bell or chime or other noisemaker
- Timepiece (minutes)
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Decide how you will form pairs.
- Optional: Preview the video of the [Helsinki Complaints Choir](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AH5W_-CiqSo&feature=related) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=AH5W_-CiqSo&feature=related) (8:24)—an orchestrated choral piece that uses assorted, everyday complaints as lyrics—and see other municipalities' complaints choirs, on YouTube. Read more about the [Complaints Choir project](http://www.complaintschoir.org/) (at www.complaintschoir.org/), which began in Birmingham, U.K. in 2005. Consider showing one of these videos to help participants "warm up" to rant about their pet peeves. (Listen to and read the lyrics of any

version you plan to show to make sure it is appropriate.)

Description of Activity

Participants practice active listening, and experience what it feels like to have someone listen intently to what they have to say.

Tell the children they will have a chance to complain about whatever bothers them, and have a partner listen intently to their "rant." If you wish, show one of the Complaint Choir videos.

Form pairs. If necessary, a leader can pair with one of the children. Say:

One person in the pair will be the speaker. The other will be the listener. The speaker will have three minutes to talk about their pet peeves—things that really drive them nuts. The speaker may spend all their time focusing on one particular issue, or can go through a whole list of complaints. While the speaker is ranting, the listener may not speak, but should convey by their body language and facial expression that they hear and understand what the speaker is saying. When three minutes are up, I will sound a bell (or chime) and you will switch roles. The person who was the listener will then have three minutes to rant about their pet peeves while their partner listens intently.

Sound the bell for the first speakers to begin. After three minutes, sound the bell again for partners to change roles. After another three minutes, sound the bell once more to end the exercise.

Regather the group and lead reflection with questions such as:

- Did you prefer to listen or to speak? Why?
- Was it difficult to listen without interjecting any words, even words of support or agreement?
- How often in your daily life do you listen to friends or family members this way, without thinking about what you will say next or trying to shift the conversation to a topic you prefer?

ACTIVITY 4: "I'M ALL EARS" HATS (22 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Baseball caps or other kinds of hats
- Drawing paper (11x17") and pencils
- Sheets of felt in various colors; pens or markers for tracing ear shapes on felt; scissors (including

left-handed scissors); flexible wire, and wire cutters; needles and thread, and hot glue gun

- Optional: Fabric paint, brushes, and newspaper to cover work surfaces

Preparation for Activity

- Acquire a hat for each participant plus a few extra. Your local thrift store may be an affordable source; to ensure hats are sanitary it is a good idea to run them through a washer and a hot dryer.
- If using fabric paint, cover work surfaces with newspaper.
- Optional: Download patterns for animal ears; one source is the [Fleece Farm website](http://www.fleecefarm.com/basic_animal_parts.htm#ears) (at www.fleecefarm.com/basic_animal_parts.htm#ears).

Description of Activity

Invite the children to create hats with animal ears on them, to wear as a symbol that they are "all ears" and listening intently.

Invite participants to decide what kind of animal ears they would like to have on their hat. Large, floppy elephant ears? Round bear ears? Long rabbit or kangaroo ears? Oval deer ears? Triangular wolf or cat ears? Hanging dog ears? If you have illustrations or patterns to show the group, do so now.

Once they choose the type of ears they want, invite participants to design how their chosen ears will work. Show them the hats you have brought. Will they need wire inside to make the ears stand up? If so, how will the wire attach to the felt? Distribute paper and pencils. Ask participants to draw a pattern for their ears on a piece of paper, and then trace that pattern on felt to cut out for their ear shapes. Help participants figure out how to attach the ears onto their hat. In most cases, needle and thread will probably work best. Hot glue may be a workable option.

As participants work, ask them to reflect on what it means to be "all ears." Use questions such as:

- What do you do when you are truly listening to someone? (For instance, they might nod their head, ask clarifying questions, repeat back what someone said, say "I know what you mean," use non-verbal utterances like "mmm-hmm.")
- In what situations do they most wish that someone would actively listen to them?
- In what situations is it difficult to actively listen to someone else?

Invite participants to use their finished hats at home as a way of reminding themselves to truly listen or as a way to ask someone else to listen carefully to them. Ask if they might wear their "all ears" hat to show a family member or a friend they are really listening to the person, or that they need someone to listen to them.

Including All Participants

Be ready to help children at any step of this activity, from designing to pattern tracing and cutting to implementing their plan to attach the ears to their hat.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 1, "[Listening](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in white or light blue
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1 onto white or light blue paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Listening" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- If needed, print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, and then to clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Listening" circle (Leader Resource 1) outside the "Air" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Air power encourages us to listen to others, hearing what they have to say without judgment and considering their needs and opinions in our actions.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, to take a deep breath and let it out.

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of the next element in the program, fire, for the centering space.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket.

Distribute Taking It Home. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: REFLECTING ON OUR AIR POWER (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

This activity is designed to help the group process a Faith in Action activity begun in Session 5.

An important but often neglected part of any social justice activity is the opportunity to reflect on the experience.

Use the prompt questions provided below. Write the answers participants give, or invite a volunteer to serve as recorder.

- What do you think worked best about this project? What was frustrating?
- Who was the most memorable person you met?
- Did your view of the world change in any way?
- Did you feel your gifts were welcome? Were you able to welcome the gifts of others in your group and people you met?
- What will you remember about this experience? How do you think your actions changed the world (even if in small ways)?
- How did you draw on air power (being open, being present, being still, listening)?

Summarize the feedback (or, invite a parent volunteer to do so). Share the summary with the director of religious education, and use it to help plan future Faith in Action projects. You may wish to share with this information with the Social Action committee or other volunteers in the congregation as well.

Variation

To develop leadership skills, invite the children to help write a newsletter article about their experience. Be sure to get appropriate permissions to share the information and any pictures from the project on the congregation's website. You might also create a scrapbook of Faith in Action projects.

Including All Participants

To make sure children who process their thoughts more slowly are heard, invite everyone to reflect on a question in silence for a couple of minutes before asking for responses.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?

- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

So when you are listening to somebody, completely, attentively, then you are listening not only to the words, but also to the feeling of what is being conveyed, to the whole of it, not part of it. — Jiddu Krishnamurti

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard about Unitarian Universalist minister Don Robinson, who partnered with community leaders in Washington, D.C.'s inner city to create an after-school program that responds to the needs of children and youth. The group practiced intent listening with a counting exercise and by listening to a partner talk about a pet peeve. They made "I'm All Ears" hats as a reminder to use "air power," to listen fully and deeply. You may wish to use this hat in a family context.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. How well do members of your family listen to one another? What are situations in which you feel you listen especially well? In what situations would you like to listen or be listened to better? When is it particularly difficult to offer or receive focused attention? When you are in conversation, what signs, such as eye contact or reflecting back your words to you, make you feel you are being heard?

FAMILY GAME. Try a game from this session that invites participants to pay extremely close attention to the rest of the group, sharing their voice only when it will not interrupt someone else. The objective of the game is simple: With everyone standing in a circle, individuals call out sequential numbers. For instance, Alyssa says "one," Kyle says "two," Nara says "three," etc. However, any time a person speaks over another person, the count starts over. The object is to pay such close attention to everyone in the group that you sense when there is empty space into which you can speak. The goal is to count to ten in this fashion. If the group accomplishes this goal within your available time, try the game again, this time with all family members closing or covering their eyes.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. As a family, choose someone you would really like to listen to and learn from. This might be an elderly relative, a friend or neighbor who has immigrated to this country, a congregation member you admire, or a doctor, postal worker, or shopkeeper

you see regularly whose story you would like to hear. Invite the person to share their personal story with you, and ask if you may use a recording device to preserve what they say. Brainstorm some questions before the visit to get the conversation started, and to keep it flowing.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private, especially since this is the first time the group is doing this activity. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: RECORDING ORAL HISTORIES (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Video or audio recorder(s)
- Paper or notecard for thank-you note.

Preparation for Activity

- Invite a person from your congregation or community whose life story you admire or want to learn more about to come and be interviewed.

Description of Activity

Participants practice listening, and experience the gifts that can come with taking the time to hear another person's story and point of view.

Allow five or ten minutes before your guest arrives to brainstorm questions that the children may want to ask. These can include basic personal information, such as where the person was born, how old they are, who is in their family of origin, and whether they have a spouse/partner and/or children. Include questions that dig deeper, such as "What have you done that you're really proud of?" "When was a time that you were scared?" "What's one thing you really want to do before you die?" "Who are your heroes?" or "What has made you happiest?"

Designate one or more participants to record the oral history on audio or video. If you wish, this role can switch with each question.

When your guest arrives, invite them to briefly introduce themselves. Then have participants take turns asking questions.

At the end of the interview have all participants thank your guest for their time.

After the guest has gone, invite participants to reflect on the experience, with questions such as:

- Was it hard to stay focused on listening when you were eager to ask a question yourself?
- Did you learn something new about the person who spoke?
- Was there any way your view of the world was changed by what you heard from your guest?
- What do you think would be a good thing to do with the video or audio recording that you have captured? (If you plan to share it online, be sure to get permission first).

Invite the children to write a thank-you note to the guest.

Including All Participants

Participants who tend to be physically active may benefit from having a quiet, manipulable, such as Silly Putty(R) or clay, to engage their hands during the meditation.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 8: STORY: BUILDING A BEACON

For 24 years, Reverend Don Robinson worked as a teacher. He taught in the Washington, D.C. public schools, in a juvenile jail, and later as a community youth counselor who helped families in their neighborhoods. During that time, he saw children who dropped out of school, some as early as elementary school. From the day they started first grade, some children in the community were already years behind the other students. Some children's parents could not read and write, and thus could not help their children with schoolwork. Many of the parents had additional challenges that limited their ability to help their children. Reverend Robinson saw teenage girls drop out of school to have babies, who then grew up and dropped out of school, too. He saw teenage boys selling drugs because it was the only way they knew to get money for their families. He saw that these children needed help that many of their parents and schools could not provide. He decided that an after-school study program, with adults to be mentors and help with school work, could make a big difference.

Reverend Robinson knew he would be better received in the inner-city community where he wanted to begin this program if he was a minister; so he went to seminary and became a Unitarian Universalist minister. But he didn't want to be the kind of minister who serves a congregation. All along, he knew he wanted to be the kind of minister who does not speak from a pulpit, but instead starts programs to help the community. Being a minister meant that in addition to leading an after-school program, he could officiate at weddings, funerals, and child dedications. He could be someone for people of all ages to come to when they needed to talk about their feelings or figure out a way to solve a problem.

After he became a minister, Reverend Robinson began walking around areas of northeast Washington, D.C. looking for a community in need of a program like the one he wanted to build. One day, he ran into a policeman whose daughters he had helped to get into a summer camp program. Reverend Robinson explained to his friend what kind of after-school program he had in mind. The policeman told Reverend Robinson about space in the Edgewood Terrace neighborhood. So, he

talked to the folks that were already sharing the space, and they decided he was welcome.

Finally, the project was underway. Unitarian Universalists began coming to volunteer. They decided to name the after-school program "Beacon House Community Ministry, Inc." because they wanted the program to be like a lighthouse that would lead young people to a safe space where they could get help preparing for life.

People from the UU Church of Rockville, Maryland came to Beacon House and did arts and crafts programs with the children. They helped with homework and wrote checks to support the program. Soon, other UUs became aware of the program, including a community organizer, Bob Johnsen, who helped to get more people involved. Soon after the program started, Reverend Robinson met Ms. Rogerline Nicholson, a long-time neighborhood resident. She was president of the Tenants Association at Edgewood Terrace. She wanted to improve her community for the children and all her neighbors, just like Reverend Robinson. The two became partners in the project and the rest is history.

Community programs may sound good, but to be good, and do good, the organizers need to listen to the concerns of community members. The residents let Reverend Robinson and Ms. Nicholson know they wanted sports and enrichment programs as well as the tutoring and mentoring programs.

The Rockville UUs and Bob Johnsen involved more UUs with Beacon House, and Ms. Nicholson got other people living in the community involved. It wasn't always easy. UUs who were used to planning projects the way they thought was best had to learn to listen to what members of the Edgewood Terrace wanted, rather than just moving forward with their own ideas. Together they all worked to make Beacon House the kind of program Reverend Robinson had dreamed of creating. At Beacon House, more than 600 children each year have gotten homework help, or a chance to play sports or eat a good meal or meet with a mentor or just to have fun. Beacon House successfully brought very different groups together for the good of the children. These groups included people of different ethnicities, income levels, educational levels, and ages. People who might never have even talked with one another learned to listen to each other with open minds and hearts.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 8:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "LISTENING" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

Go online to find out more about [Beacon House](http://www.beaconhousedc.org/) (at www.beaconhousedc.org/).

SESSION 9: THE POWER TO SHINE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

It is not light that we need, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. — Frederick Douglass

The power of fire is the power of shining light and passionate action. Participants learn to activate their fire power to express their feelings and beliefs and make a difference. They hear a true story of two boys who found a creative way to stand up to bullies at their school. They add fire symbols to the Circle of the Elements mural. While previous sessions have stressed listening and cooperation, this session explores the power of direct action.

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore fire as a symbol of direct action
- Demonstrate how fire power can shine, with a story about two boys who acted to stop bullying at their school
- Promote and build strategies for standing up to bullies or those who act unjustly
- Show that each of us has "fire power" to stand up for what we believe
- Affirm that "the right of conscience" (fifth Unitarian Universalist Principle) demands that we act for justice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Focus on characteristics of fire power by decorating the "Fire" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural
- Explore "fire power" strategies against bullying, by learning how two boys took action against bullying in their school and by role playing
- Experience fire power by making book covers with anti-bullying tips and slogans.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — A Sea of Pink	10
Activity 2: Adding Fire Symbols to the Circle of the Elements Mural	12
Activity 3: Shining for Justice — Role Play	15
Activity 4: Anti-Bullying Book Covers	13
Faith in Action: Exploring Ways to Exercise Fire Power	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Making an Anti-Bullying Video	45

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- Have you ever been bullied? How did it feel?
- When have you engaged in direct action for justice? How did it feel? Does "shining your fire power" work as a metaphor for what you did?
- Has someone ever acted in support of you, when you were faced with injustice? How did that feel?
- Have you ever given advice or comfort to someone who was bullied? What did you say?
- When have you felt compelled to say "no," to not go along with something you felt was wrong? How comfortable were you making your "no" visible or active?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of fire, such as a candle, a flashlight, a depiction of the sun or any material that is red, orange and/or shiny
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "fire within" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders. Before you begin,

ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought a fire symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath, release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the fire symbol on the cloth—or invite the volunteer opening worship leader to place a symbol they have brought. Say, "I bring this symbol of fire, of strength and daring, light and warmth."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "fire within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — A SEA OF PINK (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[A Sea of Pink](#)" (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say, in these words or your own:

We spend a lot of time talking about listening and cooperation and making a way for everyone to be heard. All of these things are important, but sometimes it is important to take action against something unjust. An action that shows your beliefs to others or an action that moves a situation from unfair, and wrong, toward fair, and right, is an example of using your fire power. With fire power, we show others that blazing place inside us that says "NO!" when we see someone doing harm.

A big problem in many schools and youth groups today is bullying. We're going to talk about ways to use our fire power against bullying.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- Does bullying happen at your school? In other groups of young people? In what sort of ways does it happen?
- Have you ever stood up to a bully? What did you do? What happened then?
- Have you ever given advice or comfort to someone who was bullied? What did you say?
- Can you think of ways in which people act like bullies toward our environment, or toward whole groups of people?

ACTIVITY 2: ADDING FIRE SYMBOLS TO THE CIRCLE OF THE ELEMENTS (12 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Paper, poster board, or fabric
- Paper or fabric and appropriate drawing tools (crayons, markers, permanent markers, or fabric paint), and tape or glue sticks
- Optional: Magazines to cut up, scissors (including left-handed scissors), and glue sticks
- Optional: Found objects or images that might represent fire

Preparation for Activity

- Gather materials. Provide images such as flames, the sun, a volcano, and a flaming chalice. Include items or images in the colors red, yellow, and orange, and items that are shiny or sparkly.
- If you will be using permanent markers or fabric paint, spread out newspaper to protect work surfaces.
- Set out materials on work tables for children to prepare drawings or decorations to post in the "fire" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural.
- Optional: Set up a station where an adult can guide participants' use of a glue gun.

Description of Activity

This activity adds to the Circle of Elements mural. You may have chosen to display the complete quartered circle in Session 1, or you may be adding the third, top right quarter of the circle in this session. In either case, for this activity, invite participants to decorate the top right, "fire" quarter with symbols of fire.

Invite participants to create fire pictures, symbols, or collages on a sheet of paper or fabric, which you can then attach to the fire quarter of the mural. You may invite or assist participants to attach three-dimensional items directly to the mural using hot glue. Explain how you will help participants use the glue gun, if you have one.

Post participants' artwork or help them do it. Save several minutes to engage the group in clean-up.

ACTIVITY 3: SHINING FOR JUSTICE — ROLE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Bullying Scenarios](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print three copies of Leader Resource 1, Bullying Scenarios. From each copy, cut apart the three scenarios, so each person in each scenario can have a copy of their scenario with their character's lines.

Description of Activity

Participants enact scenarios in which bullying is planned, and brainstorm ways to respond in similar situations.

Affirm that it is difficult to know what to do or say in a situation that involves bullying. Ask for volunteers to act out the parts in the scenarios. Assign roles and distribute scenarios to volunteers. Give the volunteers a few minutes with their lines. Then, invite the volunteers to present their scenario to the group.

After each scenario, ask the group to think of ways to act with "fire power" in such a situation. Use these questions:

- If you are standing by and hear this conversation what do you do?
- What do you do if the people talking are your friends?
- What do you do if the person they play to bully is your friend?
- What do you do if you don't know anyone involved?

Including All Participants

It is very possible that some participants will have been bullied and that some have acted as bullies, perhaps even toward others in this group. Most children will have witnessed a bullying scenario in real life. Be aware of interactions among the children and individual's responses to the scenarios. Consult the religious educator or minister if you feel pastoral care may be needed.

ACTIVITY 4: ANTI-BULLYING BOOK COVERS (13 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

- Brown paper shopping bags, scissors, and pencils and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Make a practice book cover so you can demonstrate for the group. If needed, see "[How to Make a Paper-Bag Book Cover](#)" (at specialchildren.about.com/od/schoolissues/ht/bookcover.htm) on the About.com website.
- Post blank newsprint.
- Optional: To maximize time for children to write slogans and decorate covers, cut each paper bag so it lies in a single, flat sheet.

Description of Activity

Participants create book covers with anti-bullying slogans and advice, so their school books can "shine" a message to take action against bullying.

Ask participants to share actions young people can take to prevent bullying, to interrupt bullying when it happens, and to support people who are being bullied. Prompt by reminding them of solutions they generated for the bullying scenarios they have just discussed (Activity 3). Possibilities might include standing next to someone who is being bullied; suggesting the person walk away with you; telling a teacher or principal; using humor to defuse a tense situation; making a point of including people in your group who you think might otherwise be bullied; affirming different kinds of diversity; or, when someone tells a mean joke, saying you don't like it.

If participants suggest fighting back physically or getting revenge, gently point out that while it may be tempting, those sorts of solutions tend to escalate the problem and make it worse. Emphasize that fire power is action for justice and good. We would not use it to hurt someone else. Write all suggestions on the newsprint.

Now invite participants to decorate the blank side of a brown paper bag with tips and/or slogans to prevent or stop bullying. Invite them to "shine" their message by putting their book cover on a book they take to school. Their action will help others act to stop and prevent bullying.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Shine](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)

- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in red or orange
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Optional: Tea lights (one per participant), matches, a taper for lighting the tea lights, and a large ceramic or metal platter

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2. If you do not have a color printer, you might use bright yellow or orange paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Shine" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).
- Optional: If live flame is permitted in your meeting space, set tea lights on a large platter, with taper and matches nearby.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Shine" circle (Leader Resource 2) outside the "Fire" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

The power of fire encourages us to show and act on what we believe, to say "no" to injustice,

to use our passion and our caring to make the world a better place.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic.

Use a match to light the taper candle. Invite each participant use the taper to light a tea light.

Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Extinguish all flames.

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of fire for the centering space as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXPLORING WAYS TO EXERCISE FIRE POWER (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Stickers or adhesive dots

Preparation for Activity

- Research groups in your area that do good work that connects with the theme of "fire power." This might include an organization that involves people standing up for justice, such as groups working on rights for immigrants, marriage equality, or protection of the environment or animals. The topic of global warming connects with the metaphor of fire; activities to combat global warming would be appropriate for the "fire power" sessions.

Description of Activity

In keeping with this program's theme of building leadership, the Faith in Action projects build skills in identifying, planning, executing, and reflecting on work for the common good. Rather than offering a detailed project for each session, Sing to the Power provides

structured ways for participants to voice their interests and follow through on their commitments. As in the "Earth" and "Air" sections, the "Fire" section's Faith in Action activities comprise a four-session block.

An action project begins with identifying a need. Begin by explaining that the group will create and carry out a Faith in Action project based on the theme of "fire power." (Given the association of the phrase "fire power" with weapons, you may wish to substitute the phrase "the power of fire.")

Remind the group that the power of fire is the power of direct action—ways you claim and shine your power to change the world. Offer, and write on newsprint, some examples of local groups or individuals whose work connects with the power of fire. Invite participants to share any other examples of people working with the power of fire. Record these contributions. Then ask participants to brainstorm ideas of projects that they might be able to undertake within the month (or, the time frame of the fire sessions). On a fresh sheet of newsprint, write all suggestions (including any ideas you might have).

Give each participant three stickers or dots. Ask them to vote for the suggestions they like best using their dots. They may put all three dots on one idea, or distribute them among up to three ideas. When voting is complete, identify the three ideas that got the most votes.

Now lead a discussion about what it would take to successfully complete each of the "top three" projects. What would be involved? What resources would you need? How much time would it take, and when would you spend that time? Who would you connect with? What might you learn? How might you contribute to the world?

When you have discussed all three projects, give each participant one more sticker/dot. Have them vote by placing their dot by the project they prefer. The project with the most votes will be your Faith in Action project for the month.

Including All Participants

Make sure that quieter/more shy participants are encouraged to share their views, and that discussion is not dominated by those who think the quickest or speak the loudest. Offer to place dots for a child who has mobility limitations, or have another participant place dots for them.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

It is not light that we need, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. — Frederick Douglass

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard a true story of two boys who responded to a younger boy being bullied for wearing a pink shirt by organizing all the students in the school to wear pink, as an expression of support. We talked about how the power of fire is the power of direct action, showing others your beliefs, and of saying "no" to injustice. The group acted out scenarios of children being bullied, and discussed ways they could respond with "the power of fire" in similar situations. We made book covers with anti-bullying messages, to get the word out at school that everyone can prevent bullying.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. How have members of your family turned the power of fire on injustice? Has anyone stepped in when they saw another person being treated unfairly? Expressed their distaste for a racist or sexist joke? Joined in action to protest a war or the actions of an unethical corporation?

FAMILY GAME. Your family might try role-playing so everyone can experience ways to respond to bullies. Have two family members improvise a scene in which one person is the bully and the other is being bullied. Have others play the role of bystanders, and practice ways to interrupt or defuse the bullying. Or, have one person play the bully and have another family member, as the person being bullied, figure out ways to try to stop the bullying. They may use other family members to role-play other people they might turn to, such as friends or teachers.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. As a family, participate in a protest march or vigil, or write a letter to your local paper about an issue that you feel strongly about and hope to change. Talk about how you are letting the power of fire "shine!"

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: MAKING AN ANTI-BULLYING VIDEO (45 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Writing paper and pens/pencils
- Video recording and editing equipment

Preparation for Activity

- Recruit an older youth or an adult to edit the material you videotape, post the edited clip on YouTube and create a DVD.
- Work with the religious educator to make sure you have appropriate permissions from parents and guardians to videotape participants and to post video of participants online.
- Write on newsprint, and post:
 - What happened?

- What was your role?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- What actions would you advise someone to take, in a similar situation? take?

Description of Activity

Participants act against bullying and for a climate in which people feel safe and supported, by making and showing a video.

Guide the group to prepare stories to tell on videotape about their own experiences with bullying. Encourage them to think about a time when they were a bully, a person bullied, and/or a witness to bullying.

Indicate the questions you have posted on newsprint. Tell the group each person will be interviewed on videotape, and asked these questions. Brainstorm things that students can do to prevent or interrupt bullying, and to support people who have been bullied, and then have participants share these tips as the final part of your videotape. Optional: Distribute writing paper and pens/pencils, and invite participants to gather their thoughts by making some notes.

Videotape the participants, one a time or a small group at a time.

Discuss how you can share the edited video. For example: post it on YouTube or another video sharing site, or make a plan to show it to other young people in your congregation, present it during a Sunday service, or share it at a school.

Including All Participants

Do not insist that all children speak on camera. Invite children who prefer not to be videotaped or whose parents have not given permission to, instead, operate the video camera or make graphics, such as a poster of anti-bullying tips, to include in the video. A child who prefers not to be photographed may like to narrate a list of video tips which can be shown on-screen.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 9: STORY: A SEA OF PINK

By Elisa Pearmain.

Scott was nervous on his first day of junior high school. Junior high started with the fifth grade in his town. He was going to be among the youngest kids in school, and everything was new to him. He had loaded his back pack with all the things on the back to school list and his favorite lunch and snacks. He even wore his favorite pink tee-shirt for good luck.

When he got off of the bus and starting walking into the school he realized how big the seventh and eighth graders were. He sure hoped he got his growth spurt soon. He didn't see any of his friends. Inside the school, he followed signs to his new homeroom, Room 205. Suddenly he felt himself being slammed into the lockers on the side of the hall. When he looked up there were at least five older kids looking down on him. "Hey, girly boy," the tallest one scowled. "Boys don't wear pink in this school. You hear?" "Yeah," said another with a really deep voice, "and if you do it again you're gonna get a beating." The first boy grabbed him by the back pack and lifted him off the ground.

A teacher's voice called, "Break it up and keep moving."

The gang of boys moved off. Scott looked up. It didn't seem as if the teacher had even seen him in the middle of that. But several other students did. Two equally tall boys came walking over to Scott. He started to walk away but one of them put out his hand. "Hey, man, it's okay. I'm Travis."

"I'm David," said the other boy. "We saw what happened back there. What did those kids say to you?"

Scott told them what had happened, and the threat they had made.

"That's ridiculous," said Travis. "You can wear whatever you want to this school."

Travis and David walked Scott to his homeroom. "We'll be keeping an eye out for you Scott," they promised him.

That day after school Travis and David went back to David's house. "It makes me so mad that a few bullies

tell everyone what they can and can't wear. We should do something about that," said David.

"Yeah, but what can we do?" asked Travis.

"We could tell the teachers," David suggested.

"Yeah but they'd still do it on the bus, or at recess, or after school," said Travis.

"We need to take it to the people!" David suggested.

"Yeah," said Travis, a look of excitement growing on his face. "Hey, I have an idea! Let's ask our friends if they will wear pink on Monday."

"Yeah," smiled David, "not just our friends, but everyone."

"Excellent," grinned Travis, "I can see it now, a sea of pink!"

They called their friend Adam to tell him the plan. He suggested they go to the mall to buy a whole bunch of pink tee-shirts. They asked their friends to chip in and bought 75 tee-shirts for kids who didn't have pink. Then they decided to send out the word to everyone in the school. Just about everyone was on Facebook. The word spread fast.

That next Monday, David and Travis were at school early, with their boxes of 75 pink tee-shirts. Many kids got off of the bus with pink tee-shirts on, and those who didn't got to take one from the boxes. Travis and David also brought pink fabric, and some kids used it to make pink armbands. One kid brought a pink basketball to recess. At least 415 of the students in the school—over half the kids, both boys and girls—wore pink.

That day in school the bullies were mad. They gave the kids in pink dirty looks and one of them even threw a chair in the cafeteria, but people just laughed. The bullies knew that the boys had gotten their message across—a message about bullying and people looking out for each other. It made almost everyone in the school feel happier.

And what about Scott? He wore his favorite pink tee-shirt to school that Monday, underneath his sweatshirt. When he got off the bus and saw how many kids wore pink, he took off his sweatshirt and wore his "good luck" tee-shirt proudly.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 9: LEADER RESOURCE 1: BULLYING SCENARIOS

Scenario 1

RICK: What do you think of that new kid in class?

GREG: He seems kind of weird.

JOSH: Yeah, I mean, what kind of a name is Harvinder?

GREG: A weird name.

RICK: And what's up with that funny topknot turban he wears on his head? Does he ever take it off? Like, does he leave it on in the shower?

JOSH: Probably not, and that's why he smells funny.

RICK: Well, I think we should just go over there and pull that turban thingy off him. Let him try looking like a normal person for once.

GREG and JOSH: Yeah... .

Scenario 2

HANNAH: (looking at her cell phone) Look! Look! I just got the funniest text! Athena just sent me a picture she took of Katie at the drinking fountain with her big butt sticking out. You can totally see her underwear and everything.

ALIYAH: Show me! Oh no, that's too funny! Text it to me, I want to send it to Jessica.

JASMINE: Yeah, and send it to me too. I can get my sister to put it on her Facebook page. What should she write to go with it?

HANNAH: How about "Caution: Wide Load?"

ALIYAH: That's perfect. Or maybe "Hippo Crossing."

JASMINE: I know, I'll have her put both of those up, and tell people to repost to their own pages with their own captions. The whole middle school will do it.

Scenario 3

CHRIS: Did you hear that Justin is taking ballet?

LONDON: That's so totally gay! What's he gonna do, prance around on his tippy toes?

SARAH: We should have him do his dance steps for everybody in the cafeteria.

CHRIS: Somehow, I don't think even Justin is gay enough to do that.

LONDON: Oh, I bet we could make him do it. Or we could just dance all faggy around his table at lunch time and ask real loud if that's what he does in dance class.

SARAH: You're on. We'll catch him at lunch today. This is gonna be funny.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 9:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: "SHINE" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

Read the real-life story on which "[A Sea of Pink](#)" (at www.religioustolerance.org/homschbul.htm) is based on the Religious Tolerance website.

Websites with tips for children, youth, and adults on combating bullying include [Teaching Tolerance](#) (at www.tolerance.org/activity/bullying-tips-students) and [StopBullying.gov](#) (at www.stopbullying.gov/). For

children and families, the [National Crime Prevention Council](#) (at www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying) has an online campaign to prevent and stop cyber-bullying. Anti-bullying videos on YouTube include [Hero in the Hallway](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtFtbaKIYyg) and [The Price of Silence](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=wY7Gvq0P4hc&feature=related).

SESSION 10: THE POWER OF PASSION

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. — Harriet Tubman

The power of fire is the power of passion, of allowing the heart to lead us to good actions. When we follow our passion for a more just world, we see amazing results. The children learn how Hannah Salwen inspired her family's decision to sell their mansion and give half the proceeds to a charity which they chose. Participants practice advocating a cause they care deeply about. Then the group will choose a cause, and prepare to engage the congregation to support it with half of a Sunday offering.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate that everyone, including a young person, can be an agent of positive change
- Develop skills for sharing personal passions
- Connect the first UU Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, with affirmation that we all have a fire inside which we can share.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Identify the expression of passion—the power of fire—in the story of Hannah Salwen and her family's journey to create change
- Practice advocacy by creating a case statement for a project they want the congregation to support and preparing to share their idea with congregational leaders
- Understand their own capability to bring forth passion into action for a good cause.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — The Power of Half	10
Activity 2: Advocating for Favorite Causes	20
Activity 3: Preparing to Make a Case for Congregation to Participate in Power of Half	20
Faith in Action: Planning Our Power of Fire	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Song — "From You I Receive"	10
Alternate Activity 3: Alternative Dreidel Game	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- What issues or topics make you feel the greatest passion to change the world?
- How do you work as an agent for change? How does your inner fire direct you in this work?
- If you were going to give up half of something in order to make a difference, what would it be?
- If you were going to advocate for someone else to join you in supporting an organization you love, what would you say?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of fire, such as a candle, a flashlight, a depiction of the sun or any material that is red, orange and/or shiny
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "passion to help" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders. Before you begin,

ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought a fire symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath, release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the fire symbol on the cloth—or invite the volunteer opening worship leader to place a symbol they have brought. Say, "I bring this symbol of fire, of strength and daring, light and warmth."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "passion to help."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE POWER OF HALF (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Power of Half](#) (included in this document)"

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

Helping others can feel like a burden. I'm sure we've all had the experience of being asked to do a household chore and just feeling grumpy at being pulled away from doing something more fun. But the Salwen family was led by Hannah into giving a tremendous amount in a way that made them feel like their life was more joyful, and even more rich, than if they had kept their big house or their money.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- When have you felt joyful about giving away your time, money, or possessions?
- If you had a bunch of money that you were going to give away to make the world better in some way, where might you want it to go? How would you decide?
- What could you give away half of and feel great about it? This could be time, like half a Saturday, or money, like half a week's allowance, or energy, like half the effort you put into a baseball game.

ACTIVITY 2: ADVOCATING FOR FAVORITE CAUSES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

- Optional: Computer(s) with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.
- If another meeting space might allow you access to multiple computers with Internet access, consider moving the group to that space for this activity.
- If you will not have computers with Internet access, do some online research based on your knowledge of individual participants' passions. Print findings to share with the group. Here are some sites to get started. Sports/mentorship in developing nations: [Grassroot Soccer](#) (at [www.grassrootsoccer.org/](#)), [Play for Hope](#) (at [playforhope.org/](#)); Aquatics Armenia, an [Armenian American effort](#) (at [www.armenianweekly.com/2009/03/06/splishing-and-splashing-in-armenia/](#)) to bring public swimming pools to communities in Armenia. Animal welfare: [Humane Society of the U.S.](#) (at [www.humanesociety.org/](#)), [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals children's website](#) (at [www.petakids.com/](#)) / [action ideas](#) (at [www.petakids.com/save_animals11.asp](#)). World hunger and health: [World Hunger Organization and The Hunger Project](#) (at [www.thp.org/](#)); [UNICEF](#) (at [www.unicefusa.org/](#)); [Oxfam](#) (at [www.oxfam.org/](#)), [Doctors without Borders](#) (at [www.doctorswithoutborders.org/](#)); [Partners in Health](#) (at [www.pih.org/](#)). Ecology and environment: [Greenpeace](#) (at [www.greenpeace.org/](#)), [Sierra Club](#) (at [www.sierraclub.org/](#)). Water: [Water Aid America](#) (at [www.wateraidamerica.org/](#)); [Global Water](#) (at [www.globalwater.org/](#)).

Description of Activity

Participants explore where they might find their own passion for making change in the world.

Take the first 10 minutes to lead brainstorming on how participants might want to make a difference. Ask: "What lights a fire inside you?" You might suggest sports, animals, camping, fashion, or music. How could they help others access the things that they love? How could they use their passions for these interests to make the world a better place?

Include online research in the brainstorming. Help participants investigate online to find helping organizations and projects that connect with their passions. Help them think of search terms that might turn up relevant organizations, nationally or in your area. Encourage them to choose an organization or project

they are passionate about and get ready to share their passion for the cause with the group.

With ten minutes left, re-gather the group. Invite participants, one at a time, to briefly tell the group about their cause and why they think everyone should support it. Write the central ideas from each presentation on newsprint.

When everyone has had the chance to advocate, introduce the idea of asking the congregation to support a cause by donating half of a Sunday offering. Explain that as a group, you will choose a cause, and then share their passion for it with your congregation's leaders, as they have just practiced doing in the group.

Lead the group to discuss and choose one cause and organization to support. Where can you make a difference? What is most in line with Unitarian Universalist values and Principles? Which do group members feel most passionate about? Which one will get other people excited, too?

If at all possible, bring the group to consensus on a cause and organization. If consensus seems impossible in the time you have available, you may need to conclude this activity with a vote.

Including All Participants

Make sure quieter members of the group have the opportunity to have their voices heard. You might use a "talking stick" or another object for each speaker to hold. If any participants may be unwilling to speak to the whole group, you could pair participants for research and discussion, then have the less shy partner "advocate" for the cause they choose.

ACTIVITY 3: PREPARING TO MAKE A CASE FOR CONGREGATION TO PARTICIPATE IN POWER OF HALF (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Writing paper and pens/pencils
- Poster board, pencils, and markers

Preparation for Activity

- Find out who in your congregation has the decision-making power to choose to donate half of a given Sunday's offering. This is most likely the board of trustees, but could be the minister or a board sub-committee.
- Ask for time on the agenda of a congregational board meeting, or meeting with other relevant person or committee, at which you and any

group members who are able to attend can present your case.

- Set materials on work tables.

Description of Activity

Now that the group has chosen an organization or cause they want the congregation to support, participants prepare to ask for the congregation's involvement. Explain who you will be approaching with your request for support (e.g., the board of trustees, a minister, an administrator, an individual or committee who has decision-making power about finances). Have the group figure out how they might best make their case. Invite participants to take notes as you discuss these questions:

- Where would the money go?
- How could the money make a difference?
- Why is this something your congregation should support?
- Why should people be excited to give?
- What does the congregation have to gain by giving up half of a Sunday offering that might otherwise go entirely to supporting the congregation?

Have participants create a poster they can use as a visual aid in their presentation. Encourage them to draw pictures as well as writing some important, compelling points.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 1, "[Passion Circle](#)" (included in this document) , and tape
- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in red or orange

- Optional: Tea lights (one per participant), matches, a taper for lighting the tea lights, and a large ceramic or metal platter

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1. If you do not have a color printer, you might use bright yellow or orange paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Passion" circle, by referring to Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3).
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).
- Optional: If live flame is permitted in your meeting space, set tea lights on a large platter, with taper and matches nearby.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Passion" circle (Leader Resource 1) outside the "Fire" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

The power of fire comes from the passion inside us, the joy that comes from being able to create positive change in the world.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic.

Use a match to light the taper candle. Invite each participant use the taper to light a tea light. Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Extinguish all flames.

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of fire for the centering space as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: PLANNING OUR POWER OF FIRE (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to continue the activity begun in Session 9. Research the project the group selected in the previous session. Prepare to share information about the needs, opportunities, and possible logistical arrangements for the project.

Description of Activity

This Faith in Action activity follows on the Exploring Ways to Exercise Fire Power activity in Session 5, as part of the four-session block which includes identifying a way to exercise air power, planning how to exercise air power, engaging in the activity and reflecting on the experience. After selecting an air power activity, the next step is to plan exactly how your project will take place. Who will take part — do you need to invite anyone not present to take part? What supplies will you need? How much time do you anticipate the project will take? When is the best time to undertake your project? Who needs to be contacted in order for your project to move forward? What resources do you have available to bring to bear on the project? What resources will you need to bring in? What are the steps in bringing your project to completion?

After the session, discuss the plan with the director of religious education and determine how to communicate the details to families.

Including All Participants

Make sure that your plan is as inclusive as possible of the differing needs and abilities of your group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. — Harriet Tubman

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard the true story of the Salwen family who, at the urging of their teenage daughter, sold their mansion, bought a smaller house with half the proceeds, and donated the other half to an organization the family chose together with great care and deliberation. The children focused on finding and choosing an organization that our group feels passionate about supporting, and preparing to ask our congregation to support that organization by donating half of a Sunday offering.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Are there causes your family is passionate about supporting? How involved are children in decisions about how your family contributes to charity? How involved are children in direct action in service to others? Is anyone in your family truly passionate about a cause to make the world a better place? How do they express their passion? How does the rest of your family support them?

FAMILY GAME. Perhaps your family has played the dreidel game as part of a Chanukah celebration. You can play an alternate version of this game as a way of exploring the "power of half." Follow the usual [instructions for playing dreidel](#) (at www.wikihow.com/Play-Dreidel), but when the letter *hay* comes up, rather than taking half of the tokens in the pot, the player contributes half of the tokens they have accumulated to another player of their choice. When the game is done, talk about how it felt to be giving items away, rather than taking them. How did the players choose the recipient who would get half their tokens?

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Choose something your family can contribute half of. It might be your time and effort for half a Saturday, half the non-perishable items in your pantry, half of a weekly allowance, or half the amount you would spend on a family outing or movie. Decide together how and where to donate your "half." Afterward, talk together about what the experience was like for each member of your family.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: SONG — "FROM YOU I RECEIVE" (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook

Preparation for Activity

- Learn "From You I Receive," Hymn 402 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.
- Optional: Recruit a song leader for this activity.

Description of Activity

The song "From You I Receive," by Joseph and Nathan Segal, is a perfect expression of the experience of giving. If your group will be involved in asking the congregation to contribute to a Sunday morning offering, half of which will go to an organization of your group's choosing, this activity prepares the group to lead the congregation in singing, as part of that worship service.

Teach the song by singing the first line and having the group sing it back to you, then doing the same with the second line. Sing the song several times through, until the group is completely secure with it. Then you might wish to try singing it as a round, with the second group starting when the first group has reached the end of the first line.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: ALTERNATIVE DREIDEL GAME (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Dreidel
- Small tokens such as M&Ms(R), raisins, hard candies, or pennies, at least ten per participant

Preparation for Activity

- Memorize the rules for this spinning top game, including which Hebrew letter (nun, gimmel, hay, shin) corresponds with each action. Find [instructions on Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreidel#Rules_of_the_game) (at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreidel#Rules_of_the_game).
- If you don't have a dreidel, you can order one online; one source is the [Chocolate Gelt company](http://www.chocolategelt.com/catalog/dreidels-draydels-CHANUKAH-GAME.php) (at www.chocolategelt.com/catalog/dreidels-draydels-CHANUKAH-GAME.php). Or, you can make one. The UU Church of the Larger Fellowship offers a [template for making a paper dreidel](https://clf.uua.org/betweensundays/images/dreidel.gif) (at clf.uua.org/betweensundays/images/dreidel.gif). The dreidel will work better if you stick a short, sharpened pencil through the center.

Description of Activity

The dreidel game is a popular Hanukkah activity, but an altered version can also be a fun way to explore the power of giving half. Follow the usual instructions, but when the letter *hay* comes up, rather than taking half of the tokens in the pot, the player contributes half of the tokens they have accumulated to another player of their choice. When the game is done, talk about how it felt to

be giving items away, rather than taking them. How did the players choose the recipient who would get half their tokens? Do they think the game would work better in the traditional way, in which players take half of the pot when the *hay* comes up, or is it better this way? You may wish to give participants the option to try both versions.

Including All Participants

Be ready to help children spin the dreidel.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 10: STORY: THE POWER OF HALF

Sometimes a big idea starts with noticing small things. One day 14-year-old Hannah Salwen was in the car with her father, stopped at a stoplight under a bridge. Hannah noticed that just off the road on her right was a homeless person carrying a cardboard sign asking for help, and to the left of their car was a very expensive Mercedes. Why, she wondered aloud to her father, couldn't the person to the left of them have a cheaper car so the person to the right of them could have enough to eat? Kevin, Hannah's father, agreed that she had a good point, but, he said, even the car they were driving in was certainly beyond what many people could afford.

For many people, the conversation would have ended there, but Hannah has a fire inside, a passion for justice that doesn't quit. And so she brought the question to her family. Why did they have so much when others had so little? Her parents responded by mentioning some things the family had done. They had volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, and Hannah's mom had left a very highly paid business job to become a teacher. Together the family delivered food through Meals on Wheels. The kids were required to set aside a third of their allowance to buy groceries for the homeless. Weren't they doing enough? And then Joan, Hannah's mom, threw out an idea that was only half-way a joke: Should they sell the beautiful historic mansion they lived in, get a smaller, cheaper house, and give away the money from the sale?

Hannah fell in love with idea immediately. Yes! That's exactly what they should do. Sell the house, use half the money to get another home half the size, and give away the other half of the money. At first Hannah's brother Joe thought she was nuts. Why would they want to move out of a house that was the envy of all their friends? And Kevin and Joan had to think long and hard

about a decision that would have such a big effect on their family's finances.

But Hannah kept pushing. It was something they could do, and something they should do.

Through a whole series of family meetings, in which each person had an equal vote, the Salwens not only decided to sell their lovely home, they also figured out what to do with the money. They researched the kinds of needs that existed in the world and decided together that their money could make the biggest difference in Africa. Then they researched organizations working to make life better for people in different parts of Africa. The Salwens wanted to work with an organization that supported people in making their own lives better, not one that just went in and helped poor people without ideas and effort from the folks they were helping. The family traveled to meet with officials from four different organizations, and ended up choosing The Hunger Project, which helped villagers in Ghana to build community service centers.

In the meantime, the project got harder than anyone had expected. The housing market took a sudden drop, the economy tanked, and no one wanted to buy the Salwens' house for anything close to the 1.6 million dollars they had been expecting to get for it. But they had already committed \$800,000 to the Hunger Project, and they didn't want to go back on their word. When their house eventually sold, there was a gap of \$300,000 between what they had promised and the money they had available. The day was saved when a publisher agreed to pay \$380,000 for the rights to a book that Joe and Hannah would write about their experiences. That book, *The Power of Half*, talks about the journey the family went through as they figured out their life-changing gift. It talks about the literal journey to Ghana they took, to see their project once it was underway. But more than that, it talks about how their family changed for the better when they all caught Hannah's fire to make a difference.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 10:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "PASSION" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

The Power of Half, by Kevin and Hannah Salwen, has ideas for how anyone can commit to the power of half and use the fire inside themselves to change the world. Three percent of your book purchase will go to The Hunger Project when you order from [Barnes & Noble using this link](#) (at www.goodsearch.com/barnes-noble/coupons).

Learn more about [The Hunger Project](#) (at www.thp.org/learn_more/news/latest_news/power_of_half_new_book_from_thp_investors_kevin_and_hannah_salwen).

A British *Telegraph* [article about the Salwens](#) (at www.telegraph.co.uk/family/7527861/The-Power-of-Half-how-Hannah-Salwen-and-her-family-gave-half-their-home-away.html) and their adventure in giving includes a picture of the family. A 2010 [New York Times Op-Ed piece](#) (at www.nytimes.com/2010/01/24/opinion/24kristof.html) by Nicholas Kristof offers further reflection. The Natural Home and Garden website posts an [interview with Hannah Salwen](#) (at www.naturalhomeandgarden.com/green-professionals/the-power-of-half-natural-home-interviews-hannah-salwen.aspx). You can even follow [Kevin Salwen](#) (at twitter.com/#!/kevinsalwen) on Twitter!

SESSION 11: THE POWER OF ACTION

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*Have a bias toward action—let's see something happen now. You can break that big plan into small steps and take the first step right away. —
Indira Gandhi*

The power of fire is the power of action. When we work from fire power, we move forward to do what we can, even if we cannot see a way to fix the whole problem at once. The children learn about Bill McKibben and 350.org, a worldwide organization fighting climate change. Participants think creatively about power sources that do not contribute to climate change and consider how they might change their own habits and those of their friends to slow the climate change which threatens the world's ecosystems.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce climate change and explore how different actions we take can fuel or cool it
- Demonstrate alternate forms of energy, through making a solar-powered oven or devising a way to move a penny with wind power
- Encourage use of positive action, informed by creative thinking, to effectively confront large, complex problems
- Promote "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part," our seventh UU Principle.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn how Bill McKibben founded 350.org to combat climate change, and how 350.org has engaged people around the world, including many Unitarian Universalists
- Experience the inspiration of others' actions to solve a shared problem
- Explore alternative energy sources, by making a solar-powered oven or using wind power to move a penny

- Identify ways they and their friends can take action to combat climate change.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Taking the Heat: 350.org and Action to Fight Climate Change	10
Activity 2: Video — "The Day the World Came Together, The 350 Movement"	5
Activity 3: Build a Solar Oven	25
Activity 4: Strategies for Fighting Climate Change	10
Faith in Action: Exercising the Power of Fire	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Wind-Powered Penny Races	25

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- When have you stepped past your comfort zone to be an agent of change? What has allowed you to do so? Has creative thought beforehand helped prepare you to act? How has inspiration or support from other people helped you?
- What motivates you to try to make a difference in the world?
- In what ways do you serve as a role model for children in the choices you make to reduce your use of fossil fuels and to use renewable sources of energy?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of fire, such as a candle, a flashlight, a depiction of the sun or any material that is red, orange and/or shiny
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2). If needed, add the words "fire within" for this session, leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders. Before you begin,

ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought a fire symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath, release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the fire symbol on the cloth—or invite the volunteer opening worship leader to place a symbol they have brought. Say, "I bring this symbol of fire, of strength and daring, light and warmth."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words "fire within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person on the left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person their left, followed by each person in rapid succession, sending the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — TAKING THE HEAT: 350.ORG AND ACTION TO

FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Taking the Heat: 350.org and Action to Fight Climate Change](#) (included in this document)"

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

Do you ever feel like the problems of the world are just too big to even think about—that it's too upsetting, and you can't fix them anyway? Climate change, also known as global warming, can feel like that kind of overwhelming problem. It's a serious problem that all of us contribute to. There isn't a single "bad guy" causing the problem, and so it's going to take a whole lot of good people with creative ideas to work on a solution.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- When was the last time you deliberately chose to do something because it would be better for the environment? What did you do? Why did you choose to do it?
- Do you ever talk about climate change with your friends or adults you know? Have you talked with people who say that climate change isn't real? What do you think of what they have to say? What have you said to them?
- Have you ever participated in a protest with other people? What was it like? How did it feel?

ACTIVITY 2: VIDEO — "THE DAY THE WORLD CAME TOGETHER, THE 350 MOVEMENT" (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access and large monitor or projection screen

Preparation for Activity

- Preview the [video clip on YouTube](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=noPcVKf24rk) (2:10).
- Test equipment and Internet access, and queue the video clip to show the group.
- Optional: Preview the 90-second animation for the 350 movement's 2009 International Day of Climate Action. If you have time, you might share it with the group.

Description of Activity

Participants learn how people all around the world participated in the first 350.org actions through a light-hearted documentation of actions to solve a serious problem.

Tell the group they will see a video clip about the first International Day of Climate Action led by the 350 movement. Invite them to watch for ideas they might use to take creative action against climate change.

Show the video clip. Then, ask:

- What action that you saw stood out most for you?
- Which looked like the most fun?
- Which looked most likely to make a change?

Choose one of the actions participants mentioned, and ask:

- If you were planning an action like that, what would you want to do?

If you have time, show the 90-second animation. Invite the group to watch carefully for actions the video suggests for fighting against climate change.

Including All Participants

To minimize fidgeting and disruption, provide quiet manipulables such as Silly Putty(R) or pipe cleaners for children to hold during the video.

ACTIVITY 3: BUILD A SOLAR OVEN (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Building a Solar Oven — Instructions](#) (included in this document)
- Cardboard pizza box, a ruler, a marker, a box knife or sharp scissors, aluminum foil, black construction paper, clear plastic wrap, and glue
- A stick, large straw, or wooden spoon
- A tin pie plate or a glass dish
- Ingredients to cook a treat such as hot dogs, bread or tortillas with melted cheese, or s'mores
- Oven mitts
- Optional: Computer with Internet access

Preparation for Activity

- The oven will only work in full sunlight. The best hours to set up your solar oven are when the sun is high overhead, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Identify a sunny outdoor location or a full-sun window to set up and try the completed solar oven. Bear in mind that the amount and intensity of sunlight will affect cooking time for a treat. Make sure children can come back later to enjoy their treat. Or, you may wish to construct the solar oven in this session, and use it for cooking in a later session.
- If you are unlikely to have access to full sunlight, decide whether (a) the group will build the oven but not try it, and you will explain that solar power only works when the sun is out, or (b) you will use Alternate Activity 2, Wind-Powered Penny Races, instead.
- Decide how you will divide tasks so that everyone can be involved in building a single unit, or set out sufficient materials that each person can build their own solar oven.
- Set out materials so they are easily accessible.
- Optional: See how to build a pizza box solar oven on [YouTube](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbwliZJiHe8) before using the instructions provided in Leader Resource 1. You may decide to show the 3:00 video to the group.
- Optional: Preview a video clip (2:18) about "Solar Demi," a man who recycles soda bottles to bring solar lighting to homes in a Philippine village, and queue up the clip to show

the children. While it is in Tagalog with English subtitles, the pictures tell the story well.

Description of Activity

To combat climate change, we must explore renewable, non-polluting sources of energy, such as solar power. Participants experience building a solar oven, one way to harness the sun's power and to flex our "fire power" to fight climate change.

Invite the children to help you follow the instructions in Leader Resource 1 for constructing a solar oven.

As participants work, invite them to reflect on how solar ovens might make a difference in fighting climate change. Ask:

- Would solar ovens be a good alternative for those of us who are used to cooking with electricity or gas that comes into our homes? Why, or why not? [not enough sunlight, takes too long]
- What about people in a hot, dry climate who cook with firewood? Would solar ovens work better in a place like that? Why might the solar oven be a good alternative? [firewood is not always available, firewood requires cutting down trees, which are keep the air clean for breathing; for people in hot, dry, climates, solar powered cooking can make a big difference in a way that doesn't require complicated technology, which may not be available]

Optional: Show the [YouTube video](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-Fpsw_yYPg&feature=related) that shows how one man is bringing light to village homes in the Philippines using soda bottles as solar light bulbs. Explain that these solar lights are an example of other creative uses of solar power. Invite participants to suggest other ways people might use solar power instead of pollution-creating electric power in their daily lives.

Including All Participants

If you decide to have each participant make their own solar oven, rather than constructing one as a group, but are concerned that individual class members may not be able to do all steps of the project, have participants work in pairs, so that tasks can be shared in a way that allows everyone to be successful.

ACTIVITY 4: STRATEGIES FOR FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Place newsprint where everyone will be able to see it.

Description of Activity

The only way to truly make a difference in climate change is for each of us to get involved in as many and as creative ways as possible. Invite participants to brainstorm ways that they, their families and their communities (including their congregation) could reduce their use of fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) which cause climate change. Remind them that manufacturing things always takes energy, so ways of using less or reusing items are ways to fight climate change. Write down all responses, even if they seem silly or crazy. Remind participants that creativity is an important part of solving very large problems such as climate change. Some examples to get things started might be to bike or walk to school, take shorter showers, buy used clothing or toys, set the thermostat lower, have people bring mugs to coffee hour rather than using disposable cups, etc.

When the list feels complete, invite children to consider which of the ideas they would be willing to actually implement. For each item on the list, ask for a show of hands of who is willing to take this step. Then ask who is willing to encourage a friend to take the step.

Including All Participants

Make sure that everyone has a chance to talk, including participants who are quieter or take longer to respond than others in the group. You may wish to pass a talking stick, or ask each person who speaks to choose the next person to speak, as a way of making room and time for everyone.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Action](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket

- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in red or orange
- Optional: Tea lights (one per participant), matches, a taper for lighting the tea lights, and a large ceramic or metal platter

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2. If you do not have a color printer, you might use bright yellow or orange paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Action" circle, by referring to Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3).
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).
- Optional: If live flame is permitted in your meeting space, set tea lights on a large platter, with taper and matches nearby.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Action" circle (Leader Resource 2) outside the "Fire" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

The power of fire comes from the passion inside us, the joy that comes from being able to create positive change in the world.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic.

Use a match to light the taper candle. Invite each participant use the taper to light a tea light. Ask the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Extinguish all flames.

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of fire for the centering space as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXERCISING THE POWER OF FIRE (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Digital still cameras and/or video cameras

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to implement the project planned in Sessions 9 and 10. If your fire power activity requires travel beyond your congregation, recruit volunteers to provide transportation. Get signed permission slips from all participants' families for any off-site activity.
- Optional: Recruit volunteers to photograph and/or videotape the project; obtain appropriate permissions from people who appear in photos and video.

Description of Activity

By this session, the group should have identified a project and planned the elements needed in order to complete this project. This session, then, is when the group will actually do the activity that expresses their own air power.

Including All Participants

Make sure your transportation plan is accessible for all participants, and that all will have full access at any off-site location.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we improve the sense of community in this group?

Approach your religious educator for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Have a bias toward action—let's see something happen now. You can break that big plan into small steps and take the first step right away. — Indira Gandhi

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children heard about Bill McKibben the organization he founded, 350.org, to fight climate change. We learned about how Unitarian Universalists have been involved in combating climate change, and we built a solar oven to try cooking without using fossil fuels. Finally, we brainstormed ways each of us could take action in our homes and communities to fight global warming.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. What choices do members of your family, or your family as a whole, make to fight climate change? Examples might be putting on a sweater when it gets cold rather than turning on the heat, walking or biking to work or school, eating less meat or no meat, or buying reused or recycled items. How do you feel about the choices you are already making? Are there additional things that you are willing to do as a family to cool our planet?

FAMILY GAME. One fun way to explore the power of wind, a renewable energy resource which doesn't contribute to climate change, is to have wind-powered penny races. Assemble some pennies, some drinking straws, paper and/or light cardboard, scissors, tape, string, and any other household items you wish to use. Invite each member of the family to design a way move a penny across a table, using only their breath to move the penny. When everyone has completed their construction, see who can get their penny across the table the fastest.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. You can go on an adventure in your own home by doing an audit of your carbon

footprint online. Go to the website [Zero Footprint](http://www.zerofootprint.net) (at www.zerofootprint.net) to calculate the carbon dioxide your family generates, compare your family with others, and suggest changes to your lifestyle that would be healthier for the planet. Work together on weatherizing projects such as installing weather stripping around doors, which can make a real difference in your energy usage.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: WIND-POWERED PENNY RACES (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pennies (one per participant)
- Drinking straws
- Construction paper, lightweight cardboard, or manila folders
- Scissors, including left-handed scissors
- Tape

- String
- Clean, recyclable objects such as plastic yogurt lids, aluminum or tin cans, etc.

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure you have a clear table top or open floor space to use as a "racetrack."
- Set out materials where everyone can reach them.

Description of Activity

Participants explore the power of wind, a renewable energy resource which doesn't contribute to climate change, and use creativity to devise ways to harness non-polluting air power to move a penny across a table.

If the group is large enough, form teams. Encourage the children to exchange ideas and work together to design their wind-powered penny transport device. Show them the materials you have gathered and tell them their device can be powered only by their breath.

When everyone has completed their construction, have races to see who can get their penny across the table the fastest.

After the races, ask participants to reflect on the process:

- Were the simplest designs most effective, or did a complicated device work best?
- Did seeing another person's design inspire new ideas for you? What helped you to come up with new and creative ideas?
- Were there ideas you wanted to try, but you didn't have the materials or other technology to make them work? Did the limits of the materials that were available force you to be more creative?
- Can you think of real-world examples you've heard of where people have used limited resources to come up with helpful, creative products?

Including All Participants

Be ready to help children with fine-motor tasks, as needed to implement their ideas.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 11: STORY: TAKING THE HEAT: 350.ORG AND ACTION TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

What's the biggest protest you've ever heard of? Maybe you've seen pictures of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaking in front of a sea of faces on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. in 1963, or the 1969 March on Washington in protest of the Vietnam War that brought some 500,000 people to the same place. Those protests were huge. But what if a protest happened in more than one city? What if a protest took place all around the world, to bring attention to the problem of climate change?

Although we cannot see what's in the air we breathe, scientists know it contains some carbon dioxide. It comes from the electricity and oil and coal we use to keep machines moving, to heat our homes, and drive our cars, buses and trains. And scientists know that 350 parts per million is the most carbon dioxide we can safely have in the air. If the carbon dioxide in our air goes beyond 350 parts per million, then the "greenhouse gas" traps so much of the sun's warmth that the climate of our world changes. We're already above 350 parts per million. This is why the Arctic's glaciers and ice caps are melting, and droughts, floods, heat waves, and hurricanes have become bigger and bigger problems around the world.

If we change the ways we use energy, we can lower the amount of carbon dioxide we put into the air, and turn climate change around. But people everywhere need to get involved. That's why Bill McKibben and the people he worked with decided they would plan a protest to happen not just in one place, like the National Mall in

Washington, D.C. They organized groups of people all over the world to take whatever action they could think of to tell their governments to fight climate change and to work against climate change themselves.

Groups participating in the Day of Action included 90 different UU congregations. The Towson UU Church in Maryland had a "350 Caulking Party" to weatherize the congregation's building and teach people to make their own homes more energy efficient. The Northwoods UU Church in Texas had an organic potluck and heard a talk on sustainable living. The UUs joined people on mountaintops, on glaciers, and even under the ocean in calling for a world where we use energy in ways that doesn't heat up the planet.

The next year, on 10/10/10—October 10, 2010—at least as many UU congregations participated in 350.org's Global Work Party. And the year after that, some 40 UUs made their way to a two-week-long protest organized in part by 350.org to try to stop the XL Tarsands Pipeline, which would bring masses of gummy tar from Canada across the United States for processing—creating various environmental problems and doing nothing to help get us off using the fuels that cause global warming. Fourteen UUs were arrested as part of this protest.

Bill McKibben, 350.org, and thousands of UUs are getting hot under the collar about global warming, and they are showing that everyone can take action. What can kids do? Plenty, right at home, without traveling to Washington D.C. to protest. Whether it's biking to school rather than asking for a car ride, turning off lights that aren't in use, or talking to people about the reality of global warming and the need for us all to make a change, people around the world are getting fired up to making a difference, and you can, too!

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 11: LEADER RESOURCE 1: BUILDING A SOLAR OVEN — INSTRUCTIONS

On the top of the pizza box, use a ruler and a marker to draw lines parallel to three sides of the box, 1" in from each edge. Use a box cutter or sharp scissors to cut along the three lines, to make a flap in the lid of a pizza box. Fold this flap up so it stands when the box lid is closed.

Cut aluminum foil to cover the inner side of the flap. Glue the aluminum foil to the inner side of the flap, shiny side out.

Use two sheets of clear plastic wrap to create an airtight window for sunlight to enter the box. Do this by opening the box and taping one sheet of plastic wrap across the inside of the opening you made when you cut the flap in the lid. Then, close the box and tape the second sheet of plastic wrap across the same opening, on the outside. Tape very securely, to seal out air.

Glue aluminum foil to the bottom of your box.

Cover the aluminum foil with black construction paper (black absorbs heat). The black surface is where your food will be set to cook.

Take the box outside to a sunny spot. Adjust the flap to get the most sunlight possible to reflect off the aluminum foil and onto the plastic-covered window. Use a ruler, stick or large straw to prop the flap where you want it. You can also tilt the box, by rolling a towel and placing it underneath the box. (Hint: You can preheat the oven as high as 200 degrees Fahrenheit by setting it in direct sunlight for 30 minutes.)

You can make toast of a buttered slice of bread, or melt cheese on bread, tortillas, or chips. You can cook a hot dog, make nachos, or cook s'mores. To keep the paper liner clean, place items on a clear plastic or glass plate (a pie plate works well). To remove food from the oven, lift the lid of the pizza box, and use oven mitts or potholders to lift the glass dish out.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 11:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: "ACTION" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

Learn about Unitarian Universalist efforts to care for the Earth on the websites of [Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth](http://www.uuministryforearth.org/) (at www.uuministryforearth.org/) and [The Green Sanctuary Program](http://www.uua.org/leaders/environment/greensanctuary/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/leaders/environment/greensanctuary/index.shtml).

The website for [350.org](http://www.350.org/) (at www.350.org/) offers up-to-date information on important climate change issues and suggests ways to get involved. On [Bill McKibben's website](http://www.billmckibben.com/) (at www.billmckibben.com/), find descriptions of his books, [video](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdF8wz4Jwm8) of him speaking at a conference, and [interviews](http://www.truthout.org/truthout-interview-bill-mckibben/1314803404) (at www.truthout.org/truthout-interview-bill-mckibben/1314803404) he has given, including one on [the role of religion in the climate change movement](#) (at

www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/5369/fueling_activism%3A_an_interview_with_bill_mckibben/).

Go to the website [Zero Footprint](http://www.zerofootprint.net) (at www.zerofootprint.net) to calculate the carbon dioxide your family generates, compare your family with others, and discover lifestyle changes you can make that would be healthier for the planet.

[The Squidoo website](http://www.squidoo.com/reduce-climate-change) (at www.squidoo.com/reduce-climate-change) suggests 50 actions people can take to slow climate change.

The [Build It Solar](http://www.builditsolar.com/index.htm) (at www.builditsolar.com/index.htm) website offers renewable energy, [do-it-yourself projects that children and families can do](http://www.builditsolar.com/Projects/Educational/educational.htm) (at www.builditsolar.com/Projects/Educational/educational.htm).

SESSION 12: THE POWER OF REACHING OUT

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

*it starts when you say We
and know who you mean, and each
day you mean one more. — Marge Piercy*

The power of fire is power to ignite enthusiasm that spreads like wildfire to make change in the world. This session focuses on immigration through the story of a UU congregation that harnessed the power of the Standing on the Side of Love campaign to involve UUs across the country to save Raul Cardenas from deportation. Participants play games and create a petition to explore the power of actions to "go viral."

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate how much more quickly change happens when we engage others in our efforts
- Explore how we can draw others in to our efforts through the use of social media as well as personal contacts
- Experience some of the feelings involved in both excluding people and protecting them
- Engage with "the inherent worth and dignity of every person," our first UU Principle, as it applies to immigration law.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Consider the story of how one UU church connected with thousands of people in attempting to prevent the deportation of their member Ral Cardenas
- Play two different versions of the game of tag that explore what it means for an action to "go viral"

- Create a petition for an issue that matters to them and strategize how they might get the maximum number of people to sign the petition
- Play two different version of the game of red rover that allow participants to experience being excluded/excluders and protected/protectors.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Standing on the Side of Love	10
Activity 2: Viral Tag	7
Activity 3: Create a Petition	25
Activity 4: Immigration Red Rover	8
Faith in Action: Reflecting on Our Fire Power	20
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Interview with an Immigrant	35

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- How do you feel about inviting others into involvement in issues that matter to you?
- What prevents you from engaging others in your passions? What encourages you or enables you to engage others in the things you care about?
- What are your own feelings and beliefs regarding immigration and immigration policy in our country?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of fire, such as a candle, a flashlight, a depiction of the sun or any material that is red, orange and/or shiny
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part and the two parts sung together here. You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2). If needed, add the words "fire within" for this session, leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this session's worship leaders. Before you begin, ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought a fire symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath, release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the fire symbol on the cloth—or invite the volunteer opening worship leader to place a symbol they have brought. Say, "I bring this symbol of fire, of strength and daring, light and warmth."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words "fire within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person on the left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person their left, followed by each person in rapid succession, sending the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Standing on the Side of Love](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Review the discussion questions and choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

Can you imagine what it would be like to find out that the government was planning on sending a parent or close relative of yours out of our country? In times of crisis we hope our friends will come to help us, but some problems are big enough that we need the friends of friends, and the friends of those friends, to stand at our side and try to make things right.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- Have you ever had someone in authority, like a teacher or principal, give you a punishment that you thought wasn't fair? What was it like? How did it feel? Was there anything you could do about it?
- Did you ever involve other people in something you thought was important? Whom did you ask and how?
- Do you know people who immigrated to the United States from another country? Does your family, or any family you know, include adults who immigrated to the U.S.? What do you know about the experiences they have had?

ACTIVITY 2: VIRAL TAG (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Timepiece (seconds) or stopwatch

- A sheet of paper and a pencil

Preparation for Activity

- Find an open space large enough for all participants to run around, but with some boundaries that ensure safety.

Description of Activity

This activity demonstrates the power of going viral. In these words or your own, say:

The phrase "to go viral" has become commonplace in our society. YouTube videos and music sensations like Justin Bieber go viral when fans share with their friends, who share with their friends. Pretty soon everyone has seen it, in much the same way that a virus spreads through a school or town. We are going to compare the power of going viral with a single person's effort through playing two different kinds of tag.

Explain that for the first kind of tag, one person will try to tag each and every person in the room as they try to escape. Select a volunteer to be "it" and start the stopwatch, calling "time" at one minute (allow two minutes if the group is large and you have more time.) Make note of how many people have been tagged in that one minute. Then, with the same person as "it," change the rules: Now, any time a person is tagged, they then become a "virus" and can tag others. As with the first version, call "time" at one minute and count how many people have been tagged.

Repeat both games with a new person as "it," as time allows. Record the number of people tagged during each game.

Ask the group to reflect on the difference between the two versions of games with questions such as:

- How much difference is there in the number of people are tagged when one person is doing all the work and the number tagged when each person who is tagged gets involved?
- How do you think the power of "going viral" might make a difference if you were trying to change something in the world?

Including All Participants

Participants who have mobility limitations can serve as time-keepers and recorders.

ACTIVITY 3: CREATE A PETITION (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [How to Write a Good Petition](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Computer with Internet access and large monitor or digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Decide whether you will have time for the group to choose a topic for the petition. If not, choose a topic for the group. The topic would logically be related to immigration in your particular area, but if your congregation or RE program is involved in a social justice project on another topic, you might wish to create a petition that aligns with work your congregation is already doing.
- Copy Handout 1, How to Write a Good Petition, for all participants.
- Consider how you will deliver the signed petition(s) to the proper target. You may wish to have the children deliver the signatures during a future session or social justice activity. You may want to design the petition so it can be delivered electronically or to a group within your congregation.
- Optional: Post blank newsprint where participants can gather around it.
- Optional: Set up the computer, test Internet connection, and preview the [page for creating a petition](http://www.thepetitionsite.com/create.html) (at www.thepetitionsite.com/create.html) on The Petition Site.

Description of Activity

The Standing on the Side of Love campaign used the power of social media to collect over 4000 signatures on a petition to prevent Raul Cardenas from being deported. Invite the children to create their own petition and figure out how to best gather signatures.

If you have time, allow the group to brainstorm about issues that matter to them, recording all ideas on newsprint. Then, have the group vote on an issue about which to create a petition. However, in order for the activity to work within the allotted time you will most likely need to choose a topic for your petition. Present the topic to the group.

Distribute Handout 1, How to Write a Good Petition. If you have a larger group you may wish to ask if there are two or three people who would like to work together to create the wording for your petition. This work group can use the computer to create the petition that you will post online.

Invite the rest of the group to consider how you will get people to sign your petition. Do members of the group use a social media site such as Facebook or Twitter? Do they have family members who are active on social media and could help them invite people to sign? What help can the group ask of congregational leadership such as the minister, religious educator, or board of trustees? Could leaders help the children invite members of the congregation, or a wider group, to promote the petition through social media? How could the children get their schools involved? Create a plan to get as many signatures as possible on the petition.

Next, consider to whom and how you will deliver the signatures. If you have a plan, share it with the group. Given limited session time, a leader or other volunteer may need to finish creating the petition, begin its circulation, and take care of delivering the signatures.

Invite all participants to reflect on the project with questions such as:

- Do you believe creating or signing petitions is an effective way to make change? Why or why not?
- What can a petition accomplish, besides changing the mind of the person who receives the signatures?
- What are some other ways of using the power of "going viral" to create change?

Including All Participants

This project may appeal especially to verbal or intellectual participants. If the group is highly active and participants have difficulty staying focused on activities that involve a lot of talking or processing, you may wish to spend more time on the active games in this session and shorten this activity by creating a petition in advance.

ACTIVITY 4: IMMIGRATION RED ROVER (8 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure you have an open space that is safe for an active game.

Description of Activity

Participants experience feelings of being excluded and of including or protecting others that could occur related

to someone's immigration to a new country, through variations on the game of Red Rover.

Ask if the children know the game Red Rover. Tell them they will play some different versions of it.

Explain that in the first version, all participants except one will create a wall by holding hands or placing their arms around each other. The one "immigrant" must try to break through the wall of people to get into their "new country." Allow each participant to experience being the "immigrant." Then lead reflection:

- How did it feel to be the person trying to break through?
- If you were part of the "wall," how did you feel about the person who was trying to break through?

Now introduce another version of the game. Have all but two participants lock hands or arms to create a circle. One participant—the "immigrant"—stands in the center of the circle. The second participant starts outside the circle, and must try to get through the circle of people to put their hands on the "immigrant's" shoulders. The job of the people in the circle is to protect the "immigrant" and try to prevent this from happening. You may wish to offer specific guidelines ("no kicking," "keep your hands locked where they are to form the circle") to convey that everyone's movements must keep the game safe for everyone. Change roles as many times as time allows.

Then, lead reflection:

- How did this feel different from the earlier version? What was it like to be in the middle?
- What was it like to be the person trying to get to the "immigrant?"
- How different did it feel to be the circle of protection rather than the wall keeping someone out?

Including All Participants

If any participants have mobility or balance challenges, have the circle of protectors sit in a circle of chairs rather than standing in a circle.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Reaching Out](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions

- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in shades of red or orange
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- Tea lights (one per participant), matches, and a taper to use for lighting the tea lights (if you are able to have live flame in your RE space)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2 onto red or orange paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Reaching Out" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions..
- If needed, print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).
- Set one tea light per participant on your focus space.

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and that the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, and then to clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Reaching Out" circle (Leader Resource 2) outside the "Fire" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Fire power moves from one person to another, catching people's energy up like a spreading wildfire.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic. Use a match to light a taper candle. Invite them to use the taper to light a tea light. Have the day's closing worship leader choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session). Extinguish all flames.

Ask for (and record) a volunteer to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of the next element in the program (water) for the centering space.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: REFLECTING ON OUR FIRE POWER (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

This activity is designed to help the group process a Faith in Action activity begun in Session 9.

An important but often neglected part of any social justice activity is the opportunity to reflect on the experience.

Use the prompt questions provided below. Write the answers participants give, or invite a volunteer to serve as recorder.

- What do you think worked best about this project? What was frustrating?
- Who was the most memorable person you met?
- Did your view of the world change in any way?
- Did you feel your gifts were welcome? Were you able to welcome the gifts of others in your group and people you met?
- What will you remember about this experience? How do you think your actions changed the world (even if in small ways)?

- How did you draw on the power of fire (e.g., action, reaching out, shining light on a problem)?

Summarize the feedback (or, invite a parent volunteer to do so). Share the summary with the director of religious education, and use it to help plan future Faith in Action projects. You may wish to share with this information with the Social Action committee or other volunteers in the congregation as well.

Variation

To develop leadership skills, invite the children to help write a newsletter article about their experience. Be sure to get appropriate permissions to share the information and any pictures from the project on the congregation's website. You might also create a scrapbook of Faith in Action projects.

Including All Participants

To make sure children who process their thoughts more slowly are heard, invite everyone to reflect on a question in silence for a couple of minutes before asking for responses.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we improve a sense of community within this group?

Approach your director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

it starts when you say We

and know who you mean, and each

day you mean one more. — Marge Piercy

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children learned how members of the First Universalist Church of Denver, Colorado and the UUA's Standing on the Side of Love campaign engaged UUs across the country in the fight to allow Raul Cardenas, an undocumented immigrant, to stay with his family. We played games that explored what it means for a message to "go viral" and what it feels like to exclude or include people. We worked on

creating a petition that we hope will involve many people in a cause we feel is important.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. How does your family connect with the experience of immigration? When did you or your ancestors arrive here? How were they welcomed (or not)? How difficult was it to become a citizen? Did immigrants in your family follow all the rules, or were some elements of their immigration story outside the law?

FAMILY GAME. We played two versions of tag today. In the first version, one person tries to tag every member of the group. In the second version, once a person is tagged they then try to tag others. Try these two versions of tag as a way of exploring how much quicker and easier it is to make change in the world when we draw as many people as possible into our efforts.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Go to a place in your area where the predominant culture is that of immigrants. For instance, you might visit an ethnic neighborhood, an ethnic grocery store, an ethnic house of worship or a community fair that honors a particular nationality. Notice how it feels to be among many people whose language, foods or other traditions differ from yours. What do you enjoy about the experience? What is uncomfortable?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: INTERVIEW WITH AN IMMIGRANT (35 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Paper and markers or crayons

Preparation for Activity

- Invite a friend, colleague, member of your congregation, or member of your wider community to come speak with the group about their personal experience of immigrating to this country.

Description of Activity

A good way to explore immigration to this country is to talk with someone who has had the experience—preferably fairly recently. Allow time before your speaker arrives for the participants to brainstorm some questions for your guest. You might offer:

- Why did you come to the United States?
- What is the process for being allowed to legally stay in the country?
- What is the process for becoming a citizen?
- What do you miss about the country you left?
- What do you think is the best thing about the U.S.?
- When your guest arrives, give each participant a chance to ask a question and hear the response from your speaker. If possible, allow the group time after the speaker leaves to make a thank-you card to express your appreciation.

Including All Participants

Provide quiet manipulables such as silly putty or modeling clay for participants who may have difficulty sitting still and listening while the speaker is talking.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 12: STORY: STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE

Raul Cardenas came to the United States from Mexico, looking for work that would support him and his parents. He found a job driving heavy machinery, and even better, he found the love of his life, Judy. What he didn't find was a way to become a legal American citizen, even after he and Judy were married. Since the laws changed after the 9/11 tragedy, marrying a U.S. citizen no longer provides a path to citizenship. Like many undocumented workers in the United States, Raul just kind of hoped for the best. He and Judy were busy working, and raising their daughter and Judy's two sons from an earlier marriage, as well as caring for Judy's elderly father.

Then, in 2009, the Cardenas family got the call that turned their lives upside down. The Department of Homeland Security had discovered that Raul was in the country illegally, and they told Raul that he would be deported—sent back to Mexico. This story happens to thousands of families in the U.S., as laws tear immigrant parents away from their U.S.-born children. But the Cardenas family had something going for them that many families in their situation don't have—a faith community prepared to get involved.

The Cardenases are active members of the First Universalist Church of Denver, Colorado, and Judy started an immigration task force at their congregation. When the news came about the plans for Raul's deportation, the congregation sprang into action. Members began to call and write to the Department of Homeland Security, and to their legislators. The UU involvement spread. Standing on the Side of Love, the justice campaign of the Unitarian Universalist Association, used the Internet to invite people around

the country to get involved, and soon some 4000 people had signed a petition, made calls, or sent letters and faxes asking that the Cardenas family be allowed to stay together.

When the time came for Raul to have a hearing with the Denver Immigration Court of the Department of Justice, 20 UU ministers from four different states, as well as members of the Denver church, showed up to support the Cardenas family. The ministers all wore their colorful liturgical stoles. The small immigration hearing room, which normally has two or three people watching the proceedings, was packed with the Cardenas supporters. Judge Trujillo noted the crowd's presence for the court record.

After the short hearing, the ministers posed outside for photos with the family while holding a large yellow "Standing on the Side of Love" banner. They broke into song, singing "Love Will Guide Us," and embraced Judy and Raul.

At that hearing, the judge decided *not* to decide. That meant Raul could stay in the country for now, though he did not receive citizenship or a green card that would allow him to work. In January of 2012, President Obama announced a new policy that would focus deportation efforts on people with serious criminal records, rather than everyone who was in the country without proper paperwork.

The voices of all the people who have stood up for the Cardenas family and many other families are being heard. Unitarian Universalists are becoming known among people fighting for immigrant rights as "The Love People," the people with the bright yellow tee-shirts who are out in the streets and in the courtrooms and calling and writing from home with the message that we are Standing on the Side of Love.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 12:

HANDOUT 1: HOW TO WRITE A GOOD PETITION

Adapted from [The Petition Site website](#).

If a petition is not clear and well presented, then people will not want to sign it. To create a good petition, you should:

Set an Achievable Goal

A clear goal that you can actually achieve will make it easier for people to sign onto your petition. Having too many goals, or trying to do too much with one petition, can make it hard to communicate your point and may confuse people.

Select an Effective Target

A target is a person, position, or organization that can make your goal happen. If that person/organization refuses to change, then consider those who might influence him/her/them. Possibilities include:

The board of directors of your congregation

Local or national legislators

City or community officials

Local newspapers, TV or radio stations

Local or national businesses

International organizations, such as the U.N.

Show People How Your Cause Affects Them

As a result, they will be more likely to take action. Also, when your issue is in the news, take advantage of the fact and gather signatures as quickly as you can.

Write a Summary That Makes People Want to Sign

A good petition summary contains the following:

Call to action: Tell people right away why they are signing, within the first or second sentence.

Background information: Provide one or two sentences of background information.

Supporting facts: If it makes sense, include a short list of 2—3 facts supporting your petition's appeal. You should assume most people don't have the time to read all your information, so be brief.

Final Call to Action: One Sentence Restating Your Call to Action.

DON'T FORGET TO SPELLCHECK! A poorly written petition filled with spelling and grammar mistakes will take away from the credibility of your petition.

Write an Effective Letter to Send to Your Target

Be polite: Don't attack your target. They won't listen to your petition unless you are polite and respectful.

Make your purpose clear: Be sure to state what you want the target to do at the beginning of the letter.

Provide details: Tell your target why you want them to do this, and support your statement with facts. However, don't make the letter too long, or your target won't read it.

Proofread and SPELLCHECK: You want to look professional. Typos will keep your target from taking you seriously.

Make sure you're sending it to the right person: You don't want to do all the work and then find out that your target has nothing to do with the decision-making process for your issue.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 12:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "REACHING OUT" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

The website for the [Standing on the Side of Love](http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/) (at www.standingonthesideoflove.org/) campaign offers ideas and resources for getting involved with other UUs in standing up for justice for immigrants, marriage equality, and other issues of concern to UUs.

See the [Summer 2012 Family pages insert in UU World](#) (at

www.uua.org/documents/uuworld/families/12_summer.pdf) for two stories of Unitarian Universalist action and witness to stand with immigrant families, and activities to do with an RE group or at home.

View, sign, and "share" a variety of petitions and create your own on the [Change.org](http://www.change.org/petitions) (at www.change.org/petitions) and [The Petition Site](http://www.thepetitionsite.com/create.html) (at www.thepetitionsite.com/create.html) websites.

SESSION 13: THE POWER OF WATER

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Can we be like drops of water

Falling on the stone,

Splashing, breaking, dispersing in air

Weaker than the stone by far, but be aware

*That as time goes by the rock will wear away. —
Holly Near, singer/songwriter and activist*

The power of water is the power of flexibility, creativity, and persistence. Water finds a way through the tiniest available channel. Water creates change over time. Participants learn how the force of water carved the massive Grand Canyon, over millions of years. A game, *Rocks vs. Water*, demonstrates water's ability to move past obstacles. Participants explore the real-world power of flexibility and creativity by working on scenarios in which two groups have opposing goals. In the *Human Knots* game, participants physically experience the water power of working together to explore options and find solutions.

GOALS

This session will:

- Introduce qualities and forms of "water power"
- Demonstrate through physical experiences what it means to "go with the flow" when facing obstacles
- Interpret our fourth UU Principle, a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning," as guidance to creatively seek possible solutions to a problem.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Discover how solutions to problems can often be found using indirect routes and flexibility, two attributes of water power
- Consider the scientific story of how the Grand Canyon was formed by the action of the Colorado River

- Explore processes of working cooperatively for mutually beneficial solutions as a form of water power.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — The Power of Water	10
Activity 2: Adding Water Symbols to the Circle of the Elements Mural	10
Activity 3: Rocks vs. Water Game	7
Activity 4: Designing Flexible Solutions	23
Faith in Action: Exploring Ways to Exercise Water Power	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Building a Water Channel	30
Alternate Activity 3: Knots Game	7

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- Have you ever worked together with people whose needs or wants were opposed to yours, for a mutually beneficial solution? What worked, or didn't work?
- What internal conditions help you be flexible and creative?
- What external conditions help you be flexible and creative?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of water, such as a shell, a glass or bowl of water, a picture of an ocean or river, or fabric or paper that is blue and/or green
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "flowing deep within" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.
- Make sure you know which children at the previous session volunteered to be this

session's worship leaders. Before you begin, ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought a water symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the opening worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Place the water symbol on the cloth—or invite the volunteer opening worship leader to place a symbol they have brought. Say, "I bring this symbol of water, of flexibility and creativity, of always moving forward, whatever the obstacles might be."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "flowing deep within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE POWER OF WATER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Power of Water](#) (included in this document) "
- Optional: A computer with Internet access, and a large monitor or digital projector

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.
- Optional: Preview this [aerial footage of the Grand Canyon](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3jY4wzQPGs) on YouTube. Test equipment and Internet access to show the video to the group.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

It's hard to imagine how something as yielding as water, which generally moves around obstacles rather than through them, could carve something as enormous as the Grand Canyon. But people exercising the steady power of water have managed to accomplish amazing things.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- Have you ever worked to come up with a solution with another person or group of people who wanted something different than you did?
- Has the solution from a situation like that ever been better than what you imagined you wanted to begin with?
- What's the best thing you've ever accomplished by being flexible or creative about how to get what you want?

ACTIVITY 2: ADDING WATER SYMBOLS TO THE CIRCLE OF THE ELEMENTS MURAL (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Paper, poster board, or fabric
- Paper or fabric and appropriate drawing tools (crayons, markers, permanent markers, or fabric paint), and tape or glue sticks
- Optional: Magazines to cut up, scissors (including left-handed scissors), and glue sticks
- Optional: Found objects that might represent water, such as shells, beach glass, mirror pieces, and a hot glue gun

Preparation for Activity

- If you will be using permanent markers or fabric paint, spread out newspaper to protect work surfaces.
- Set out materials on work tables for children to prepare drawings or decorations to post in the "water" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural.
- Optional: Set up a station where an adult can guide participants' use of a glue gun.

Description of Activity

This activity adds to the Circle of Elements mural. You may have chosen to display the complete quartered circle in Session 1, or you may be adding the final, bottom right quarter of the circle in this session. In either case, for this activity, invite participants to decorate the "water" quarter with symbols of water.

Invite participants to create their water pictures, symbols, or collages on a sheet of paper or fabric, which you can then attach to the water quarter of the mural, indicated on the Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3). You may invite or assist participants to attach "found objects" directly to the mural using hot glue. Explain how you will help participants use the glue gun, if you have one.

Post participants' artwork or help them do it. Save several minutes to engage the group in clean-up.

ACTIVITY 3: ROCKS VS. WATER GAME (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Pillows or mats (such as carpet samples), enough for half the group
- Masking tape or painter's tape

Preparation for Activity

- Read the Description of Activity. Then, clear a space that has room for the "Water" players to maneuver across past the "Rock" players but which is small enough for the "Rock" players to make this challenging. Use tape to mark boundaries of the playing area.

Description of Activity

The game, Rocks vs. Water, invites participants to physically explore the concept of water power. "Water" players must use flexibility, creativity, and persistence to overcome obstacles as they try to cross the room, past the "Rock" players, without being tagged by a Rock.

Form two groups and have the Water players line up on one side of the playing area. Place pillows or mats for the Rock players, across the playing area with no more than 8 feet in between. Instruct the Rock players to sit on a pillow or mat. Tell them they may move their limbs to tag a Water player, but they may not get up from their location. Invite the Water players to try to cross the room without being tagged.

As you play the game, adjust the number of Rock players or the distance between them to create a situation in which it is challenging but not impossible for Water players to get past. When all Water players have managed to get past the Rocks, reverse roles.

After the game, reflect on the experience with questions such as:

- Did anyone come up with a surprising way of getting past the Rocks?
- Did Water players work together to increase their odds of success?
- What if the odds were stacked against the Water, with the Rocks close enough to each other that their fingertips touched? Would there still be a way, given enough time, for some Water players to reach the other side?

Including All Participants

When you form groups, make sure you assign children with limited mobility to play the game as Rocks.

ACTIVITY 4: DESIGNING FLEXIBLE SOLUTIONS (23 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [Scenarios for Flexible Solutions](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Identify the scenario(s) below that you think will be of greatest interest to your group. Be prepared to adjust the number of topics you work with depending on how much time you have available and how long any given topic takes.
- Choose the scenarios from Leader Resource 1 that you think will be of greatest interest to the group. Consider the time you have available and the number of children. If you wish, add a conflict that has come up in the group or in your congregation as an alternate scenario. Copy the scenarios to distribute to small groups.
- Optional: Post blank newsprint where participants can gather around it.

Description of Activity

Participants exercise creativity, flexibility, and persistence as they seek solutions to real-life situations in which people have opposing needs.

Form two groups, Group A and Group B. Let them know that they will be working together to come up with solutions to some real problems that people encounter in the world. Remind them that water power involves creativity and flexibility, and that they will probably come up with the best solutions if they think in terms of working with the other group, rather than against them. Point out that two possible strategies are compromise, in which each group gets part, but not all of what they want, and cooperation, in which groups work together to come up with something that works for everyone, which neither group might have thought of on their own.

Have the children count off as "A" and "B." Then, read the first scenario you have chosen from Leader Resource 1, Scenarios for Flexible Solutions. Clarify which position is "A" and which is "B," and make sure each individual understands which group they belong to. Now lead a discussion. First invite some "A" and some "B" participants to state what their group wants, and why. Then ask participants to suggest possible solutions. Let them work together to come up with a solution that everyone feels they can live with. If you wish, use the newsprint to jot down concerns and

possible solutions as participants discuss ideas. Making notes on newsprint is also a good way to ensure that everyone's comments are heard and noted.

After the groups have come up with a solution, discuss the process.

- Did they compromise? Cooperate?
- Did they feel like both sides were equally willing to consider the needs of others? If not, how did they deal with that fact?

Engage with as many of the four scenarios as time allows.

Including All Participants

Make sure that participants who are quieter or slower to process have the opportunity to speak. Children who have a hard time focusing and/or sitting still may benefit from having quiet, manipulable objects to hold during the discussion.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Flexibility](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in shades of blue and green
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2. If you do not have a color printer, you might use light green or light blue paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Flexibility" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource

5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.

- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "flexibility" circle (Leader Resource 2) outside the "Water" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Water power finds its way through flexibility and creativity. It keeps on moving toward its goal, even if it has to take detours along the way.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, to take a deep breath and then let it out.

Ask the the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket to take home so they can choose and practice a reading. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of water for the centering space as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: EXPLORING WAYS TO EXERCISE WATER POWER POWER (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

- Stickers or adhesive dots

Preparation for Activity

- Research groups in your area that do good work that connects with the theme of "water power." This might include an organization that guides people in compromising to resolve differences, people practicing creative ways to change the world, people engaged in non-violent resistance, or people who work to protect our water resources or ensure fair access to clean, fresh water.

Description of Activity

In keeping with this program's theme of building leadership, the Faith in Action projects build skills in identifying, planning, executing, and reflecting on work for the common good. Rather than offering a detailed project for each session, Sing to the Power provides structured ways for participants to voice their interests and follow through on their commitments. As in the "Earth", "Air" and "Fire" units, the "Water" unit's Faith in Action activities comprise a four-session block.

An action project begins with identifying a need. Begin by explaining that the group will create and carry out a Faith in Action project based on the theme of "water power." Offer, and write on newsprint, some examples of local groups or individuals whose work connects with water power. Invite participants to share any other examples of people working with water power that they can think of. Record these contributions. Then ask participants to brainstorm ideas of projects they might be able to do within a month (or, the time frame of the water power sessions). On a fresh sheet of newsprint, write all suggestions (including any ideas you might have).

Give each participant three stickers or dots. Ask them to vote for the suggestions they like best using their dots. They may put all three dots on one idea, or distribute them among up to three ideas. When voting is complete, identify the three ideas that got the most votes.

Now lead a discussion about what it would take to successfully complete each of the "top three" projects. What would be involved? What resources would you need? How much time would it take, and when would you spend that time? Who would you connect with? What might you learn? How might you contribute to the world?

When you have discussed all three projects, give each participant one more sticker/dot. Have them vote by placing their dot by the project they prefer. The project with the most votes will be your Faith in Action project for the month.

Including All Participants

Make sure you encourage quieter/more shy participants to share their views. Do not allow children who think the quickest or speak the loudest to dominate the discussion. Offer to place dots for a child who has mobility limitations, or have another participant place dots for them.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the religious educator for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Can we be like drops of water

Falling on the stone,

Splashing, breaking, dispersing in air

Weaker than the stone by far, but be aware

*That as time goes by the rock will wear away. —
Holly Near, singer/songwriter and activist*

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we began talking about the power of water by learning how the Colorado River carved out the Grand Canyon. We played games that involved the water power characteristics of flexibility and creativity, and worked to resolve scenarios in which two groups wanted opposing results.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. How does your family resolve differences, particularly when genuine needs conflict? In what ways have members of your family been flexible and creative in coming up with solutions for family issues in which different people wanted different things?

FAMILY GAME. We played Rocks vs. Water in class today. The goal of the game is for "Water" players to get past "Rock" players to the other side of the room without being tagged by a Rock. Rock players must sit on a cushion or carpet square, and not move from their location. These rock bases should be placed in a line across the room, with about 8 feet between the bases.

You might wish to have only one family member be a Water player, while the rest are Rocks, or chose a narrow enough field of play that one or two Rocks have a chance to block the way without getting up from their base.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Go on a family adventure to a river or creek. How has the river shaped the environment around it? What does the power of the water feel like when you put your hand in it? What does the power of the water feel like if you actually step out into the flow? How does the power of the water carry a stick or another floating object?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: BUILDING A WATER CHANNEL (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Tarp or plastic tablecloth
- Large bowl
- Pitcher of water
- Duct tape

- Scissors, including left-handed scissors and tin snips
- Recyclables such as plastic bottles, plastic bags, aluminum cans, cardboard or plastic tubes, and plastic and/or cardboard milk containers

Preparation for Activity

- Set out materials on top of plastic tarp or tablecloth, in a space that will not be damaged by water. If weather permits, it is probably best to do this activity outside.

Description of Activity

Children explore the power of water in a hands-on experiment. They work together to construct a channel through which water can flow—a challenge which uses cooperation, creativity, and flexibility as participants negotiate which ideas to use and how to combine ideas.

Invite the children to work together to use the materials you have provided to plan and then build a path where water can flow.

Have them construct the channel. Then, place a large bowl at the bottom of the channel to capture water, and use the pitcher to pour water in the top and see where it goes. Engage analysis of the experiment with these questions:

- Does the water go where you anticipated?
- Does the water go places the builders did not anticipate?
- What do you learn about the power of water from this experiment?
- How easy or hard do you think water is to control?

Including All Participants

Engage participants who lack manual dexterity for building in planning and analyzing construction.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: KNOTS GAME (7 MINUTES)

Preparation for Activity

- Clear an open space that will be safe for an active game.

Description of Activity

River water finds its way by flowing and giving way, all the while moving on its downward course toward the sea. Participants experience the water power of

flexibility, moving forward and giving way as they work together creatively to untangle a human knot.

This game works best with five to ten people. If you have a very large group you might wish to break into smaller groups. However, if you have a very small group you may wish to spend more time on other activities and bypass this game.

Have participants stand in a circle. Everyone puts their hands into the center of the circle and grabs hold of two different people's hands. Once everyone is holding hands with two other people, the group must work together to untie the knot without ever letting go of hands, so that the group is in a simple circle. For an additional challenge, you might want to try playing the game again, but this time in silence, so that participants have to use eye contact and gestures of the head and linked hands to work together to untie the knot.

After the knot has been untied, invite participants to reflect on what worked and what didn't work. Was it possible to untie the knot if you just focused on yourself and decided what you needed to do without regard for what other people were doing?

Including All Participants

Knots can be resolved with some participants remaining seated, as needed to accommodate mobility or balance issues. Children who are uncomfortable being touched or in close physical proximity can participate by making suggestions from outside the circle as to possibilities for untying the knot.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 13: STORY: THE POWER OF WATER

Imagine that you are in a glider, soaring over the Grand Canyon. You see layers of rock, red and yellow, brown and black. You see a deep gorge, as if someone has cut a trench a mile deep out of the layers of rock. Some places the cut is narrow, the walls steep, and some places the canyon widens out so that the walls stretch wide apart. And at the bottom, through the 277 miles of the canyon, runs the Colorado River.

Mostly, the river looks rather calm and quiet from above, oozing along the bottom of the great channel. But it's not quite right to think of the canyon as being the route that the river follows. In fact, the river is what carved the canyon.

Hundreds of millions of years ago, changes in the earth's climate brought changes to the environment where the Grand Canyon is now. At different times, deserts, swamps, and inland seas covered the area, alternately, for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of years apiece.

With each new environment a new layer of sediment was deposited on top of the previous one. The weight from each new layer pressed and compacted the ones below, cementing each layer into rock.

Tectonic plates, blocks of the Earth's crust, shifted these layers of rock around. When the Kula and Farallon plates slid under the North American plate 75 million years ago the movement forced the land to push up, creating the mountains we now call the Rocky Mountain range. A similar movement 60 million years later formed the flat rise of land we call the Colorado Plateau.

The first uplift created the path of the Colorado River. And as the river ran through the layered rock, the water began to erode the relatively soft sandstone. As the river flowed along, bits of rock moved along with it, carried to the river's end at the Gulf of Mexico. The second uplift increased the Colorado's already steep slope, causing the river to flow faster and erode the rock more quickly. But it wasn't until the Ice Ages, a little more than 2 million years ago, that the Colorado River did most of its work. During this period of the Earth's history the Colorado ran high from snow and rain, carrying more rock and soil than ever before. Boulders as big as trucks went crashing down the river's length, as the power of the water cut the canyon deeper and deeper.

There's a dam across the Colorado River now, and the river flows more slowly. But still, gradually, the Grand Canyon continues to be carved deeper and deeper. So you might want to ask yourself this: Which is stronger, rock or water? If you pour water on a rock, the water will flow away, while the rock stands firm. But given enough time (lots and lots of time!) it is the power of water that carved the Grand Canyon out of the rock.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 13: LEADER RESOURCE 1: SCENARIOS FOR FLEXIBLE SOLUTIONS

1.

Group A. You are a group of parents who would like your babies and toddlers to be with you during the worship service.

Group B. You are a group of older people who have a hard time hearing the service, and think that noisy babies and toddlers should stay in nursery care during the worship service.

2.

Group A. You are a group of vegans who think that eating any animal products is wrong, and who think that at your upcoming overnight camp no animal products should be served.

Group B. You are a group of omnivores who think that eating protein is important, and that people should eat what they like. You know marshmallows contain gelatin, an animal product, but it won't feel like camp if you don't roast marshmallows.

3.

Group A. You are high-energy kids in a religious education group who love to run, play, and move. You think your curriculum should be entirely active games that are fun and not boring.

Group B. You are verbal and artistic kids who like to talk about things, learn new things from books, and create beautiful arts and crafts projects. You think your curriculum should be entirely things you can do sitting down.

4.

Group A. You are dog lovers who know how much your dogs love to run and play off leash. You think that dogs should be allowed to enjoy themselves off-leash in your big local park.

Group B. You are parents who take your small children to play in your local park. You think that off-leash dogs are dangerous, and that having dogs in the park at all makes the park less of a place that you would want to take your children to play.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 13:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: "FLEXIBILITY" CIRCLE**



water

FIND OUT MORE

The [Tapestry of Faith](http://www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith) (at www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith) curriculum Gather the Spirit is an eight-session, wide age span program focused on water ecology and stewardship. [Browse Gather the Spirit online](http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/index.shtml) for water-themed activities, readings, and stories to enhance this unit of Sing to the Power.

"Water, stewardship, and justice" was the theme of the Tapestry of Faith Family pages in the Summer 2010 issue of UU World magazine. [Download the insert in PDF format](http://www.uua.org/documents/uuworld/families/10_summer.pdf) (at www.uua.org/documents/uuworld/families/10_summer.pdf). It offers a story about Pete Seeger's environmental projects based on the ship The Clearwater, and

activities and reflections to use at home or with the RE group.

[Durango Bill's website](http://www.durangobill.com/Paleorivers_preface.html) (at www.durangobill.com/Paleorivers_preface.html) provides links to detailed and scholarly information on the formation of the Grand Canyon. This [YouTube video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktf73HNZZGY) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktf73HNZZGY) shows the history of the canyon's formation, in just under four minutes.

See a video of singer/songwriter Meg Christian singing the lovely song "[The Rock Will Wear Away](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNCQZoaI2Uo)," (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNCQZoaI2Uo) words by Holly Near and music by Christian, the source of this session's opening quote.

SESSION 14: THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won.

Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none.

And by union what we will can be accomplished still.

Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none.

— Traditional union song

The power of water is the power of persistence, of moving past all barriers one drop at a time, until a flood collects that can break down walls. In this session participants learn about Universalist minister Phebe Hanaford, who devoted 60 years of her life to working for women's suffrage, and finally won the right to vote at the age of 90. Participants experience persistence and patience in an art project, by carving soap. The Burmese story "The Old Alchemist, which the children perform as a play, offers a fun twist on how persistence can turn dirt into gold.

GOALS

This session will:

- Promote a long-range, patient view of work for positive change
- Cultivate patience and the willingness to persist, two qualities of water power, through an art project that requires, slow, incremental work
- Demonstrate how persistent exercise of "the use of the democratic process," our fifth UU Principle, can be slow, yet powerful, through the story of 19th-century Universalist minister and women's rights advocate Phebe Hanaford.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Respond to the persistence of Phebe Hanford, a Universalist minister who worked for women's suffrage for some 60 years and finally lived to see women get the right to vote

- Experience the effects of patience and persistence, by doing an art project that requires slow, careful work to make incremental changes
- Understand the importance of persistence and patience through enacting a play based on the story "The Old Alchemist."

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Phebe Hanaford Gets the Vote	10
Activity 2: Soap Carving	25
Activity 3: The Old Alchemist — A Play	15
Faith in Action: Planning Ways to Exercise Water Power	
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	5
Alternate Activity 2: Drip Sand Castles	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- What in your life have you worked at the longest?
- Why do you think you have devoted such a long time to this particular endeavor?
- What kept you going when you felt discouraged?
- What rewards have you gotten from the duration of your effort?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of water, such as a shell, a bowl of water, a picture of an ocean or river, or any material that is blue and/or green
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "flowing deep within" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.

- Before you begin, ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought a water symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Place the water symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of water, of flexibility and creativity, of always moving forward, whatever the obstacles might be."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "flowing deep within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — PHEBE HANAFORD GETS THE VOTE (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Phebe Hanaford Gets the Vote](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.
- Optional: Save some of this story's discussion questions for the next activity, when the children will be carving soap—a quiet, focused activity which may lend itself to conversation.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story.

Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

Can you imagine spending more than 60 years trying to change something in the world? Of course, Phebe Hanaford was only one of many, many people, men and women, who worked for decades to win women the right to vote. You could think of each thing that each of these people did—every time they made plans at a meeting, or went to a march for women's suffrage, or spoke up about what they thought was right—as being like small drops of water. A single drop of water doesn't make much difference. But if enough drops trickle in, over enough time, then you have a river's worth of water that can change a whole landscape.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- What in your life have you worked at the longest?
- Why do you think you have devoted such a long time to this particular activity?
- What kept you going when you felt discouraged?

- What rewards have you gotten from working at your activity so long?

ACTIVITY 2: SOAP CARVING (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Tarp for collecting soap shavings
- One bar of soap per person
- Pencils to share
- Table knives, screwdrivers, orange sticks, nails, popsicle sticks and/or other soap-carving tools

Preparation for Activity

- Make sure you are comfortable guiding participants to carve soap. Watch [a YouTube video](#) (at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJfc62VG3Uc) which demonstrates how to carve a fish from soap. Visit [this Wiki page](#) (at www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Soap-Carving) for soap carving instructions with pictures.
- Spread a large tarp on the floor and/or work tables so you can collect and discard soap shavings when you are done.
- Set carving implements where everyone can reach them easily.

Description of Activity

Tell the group:

Trying to take off too much at once will cause the bar of soap to break. Carving soap requires patience and persistence. Let's see how much of these "water power" qualities we have.

Make sure that participants' hands are dry before they touch their bar of soap; water will make the soap slippery and difficult to handle. Distribute bars of soap and invite the group to each think of an object or shape to carve. Encourage participants to come up with a plan before they start carving. Suggest that a fish or turtle shape tends to work well, as does a sun or a face.

Invite the children to use a pencil to lightly carve the desired shape into the surface of their bar of soap, and then use tools such as a table knife or screwdriver to gently carve the soap.

This activity lends itself to conversation. Use some discussion questions from Activity 1 to help the group continue processing the story, "Phebe Hanaford Gets the Vote." Or, invite participants to think about other social justice movements besides the women's suffrage

movement in which people showed great persistence. For instance, during the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott, protesters walked to work and school every day for over a year before they won the right to sit anywhere on the bus they chose.

Including All Participants

Choose carving implements that are safe for all members of the group. Although some children this age are adept with a small kitchen knife, do not provide any utensils you think could challenge the dexterity or safe behavior of any group members.

ACTIVITY 3: THE OLD ALCHEMIST — A PLAY (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Leader Resource 1, [The Old Alchemist — A Play](#) (included in this document)
- Optional: Props including a bag of dirt, a bag of fake, gold-colored coins, chemistry beakers, and a large leaf

Preparation for Activity

- Make four copies of Leader Resource 1, The Old Alchemist — A Play. On each copy, highlight the speaking part for one of the characters.
- Plan how you will assign parts for the play. If you have a large group and enough time, you may wish to perform the play twice, giving eight people a chance to have a part, rather than four. Or, have one set of performers who read the lines and a second set of performers who act out what the readers are describing. Note: You may wish to arrange volunteers ahead of time. Give each volunteer a copy of the script (Leader Resource 1) with their speaking lines highlighted.
- Gather props.

Description of Activity

Participants perform a play based on a story from Myanmar/Burma about a man who will try anything to turn dirt into gold.

Assign parts or ask for volunteer. Have the participants read/act out the play.

At the end of the play, ask participants to reflect on the story with questions such as:

- Is persistence always a good thing?

- What is the difference between showing persistence and acting stubborn?
- Who in the story actually managed to create change? How?

Including All Participants

Allow participants who are uncomfortable performing in front of a group to fill the important role of audience members. If you are aware that a child has discomfort or difficult reading, assign them to act out a role while another participant reads the words.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Persistence](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in blue or green

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2. If you do not have a color printer, you might use light blue paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Persistence" circle, by referring to Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3).
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Persistence" circle outside the "Water" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Water power is power that keeps moving in spite of obstacles, that doesn't give up, that keeps looking for a way.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, to take a deep breath and then let it out.

Ask the the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the Opening volunteer to bring a symbol of water for the centering space, as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute Taking It Home. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: PLANNING OUR WATER POWER

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to continue the activity begun in Session 13. Research the project the group selected in the previous session. Prepare to share information about the needs, opportunities, and possible logistical arrangements for the project.

Description of Activity

This Faith in Action activity follows the Session 13 Faith in Action activity, Exploring Ways to Exercise Water Power, as the second step in a four-session process that leads the group through (1) *identifying* a way to exercise water power, (2) *planning* how to exercise water power, (3) *engaging* in the planned activity, and (4) *reflecting* on the experience. After selecting a water power activity, the next step is to plan exactly how the project will take place: Who will take part? Who needs to be invited, and who will invite them? What supplies will you need? How much time do you anticipate the project will take? When is the best time to work on the project? Who needs to be contacted for the project to move forward? What resources do you have available? What resources will you need to bring in?

Define the steps to bring the project to completion. Make plans as a group. Identify and assign action items for co-leaders or participants to complete before the next session.

After the session, follow up with your religious educator to determine how to communicate the project details to families and, if needed, the wider congregation.

Including All Participants

Make sure the plan is as inclusive as possible of the differing needs and abilities in your group.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we build the sense of community in this group?

Approach the director of religious education for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won.

Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none.

And by union what we will can be accomplished still.

Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none.

— *Traditional union song*

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children learned about Phebe Hanaford, a Universalist minister born in 1829 who worked for women's suffrage for more than 60 years. They carved soap as an experience of slow, careful persistence, and they acted out the story of the Old Alchemist, in which a man finds a surprising way of turning dirt into gold after much effort.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. What sorts of things do members of your family work hard for over time? Do family members have hobbies, musical or athletic pursuits, or social/political causes that they have persisted at over years? What have you gained from sticking with something that matters to you?

FAMILY RITUAL. All of us can use encouragement when we are feeling the challenge of sticking to the work of achieving a goal, whether it is a homework assignment, a hobby, or a lifestyle change. Have a few ritual words to share when the going gets tough. For example, saying "step by step" can be a blessing as well as a reminder that significant goals take time and attention.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. A lengthy or challenging hike or bike ride is a good way to experience both the difficulties and rewards that come with persistence. Plan a hike or excursion that is not overwhelming, but which pushes family members' typical assumptions about their stamina, their ability to persist.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: DRIP SAND CASTLES (20 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Bowls (one per participant) and large baking tray or cookie sheet
- Fine grain play sand
- Pitcher of water
- Plastic plates (one per participant)

Preparation for Activity

- Set out materials in a space that will not be damaged by water or sand. If weather permits, do this activity outside in an area that won't be harmed by a bit of spilled sand.

Description of Activity

Ask the children if they know a way to make a sand castle on the beach. Affirm that one can heap up piles of sand, or form large shapes with buckets. Tell them that patience and persistence, added to sand and water, can build beautiful, delicate fairy castles.

Give each participant a plate to build on, and a bowl of sand, with enough water added to cover the sand. Demonstrate: Take a handful of wet sand and hold it over a plate in a loose fist with the thumb up. Squeeze drops of very wet sand onto the plate so they accumulate to build a structure. Encourage participants to experiment with how much water to allow to drain from their hand, back into the bowl, before dripping the sand onto the castle. After participants have experimented with creating individual sand castles, they may wish to work jointly on building a larger castle on a cookie sheet or baking tray.

As participants work, or after they are done building the castles, invite them to reflect on the experience:

- How did it feel to build drip sand castles?
- Was it frustrating to build something that went fairly slowly?
- Was it relaxing?

- Was it difficult that you could not completely control where the drips went?
- Did trying to go faster make the castle come together faster or not? Did slowing down help you build it the way you wanted?
- What are some other activities that go better when you have patience and go slowly? (For instance, when gardening you have to wait for plants to come up. There's no way to rush the process.)

Invite participants to think of building justice in their community or in the world as an activity like building a drip sand castle. Why does it sometimes go slowly? What individual drips of effort have you seen people make toward building justice?

Including All Participants

Participants who are uncomfortable getting their hands wet and sandy can try the activity using a scoop and a turkey baster or funnel.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 14: STORY: PHEBE HANAFORD GETS THE VOTE

Young Phebe Coffin stood on a box in the barn, playing preacher to the group of friends she had gathered. Of course, in the 1830s, when Phebe was a child, women ministers were unusual, if there were any at all. Women couldn't vote, didn't have the right to own property, and couldn't attend most universities. But Phebe was raised in a Quaker family that believed in equality for men and women, and her cousin, Lucretia Mott, was a famous advocate for women's rights. So perhaps it's not too surprising that the highly intelligent Phebe grew up expecting to make her voice heard. At 13 she started to get her writing published, and at 16 she became a teacher.

When she was 20, Phebe married a Baptist doctor named Joseph Hanaford, and became a Baptist herself. She started writing books to help support her family, which included two children. Eventually she wrote a total of 14 books, many of which were quite popular. But over time Phebe decided she couldn't accept Baptist beliefs, and she became a Universalist.

At her father's request, Phebe preached a couple of times at the schoolhouse on the island of Nantucket where she had once been a teacher. But it came as a surprise and a rather scary honor when she was asked to fill in preaching for her hero, the Universalist minister Olympia Brown, who was the first woman to be ordained as a minister in the U.S.

With Olympia's encouragement, Phebe became a Universalist minister herself. She eventually left her husband, who wouldn't follow her to Connecticut, when

she was called to serve as a minister there. After separating from her husband, Phebe fell in love with a woman named Ellen Miles, and they lived together for over 40 years, until Ellen died.

While Phebe was serving as a busy and successful minister, she was also very active in working for women's rights. Her church in Jersey City, New Jersey decided to fire her after her first three years of ministry, even though the church had doubled in size. The church leaders said it was because she was spending too much time working on women's issues, but Phebe's letters make it clear that the church was also upset by her relationship with Ellen Miles, who they called "the minister's wife." They insisted that Phebe give up both her work for women's rights and her relationship with Ellen. In response, Phebe, and the people in the church who supported her, set up a church in a hall across the street, and she preached there for several years.

Phebe continued in active ministry until she retired in 1891, and she spoke at conventions for women's rights around the country, doing everything in her power to bring women the right to vote. It says something about both her gifts as a speaker and her importance to the women's movement that she was asked to conduct the funeral services for both Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the two most famous leaders of the movement.

Even after she retired from ministry, Phebe remained active and interested political issues. Before she died, at the age of 92, Phebe had the joy of being one of the few women's suffrage leaders of her generation who lived see the passage of the 19th Amendment. After more than 60 years of work, Phebe finally won the right to vote.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 14: LEADER RESOURCE 1: THE OLD ALCHEMIST — A PLAY

A story from Myanmar/Burma.

NARRATOR:

Once upon a time, there was an old man whose daughter was married to a handsome young lad. The young couple led a happy life, except for one problem. The new husband spent all his time dreaming of a way to turn dirt into gold. In those days people who tried such transformations were known as alchemists. Soon enough, the young man spent all of his inheritance, and the young wife had to struggle to buy food each day.

WIFE:

Your obsession with turning dirt into gold is going to kill us all! We have no money for food, and what little money I can earn is paying for your chemicals rather than feeding and clothing our children. Please, please, can't you give this all up and find a regular job?

YOUNG ALCHEMIST:

But I am on the verge of a breakthrough! When I succeed in turning dirt into gold, we'll be rich beyond our wildest dreams!

NARRATOR:

Finally the young wife went to her father about the problem.

WIFE:

Daddy, what am I to do? My husband spends all day messing around with his silly chemicals, trying to turn dirt into gold. It will never work, and in the meantime we're all starving.

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Really? Your husband is an alchemist? What a surprising path for a young man who seems so sensible. Let me talk to him and see if I can help.

WIFE:

I've talked until I'm blue in the face, but he just won't listen and he won't let it go!

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Well, you never know, I might be able to help. I'll go see him tomorrow.

NARRATOR:

And so the father went to visit his son-in-law, who looked none too happy to see him, since the young man expected a scolding. But what he heard was a complete surprise.

OLD ALCHEMIST:

So, my dear, my daughter has shared with me the interesting news that you are an alchemist.

YOUNG ALCHEMIST:

That's true... .

OLD ALCHEMIST:

It might surprise you to know that I, too, was an alchemist when I was young. What could be more exciting than the prospect of turning dirt into gold? What have you tried so far?

NARRATOR:

So the two men spent the afternoon in excited conversation about the young man's experiments. Finally, the old man threw his hands up in the air.

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Why, you have done everything I did when I was your age! You are surely on the verge of a breakthrough. But you need one more ingredient in order to change dirt into gold, and I have only recently discovered this secret. I am too old to undertake the task, as it requires too much work.

YOUNG ALCHEMIST:

I can do it, dear father!

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Hmm, perhaps you can. The secret ingredient is a silver powder that grows on the back of banana leaves. You must plant the bananas yourself because it's important that you cast certain spells on plants. Then when the plant grows, the powder on the leaves will become magical.

YOUNG ALCHEMIST:

How much powder do we need?

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Two pounds.

YOUNG ALCHEMIST:

Why, that would require hundreds of banana plants!

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Yes, and that is why I cannot complete the work myself.

YOUNG ALCHEMIST:

Do not fear! I will do it. I know I can!

NARRATOR: *[Throughout this section, as the Narrator speaks, the Young Alchemist acts out the Narrator's words.]*

And so the old man taught his son-in-law the magic spells and loaned him enough money to start the project.

The next day, the young man bought some land and cleared it. He planted the banana shoots just as the old man had told him to do and murmured over them the magic spells.

Each day he examined the seedlings, keeping weeds and pests away. Months later, when the plants bore fruit, he gently brushed the silver powder from the banana leaves. But there was scarcely any powder on each plant so the young man had to buy more land and cultivate more bananas. It took several years, but finally the young man collected two pounds of the magic dust. He rushed to his father-in-law's house.

YOUNG ALCHEMIST:

I have the magic powder!

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Wonderful! Now I can show you how to turn dirt into gold! But first you must bring your wife here. We need her presence.

NARRATOR:

The young man was puzzled, but obeyed, and brought his wife to join them.

OLD ALCHEMIST:

While your husband was collecting the banana powder, what did you do with the bananas?

WIFE:

Why, I sold them. That's how we've earned a living all this time.

OLD ALCHEMIST:

Did you save any money?

WIFE:

Yes.

OLD ALCHEMIST:

May I see it?

NARRATOR:

So his daughter hurried home and returned with several bags. The old man opened them, saw that they were full of gold, and poured the coins on the floor. Then he took a handful of dirt, and put it next to the gold.

OLD ALCHEMIST:

You see, my son? That is how you have changed dirt into gold!

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 14:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: "PERSISTENCE" CIRCLE**



water

FIND OUT MORE

Read more about Phebe Hanaford. The Nantucket Historical Society posts an [article by Lisa M. Tetrault](http://www.nha.org/history/hn/HNhanaford.htm) (at www.nha.org/history/hn/HNhanaford.htm). On the Harvard Square Library Review website, find an [article Rosemarie C. Smurzynski prepared](http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/hsr/Phebe-Hanaford.php) (at www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/hsr/Phebe-Hanaford.php) for the Greenfield Group of Unitarian Universalist Ministers.

On online search for images of "drip castles" will show some stunning examples you may wish to share with the group.

SESSION 15: THE POWER OF GATHERING

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest and simplest tools for learning more and growing is doing more. — Washington Irving

The power of water is the power of moving forward, of gathering information as you go and sharing it with others, as a river carries stones downstream. The children learn how the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry educates young adults about water issues in California and how the participants carry forward what they learn. Participants gather information about their local water supply, brainstorm how to conserve water and protect water sources, and share that knowledge by distributing reusable water bottles with others.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate that effective action requires both learning about the circumstances you hope to change and acting on that knowledge
- Encourage participants to value and preserve water as an essential and threatened resource
- Affirm that "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning" includes listening to the voices of others.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about the California UU Legislative Ministry's Water Justice Tours which engage young people in protecting clean water
- Gather knowledge about where their own water comes from and local issues related to conservation and water protection
- Brainstorm ways to carry forward the knowledge they have gathered, and advocate for water conservation and protection by decorating and distributing reusable water bottles.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — Water Justice Tour	10
Activity 2: Investigating Where Your Water Comes From	10
Activity 3: Water Conservation Brainstorm	10
Activity 4: Decorating Water Bottles and Posters	10
Activity 5: "It's the Little Things" Poster	10
Faith in Action: Planning Ways to Exercise Water Power	30
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	5
Alternate Activity 2: Congregational Scavenger Hunt	15

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- Who has taught you in surprising ways?
- What do you like to know before undertaking a new endeavor?
- What helps you discern what you know and what you need to find out?
- What do you know that you like to share with others?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbol of water, such as a shell, a bowl of water, a picture of an ocean or river, or any material that is blue and/or green
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- Set up the chalice on the cloth to create an altar area or centering space.
- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket. Feel free to add additional readings over the course of the program.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "flowing deep within" for this session and leaving space to add new phrases in future sessions.

- Before you begin, ask the volunteer opening worship leader whether they have brought a water symbol for the centering table.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual for this program invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud. Place the water symbol on the cloth, saying, "I bring this symbol of water, of flexibility and creativity, of always moving forward, whatever the obstacles might be."

As needed, assist the worship leader to light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include the zipper words from previous sessions and add today's zipper words, "flowing deep within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — WATER JUSTICE TOUR (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[Water Justice Tour](#) (included in this document) "

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Read the discussion questions. Choose those that will best help the children share their interpretations of the story and relate it to their own lives.

Description of Activity

Read or tell the story to the group.

After the story, invite the group to be silent for a moment to think about the story. Then, ask participants to recap the story in their own words. What they recall indicates what they found most meaningful or memorable.

Say something like:

Often, people think the first step of changing the world for the better is to plan your action—to figure out what you're going to do. But there's an important step that goes before that: Learning just what the problem is, who is affected by it, how they are affected, what's causing the problem, who does not want a change because their needs are being served by the way things are. Learn everything you can. As activists, we need to be constantly moving forward, but the best way forward often starts with taking the time to really learn about the problem and all the people involved.

Lead a discussion using these questions:

- What new information about water did you hear in this story?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- In what ways did the young adults on the water justice tour put what they learned into action after the trip?
- The Water Justice Tour was basically a big field trip. What field trip have you been on that taught you something interesting or important? Did you get to carry forward the knowledge you gathered? That is, did you share it with anyone? How?
- When has someone helped you understand something you needed to know in order to solve a problem?

- When have you been able to help someone else with information they needed to solve a problem?

ACTIVITY 2: INVESTIGATING WHERE YOUR WATER COMES FROM (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Computer with Internet access and a large monitor or a digital projector
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- If you will use the Internet to lead the children in researching water issues in your area, scout websites in advance. You can start at the [Environmental Protection Agency's website](#) (at water.epa.gov/), which identifies local watersheds and provides links to more information. Just before the session, test equipment and Internet access.
- If Internet access will not be available, invite a guest speaker to discuss local water issues. You might approach a municipal official or someone who works with an environmental advocacy group.

Description of Activity

The first step in making change is to understand the situation you are hoping to affect. Participants learn about the source(s) of their local water and issues that may affect access to safe drinking water.

For efficiency, you may be the best person to type queries into the computer, or you may designate a participant to do it. The website of your local water company will probably have information on both the source(s) and the quality of your water supply, and is likely to have conservation tips as well. You can also search "[your community] water issues" or use the watershed locator on the EPA website. Have volunteers take turns reading aloud what you find. Invite suggestions for other search terms that might be helpful.

If it is difficult for everyone to see the screen, have participants trade locations every minute or two.

Record, or have a volunteer record, noteworthy information on newsprint.

After you have gathered information, invite participants to reflect:

- How much of what you found on line did you already know?

- Had you ever thought about how water gets to your tap?
- Does knowing where your water comes from (and where it goes after it is used) make any difference in how you use water?

Including All Participants

Remember that the participants may come from different communities with different water sources and different water problems. Try to be inclusive in the discussion.

ACTIVITY 3: WATER CONSERVATION BRAINSTORM (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Optional: Computer with internet access

Preparation for Activity

- Set up newsprint in a location where the group can gather around it.

Description of Activity

The first step of inviting others to join you in a cause that you care about is to know what exactly you would like them to do. In this activity participants brainstorm ways in which people they know can help conserve and protect their water supply.

Invite everyone to share (by raised hands or another method) their suggestions for how people might use less water, or protect the water supplies in your area. Write suggestions on newsprint.

Point out that they will invite people in the congregation to join them in taking these actions in the next two activities: decorating water bottles and making posters.

Including All Participants

Make sure that quieter participants and ones who take longer to process, have a chance to share their ideas. You might have each person who speaks choose the next person to speak, or just go around the circle.

ACTIVITY 4: DECORATING WATER BOTTLES (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint from Activity 3, Water Conservation Brainstorm
- Plain plastic bottles of water with sports tops
- Permanent markers in a variety of colors
- Poster board and color markers

- Optional: Smocks for children to use, and newspaper to cover work surface

Preparation for Activity

- Set out materials where all can reach them.
- Optional: Protect your work surface with newspaper. You may also offer smocks to children to prevent their getting permanent marker on their clothes.

Description of Activity

While single-use water bottles can be a huge source of garbage and wasted energy, this activity allows participants to turn plastic bottles into attractive, reusable reminders to conserve water.

Direct children's attention to the list of conservation tips they have generated. Tell them they will decorate water bottles in ways that remind people to take care of our water supply. For example, they can write messages such as "Pour leftover water on a plant" or "Shorter showers." They can also add any decorative touches they like.

Have participants remove and recycle any paper labels on the bottles before decorating the bottles with permanent markers.

As participants work, discuss to whom they might give the bottles. Who do they think needs to change their actions around water use? Who do they think would be most receptive to the message? What do they hope the recipients of the bottles will learn? What could the children learn from the recipients? Then, how could they use new information they learn?

ACTIVITY 5: "IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS" POSTERS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint from Activity 3, Water Conservation Brainstorm
- Poster board, color markers, and tape or push-pins for display
- Optional: Sticky notes and pens

Preparation for Activity

- Post the newsprint where all can see it.
- Arrange for posters to be displayed in the congregation
- Optional: provide sticky notes and pens for congregants to add to the posters

Description of Activity

Remind participants of the quote from Wangari Maathai at the end of the story:

It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees.

Invite participants to create posters with water conservation actions to display in the congregation. Have them work collaboratively in small groups. Some volunteers might copy the quote at the top of their poster and then write several "little things" people can do, from the brainstorm newsprint. Other children can provide illustrations.

Optional: Invite congregants to share their ideas by asking, "What's Your Little Thing?" Provide sticky notes near the display so that congregants can add to the posters and share the tips in the congregation's newsletter.

Display the posters where the congregation can view them.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 1, "[Gathering](#)" Circle (included in this document) , and tape
- Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3)
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5), and basket
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1)
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord for any new participants
- Large beads, one per person, in blue or green

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1. If you do not have a color printer, you might use light blue paper. Cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Gathering" circle, by referring to Circle of Elements Mural Instructions (Session 1, Leader Resource 3).
- Print copies of Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1) and Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource

5). You will offer these to the children who volunteer to read opening or closing words next time the group meets, so they may choose and prepare their reading in advance. Keep copies on hand throughout the program.

- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy as a handout for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Explain that the session is almost over and the group will now work together as a community to clean the meeting space. Ask everyone to clean their own area and put away the materials they were using, then clean another area or help someone else. No one should sit in the circle until the meeting space is clean.

Gather the group in a circle. Tape the "Gathering" circle (Leader Resource 1) outside the "Water" quadrant of the Circle of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Water power is power that gathers as it goes, as a river brings what it finds along the way with it, to share with those downstream.

Invite each participant to take a bead and string it on the elastic and, as they do so, take a deep breath in and let it out.

Ask the the day's closing worship leader to choose a reading from the Closing Words Basket and read it aloud (or, to read aloud the reading they prepared after the previous session).

Extinguish all flames.

Ask for (and record) volunteers to lead the opening and closing readings for the next session. Offer the volunteers a copy of Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket or Session 1, Leader Resource 5, Closing Words for Basket that they may take home to choose and practice their readings. Tell them they are also welcome to choose their reading from a basket when they come next time.

You may wish to invite the opening worship volunteer to bring a symbol of water for the centering space as well.

Invite participants to put the bracelets in the Closing Words Basket. Distribute copies of the Taking It Home handout. Thank and dismiss participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: PLANNING WAYS TO EXERCISE WATER POWER (30 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Optional: Digital still cameras and/or video cameras

Preparation for Activity

- This activity is designed to implement the project planned in Sessions 12 and 13. If your water power activity requires travel beyond your congregation, recruit volunteers to provide transportation. Get signed permission slips from all participants' families for any off-site activity.
- Optional: Recruit volunteers to photograph and/or videotape the project; obtain appropriate permissions from people who appear in photos and video.

Description of Activity

By this session, the group should have identified a project and planned the elements needed in order to complete this project. This session, then, is when the group will actually do the activity that expresses their own water power.

Including All Participants

Make sure your transportation plan is accessible for all participants, and that all will have full access at any off-site location.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did the timing go today? What might we do to make it work better?
- What worked well? What didn't?
- What connections did we make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident? How could we continue to build the sense of community in this group?

Approach your religious educator for guidance, as needed.

TAKING IT HOME

One of the greatest and simplest tools for learning more and growing is doing more. — Washington Irving

IN TODAY'S SESSION... the children learned about the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry's work to educate young adults about water use and water problems in California. We learned about our local water supply, brainstormed how to conserve and protect water, and created posters and reusable water bottles to share with others.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Look together at your household water bill. Do you know where your water comes from, how you use it, and where it goes? What choices does your family make to conserve water? What new choices could you make?

FAMILY RITUAL. Create a water-pouring ritual to honor this precious resource. As you fill water glasses or a water pitcher at meal times, say "We give thanks for water, source and sustainer of life."

You may wish to add water to a special jar throughout the year for a September Water Communion (if that is a practice of your congregation).

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Take a family trip to a local reservoir. Note what activities are allowed in/on the water, and which are not, due to the need to protect the water source. What resources does the reservoir provide to plants, animals, and the environment?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl
- Smooth stones, at least one for each participant

Preparation for Activity

- Fill the bowl half-way with water.
- Set the bowl on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out. Set out stones near the bowl, where everyone will be able to reach them.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) into the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life recently. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CONGREGATIONAL SCAVENGER HUNT (15 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, [Congregational Scavenger Hunt](#) (included in this document)
- Pencils

Preparation for Activity

- If possible, plan this activity for a time when participants will be likely to find the people who are the "answers" of the scavenger hunt. You might use this activity during coffee hour, or before or after a worship service.
- Adapt Handout 1 so all questions apply to your congregation.
- Copy Handout 1 for all participants.

Description of Activity

Children use the water power of gathering as they seek people in the congregation who can supply different kinds of information.

Form pairs or small groups to identify adults in the congregation specified by the questions in Handout 1. If participants may not be able to approach the "answer people," have teams take their best guesses as to who these people are, then share and compare with other pairs or small groups.

Including All Participants

Some children will be more familiar with adult members of your congregation than others; you may wish to do this activity as one large group or two teams.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 15: STORY: WATER JUSTICE TOUR

By Ellen Gold.

Can you imagine not having running water in your home? How would you and your family drink, cook, bathe, or go to the bathroom? Sadly, more than a billion people in the world do not have access to clean drinking water. In addition, about 2.5 billion people live without proper sanitation systems like toilets. Most Americans probably think these kinds of water issues happen only in poorer parts of the world. That's what Glenn Farley thought too. He was one of ten UU young adults who went on a "Water Justice Tour" in California to learn more about water problems and what could be done to help make things better.

Glenn grew up UU in the Cedar Lane congregation in suburban Maryland. Then, he went to Starr King School for the Ministry. He said "I am embarrassed to say it now, but before these trips, I thought problems with access to safe and affordable drinking water only happened in so-called third world countries. I did not know thousands of Americans don't have access to safe drinking water. I know better now."

On the trip, participants discovered many things about water, including how to conserve this precious resource and how to more evenly distribute it.

In Long Beach, California, the group saw wetlands. A wetland is an area where water covers the soil for all or part of the year. It is very important for people to protect wetlands because they help the environment with things like water purification and flood control. Furthermore, wetlands are biologically diverse and are home to a broad range of plant and animal life.

Then group visited Yosemite National Park, where they saw a valley that was flooded, on purpose, in the 1920s to create a lake. The purpose of this project was to provide water to the people of San Francisco. Another stop on the tour was the San Joaquin Valley, located in the center of California. Unfortunately, water in this area contains a lot of pollution due to people overfarming the land. This is very big problem for the water supply of those who live in this region.

The young adults on the tour also got to enjoy the beauty of water while rafting on the Kern River and canoeing on Mono Lake. At the end of the trip, the group led a worship service about water at the Emerson UU Church in Canoga Park, California.

Throughout the tour, participants spoke with community leaders who are working hard to help improve various water issues. These inspiring discussions, and the trip

as a whole, had a big impact on everyone who took part. But learning about the issues and gathering information is only the first step. There's a saying that "knowledge is power," and the power comes from what you DO with your knowledge. The young adults all planned to bring what they learned on the water tour back to their communities, to help others learn about water concerns and inspire people to work together for change.

Lauren Eaton, who grew up at a UU congregation and served a small congregation as a religious coordinator, said the Water Justice Tour was "epic." She added, "It made me a different person. I knew something about water before, because my father directs a water quality lab, but this trip took things to a whole different level. Up and down the state we talked to community leaders who are working hard on water issues. This all fits with our First Principle [the inherent worth and dignity of every person], for everyone to have clean water. And the Seventh [respect for the interdependent web of all existence]. Water is part of the web of all existence."

Lauren was so inspired by the tour that she participated in another tour a year later. While earning her Master's degree in Social Work, she talked to her friends and fellow students about water issues and also led a water justice workshop at a UU young adult camp at DeBeneville Pines. She and other water tour participants have been working with the UU Legislative Ministry on a [Human Right to Water bill](http://www.uusc.org/content/human_right_to_water_bill_passes_through_senate_committee) (at www.uusc.org/content/human_right_to_water_bill_passes_through_senate_committee), which was defeated the first time around. But the "spiritual activists" in the UULM did not give up; they created five smaller bills covering the same issues and, as of Fall 2011, four of the five have passed in California.

Sierra Sukalski, another participant, planned to study environmental science in college. After the trip she said, "Water has become a much larger issue to me. Now I'm interested in how we build houses so that they fit the environment. I'd like to eventually help people find ways to live more sustainably."

"A lot of what I saw surprised me," she added. "We seem to be just starting to implement what we know about how to capture storm water runoff, for example. And there are so many things we could do to conserve water, including xeriscape plantings. If everyone does them they're not small things".

Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai once said "It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees."

Small things... little things... They add up to change the world. What things will you do?

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 15: HANDOUT 1: CONGREGATIONAL SCAVENGER HUNT

Who, in your congregation...

Knows how to run the sound system?

Knows how run the irrigation system, or where all hoses are located?

Knows the date of your congregation's annual meeting?

Knows where the art supplies are kept?

Knows how to check messages on the congregation's answering machine?

Knows where to find a bucket and mop?

Knows the date of the UU General Assembly?

Knows the year in which the Unitarians and Universalists merged to form the Unitarian Universalist Association?

Knows all the words to the hymn "Spirit of Life"?

Knows how to make coffee for the congregation?

Knows the address of the UUA headquarters?

Knows the location of a first aid kit?

Knows the topic of the current UUA study/action issue?

Knows where to find a copy of your congregation's by-laws?

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 15:
LEADER RESOURCE 1: "GATHERING" CIRCLE**



water

FIND OUT MORE

Visit the website for the [California UU Legislative Ministry](http://www.uulmca.org/main.html) (at www.uulmca.org/main.html) to learn about Water Justice Tours and other UU faith-based efforts. A [UU World magazine article](http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/174615.shtml) (at www.uuworld.org/news/articles/174615.shtml) discusses the UU legislative ministry movement; there are now UU legislative ministries in 15 states.

The UUA offers resources promoting stewardship of water which you can use to enhance this session. [Gather the Spirit](http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/index.shtml) (at www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/index.shtml) is a multi-age Tapestry of Faith curriculum focused on water ecology issues. The Tapestry of Faith

[Family pages in UU World magazine](http://www.uua.org/families/uuworld) (at www.uua.org/families/uuworld), Summer 2010, begins with a story about musician/activist Pete Seeger and his project to clean up New York's Hudson River.

The website Water Use It Wisely offers [100 tips for saving water](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-serve/index.php) (at www.wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-serve/index.php) and

[games](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/kids/) (at www.wateruseitwisely.com/kids/) to learn about saving water.

The Clean Water website offers [10 ways to protect water sources](http://www.cleanwater.org/files/publications/ca/10_Ways_to_Protect_Our_Water.pdf) (at www.cleanwater.org/files/publications/ca/10_Ways_to_Protect_Our_Water.pdf).

SESSION 16: THE POWER TO MAKE CHANGE

SESSION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. — Anne Frank

In this final session, the Hopi story of The Four Creations provides a framework for reflecting on and celebrating the kinds of power explored throughout the program. In ritual and story we honor the path the participants have taken. We invite and empower them to continue on the path of making positive change.

GOALS

This session will:

- Celebrate the power expressed by all participants
- Review the kinds of power that have been explored
- Empower participants' self-concepts as leaders for positive change.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Respond to expressions of elemental power in the Hopi story of the Four Creations
- Honor earth power through a ritual of naming where they are from
- Honor fire power through a ritual of burning paper with words that describe obstacles which prevent their becoming leaders for positive change
- Honor air power through a meditation on breath
- Honor water power through a ritual in which they pledge to create positive change
- Experience affirmation of their ability to be leaders in using their own elemental powers for positive change.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes
Opening	5
Activity 1: Story — The Four Creations, Part One and Honoring Earth Power	10
Activity 2: Story — The Four Creations, Part Two and Honoring Fire Power	10
Activity 3: Story — The Four Creations, Part Three and Honoring Air Power	8
Activity 4: Story — The Four Creations, Part Four and Honoring Water Power	10
Activity 5: Story — The Four Creations, Part Five and Commissioning Ritual	7
Faith in Action: Reflecting on Our Water Power	25
Closing	5
Alternate Activity 1: Sharing Joys and Sorrows	10
Alternate Activity 2: Closing Celebration	40

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Find a place where you can be quiet with your thoughts. Close your eyes and breathe deeply for about five minutes, perhaps repeating a word or phrase to separate yourself from the activities of the day. When you feel settled and relaxed, consider:

- What have you learned in the course of leading this program?
- What has surprised you?
- What moments have moved or inspired you?
- What moments have most frustrated you?
- Where have you seen change take place in yourself or others?

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Chalice or LED/battery-operated candle
- Cloth for altar or centering space
- Opening Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 1), and basket
- Symbols of earth, air, fire, and water
- Newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (Session 1, Activity 2)
- Optional: Session 1, Leader Resource 2, "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Optional: A copy of the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Preparation for Activity

- If you have not already done so, print Session 1, Leader Resource 1, Opening Words for Basket; cut out the short readings and place them in the basket.
- Make sure you know and can lead the Sing to the Power theme song, a "zipper" song based on "Now Let Us Sing," Hymn 368 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. You can listen to each melodic part ([Part 1](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1.mp3) and [Part 2](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt2.mp3)) and the two parts sung together [here](#) (at s3.amazonaws.com/uuavideo/audio/singpower/20120601_pt1pt2.mp3). You may want to invite a guest or a volunteer to help lead the song, perhaps to lead half the group in singing one of the two melodic parts.
- Post the newsprint with "Now Let Us Sing" lyrics (from Session 1, Activity 2) adding the words "flowing deep within" for this session.
- Before you begin, ask participants whether they have brought symbols of earth, air, fire, or water and place these on the centering table.
- Set up the centering table with the chalice and symbols of all four elements: earth, air, fire, and water.

Description of Activity

The opening ritual invites children to practice leadership and experience the power of a group coming together in sacred space.

Gather the children in a circle around the chalice. Invite them to take a deep breath and release it, and create a deep silence for a moment.

Invite the day's worship leader to select a reading from the Opening Words Basket and read it aloud.

Invite a member of the group to lift up a symbol of earth from the centering table and say something they honor about the earth or earth power. Invite a member of the group to lift up a symbol of air from the centering table and say something they honor about air or air power. Invite a member of the group to lift up a symbol of fire from the centering table and say something they honor about fire or fire power. Invite a member of the group to lift up a symbol of water from the centering space and say something they honor about the water or water power. Light the chalice.

Sing "Sing to the Power." Include verses for all four elements: "Sing to the power of the earth below." "Sing to the power of the moving air." "Sing to the power of the fire within." "Sing to the power flowing deep within."

Invite participants to hold hands in a circle. Explain, in these words or your own:

Each time the group meets, we focus on ways we find and express our power. As part of each opening circle, we send a pulse of energy, or power, around the circle.

Begin the power pulse by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, who will then squeeze the hand of the person to their left, followed by each person in rapid succession. Send the power pulse around the circle several times.

Conclude the power pulse. While still holding hands, ask the group to take a deep breath together, bringing their hands up as they breathe in, and bringing their hands down as they breathe out.

Return the reading to the Opening Words Basket and extinguish the chalice.

Including All Participants

Some participants may be uncomfortable being touched. Offer the opportunity to opt out of the circle during the time when participants are holding hands for the power pulse.

ACTIVITY 1: STORY — THE FOUR CREATIONS, PART ONE AND HONORING EARTH POWER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Four Creations](#) (included in this document) "
- An item to serve as a "talking stick"

Preparation for Activity

- Read the story and prepare to share it with the group.
- Prepare to be the first to share an "I am from... ." statement.
- Obtain an item to use as a "talking stick," an indicator that the person holding it (and only that person) has the right to speak.

Description of Activity

Tell the group you will tell them a five-part story, stopping after each part for a ritual activity. Say that after you share each part of the story, you will invite the group to be silent for a moment and then you will explain the ritual.

Read or tell part one of the story to the group. Invite a moment of silence.

Then say something like:

In this Hopi story of creation, the first people are made from different colors of earth mixed with the saliva of Spider Woman. The people are told that it is their job to respect and live in harmony with their Creator. The story implies that who we are is deeply connected to the earth and to earth power, the power of grounded-ness and connection to place, the power of knowing who we are and where we come from.

As leader, complete the phrase: "I am from... ." You might include where you live, where you were born, names of ancestors, important aspects of your community, or any other pieces of your heritage and identity that you feel are important. Then, hand the "talking stick" to another member of the group and invite them to share where they are from in the same way. Instruct each person, once they are done, to hand the "talking stick" to another member of the group.

Including All Participants

For each activity, encourage full participation, but remind participants that they do have permission to pass.

ACTIVITY 2: STORY — THE FOUR CREATIONS, PART TWO AND HONORING FIRE POWER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Four Creations](#) (included in this document) "
- Metal bowl with sand in the bottom
- Slips of paper
- Pencils or pens
- Long matches or a long lighter
- Optional: Flash paper

Preparation for Activity

- Plan where you will conduct this ritual. You may wish to have children write on slips of paper indoors, then move outside to burn the paper. You might decide to save the paper-burning until after the session is concluded.
- Put the metal bowl on a heat-absorbing surface, such as wood, as the bowl will get hot.
- Optional: Obtain [flash paper](#) (at www.dreamlandmagic.com/flash-paper.html) for participants to write on. Flash paper will burn with a very satisfying bright light, and leave no ash behind. Other sources are the online [Mad Hatter Magic Shop](#) (at madhattermagicshop.com/magicshop/product_info.php?products_id=153), or a local magic supply store.

Description of Activity

Read or tell Part Two of the story "The Four Creations." Invite a moment of silence then say something like:

In this part of the story, the world is cleansed by fire. How is that possible? Fire can destroy, but it can also transform. Each of us has obstacles that hold us back from being as brave and strong and caring and connected to our best selves as we can be. As a way of honoring the transforming and cleansing power of fire, we are going to write down any obstacles that stand in the way of our being the strongest leaders for positive change that we can be. Then we will burn those slips of paper, opening to the fire power within each of us.

Ask: What prevents you from creating positive change?

Then, distribute paper or flash paper and writing utensils. Invite participants to write down any obstacles that block them from using their own power. Then burn these slips of paper in a metal bowl.

Including All Participants

If any participants are uncomfortable near the open flame, or you think will be insufficiently careful, have participants place their own slips of paper in the bowl, and then burn the paper for all the participants yourself.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY — THE FOUR CREATIONS, PART THREE AND HONORING AIR POWER (8 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Four Creations](#) (included in this document) "
- Leader Resource 1, [Breath Meditation](#) (included in this document)

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 1. Practice reading the meditation aloud so you can lead it smoothly, pausing between sentences.

Description of Activity

Read or tell Part Three of the story, "The Four Creations." Invite a moment of silence. Then, say something like:

The people in this story get off track by being so focused on doing and getting and buying and trading that they forgot their creator. They forgot who they truly are. The coming of the ice forces everyone into stillness. Sometimes we need the stillness of air power to remember who we are, and who we can be. We honor air power and stillness with a meditation on our breath.

Invite the children to get comfortable, out of arms reach of each other. Read the meditation in Leader Resource 1 slowly, leaving pauses between sentences for participants to experience stillness and the power of air.

ACTIVITY 4: STORY — THE FOUR CREATIONS, PART FOUR AND HONORING WATER POWER (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Four Creations](#) (included in this document) "
- A large, clear bowl, half-filled with water

- Smooth stones, one per participant

Preparation for Activity

- Set out the bowl of water with the stones arranged around it.

Description of Activity

Read or tell Part Four of story, "The Four Creations." Invite a moment of silence, then say something like:

In this part of the story the world is undone by a great flood. Most often, however, water changes things bit by bit, carving great canyons by moving one stone at a time. We, too, can be like water, taking away one stone of injustice at a time. I invite you to pick up one of the stones, drop it into the water, and share aloud one thing you pledge to do to create positive change in the world.

You might go first to model this ritual.

ACTIVITY 5: STORY — THE FOUR CREATIONS, PART FIVE AND COMMISSIONING RITUAL (7 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Story, "[The Four Creations](#) (included in this document) "
- Bead bracelets created in Closing rituals of previous sessions, one per participant

Preparation for Activity

- Place bracelets on the altar/centering space. If you can, identify the owner of each bracelet as you will place them on the children's wrists.
- Think about the special power you have observed in each participant. Be ready to give each individual an affirmation during the ritual.

Description of Activity

Read or tell part five of the story, "The Four Creations." Invite a moment of silence, then say something like:

The world we live in isn't perfect, or even easy. But we are blessed to have this world as our home and to have the power to make it a better place for ourselves and others. We have explored the many powers of earth, air, fire and water, and the power that each of us has to be a creator and to connect with the power behind all that is. Remember, as we go forth, the power that each of you carries.

Invite each participant forward, one at a time. Place their beaded bracelet on their wrist. As you do so, honor each participant by briefly naming a special power you see in them. Say:

Remember your power, and use it for the good of all creation.

Have each person sit down before calling the next.

Including All Participants

If any participants were not present for any previous sessions, create a bracelet with a single bead for them and honor their presence along with the other members of the group. Use "your presence here" as an affirmation.

If mobility is difficult for any participants, plan the ritual space and process to accommodate them. This may mean you bring a bracelet to each person rather than have each one come to the centering table.

CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Circle of Elements mural from Session 1
- Leader Resource 2, "[Power to Make Change](#)" [Circle](#) (included in this document) , and tape
- Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions
- Closing Words for Basket (Session 1, Leader Resource 5) and basket
- Bracelets from Session 1, plus lengths of cord and extra beads for any new participants
- [Taking It Home](#) (included in this document) handout

Preparation for Activity

- Print Leader Resource 2 and cut out the circle. Find the position on the Circle of Elements Mural where you will post the "Power to Make Change" circle, by referring to Session 1, Leader Resource 3, Circle of Elements Mural Instructions.
- Download and adapt the Taking It Home section and copy for all participants (you may wish to email to parents as well).

Description of Activity

Gather the group around the centering table. Have the worship leader choose a reading from the Closing Readings Basket and read it in closing.

Tape the "Power to Make Change" circle (Leader Resource 2) outside the "Water" quadrant of the Circle

of Elements mural, in the position shown on Session 1, Leader Resource 3. Say:

Earth, air, fire, and water. Each and all bless us with their different powers. May we carry these powers and that blessing out into the world.

Distribute Taking It Home. Say goodbye to participants.

FAITH IN ACTION: REFLECTING ON OUR WATER POWER (25 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Newsprint, markers, and tape

Preparation for Activity

- Post blank newsprint.

Description of Activity

This activity is designed to help the group process a Faith in Action activity begun in Session 13.

An important but often neglected part of any social justice activity is the opportunity to reflect on the experience.

Use the prompt questions provided below. Write the answers participants give, or invite a volunteer to serve as recorder.

- What do you think worked best about this project? What was frustrating?
- Who was the most memorable person you met?
- Did your view of the world change in any way?
- Did you feel your gifts were welcome? Were you able to welcome the gifts of others in your group and people you met?
- What will you remember about this experience? How do you think your actions changed the world (even if in small ways)?
- How did you draw on water power (flexibility, creativity, persistence)?

Summarize the feedback (or, invite a parent volunteer to do so). Share the summary with the director of religious education, and use it to help plan future Faith in Action projects. You may wish to share with this information with the Social Action committee or other volunteers in the congregation as well.

Variation

To develop leadership skills, invite the children to help write a newsletter article about their experience. Be sure to get appropriate permissions to share the information and any pictures from the project on the congregation's

website. You might also create a scrapbook of Faith in Action projects.

Including All Participants

To make sure children who process their thoughts more slowly are heard, invite everyone to reflect on a question in silence for a couple of minutes before asking for responses.

LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING

Reflect on and discuss with your co-leader(s):

- How did this program as a whole work for you?
- What met your expectations? What did not?
- What connections did you make with the children? What connections did the children make with each other? How was this evident?
- How can the sense of community in this group be maintained and strengthened, going forward?

TAKING IT HOME

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. — Anne Frank

IN TODAY'S SESSION... we celebrated the completion of the program with rituals honoring the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. We stated ways we can express different kinds of power as leaders for positive change.

EXPLORE THE TOPIC TOGETHER. Ask your child to show you the bracelet they created in *Sing to the Power*. Invite them to share what each bead means, and what they remember about the various kinds of power symbolized by the four elements.

FAMILY RITUAL. The children participated in a ritual in which each person dropped a stone into a bowl of water and shared one action they will do to create positive change. Incorporate this ritual into your family life, perhaps on Sunday evenings as a way of leading into the school-and-work week. Place the bowl where family members can see it during the week and remember their pledge.

FAMILY ADVENTURE. Plan an activity for your family that expresses your power as leaders for positive change. This might involve political action or protest, direct service to someone you know, helping a social service organization, or caring for the environment. As you plan your activity, and as you reflect after the

activity, consider what kind of power is involved in your project.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS (10 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Attractive bowl, half-filled with water
- Smooth stones

Preparation for Activity

- Put water in bowl and set out stones where they can easily be reached. Make sure that bowl is on a surface that will not be damaged if a small amount of water splashes out.

Description of Activity

Say:

Our community is like a bowl that holds all of our lives. The joys and sorrows which affect each person's life send ripples through all of our lives.

Invite participants, as they are moved, to pick up a stone, drop it gently (!) in the bowl of water, and share aloud a joy or a sorrow which has affected their life in recent days. Say they may drop their stone in silence, instead; tell them it is okay to keep their joys or sorrows private. You might go first, to model.

Once all who wish to have shared, affirm all the words people have spoken and the thoughts and feelings that remain inside each person's head and heart.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: CLOSING CELEBRATION (40 MINUTES)

Materials for Activity

- Snacks and paper goods
- Any materials required for the games you choose

Preparation for Activity

- Review past sessions of *Sing to the Power* and identify games the participants enjoyed. Remind yourself of the rules for these games and their connection to earth, air, fire, or water power.
- Obtain snacks and paper goods for a party. Make sure the snacks you provide are suitable for the entire group; avoid items that any participants cannot have.

Description of Activity

If you have time at the end of the main ritual activities, or if you would prefer to close the program less formally,

look through previous sessions for games the participants enjoyed. Explain that the group will play games from previous sessions as an end-of-program party. At the conclusion of each game, ask participants what they remember about the context in which they originally played the game, and the kind of power the game relates to.

End with a celebratory snack.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 16: STORY: THE FOUR CREATIONS

This story comes from the Hopi people of northern Arizona. "Hopi" means "People of Peace." This story was recorded in the 1950s by Oswald White Bear Fredericks and his wife Naomi from the storytelling of older Hopi at the village of Oraibi, which tree-ring dating indicates has been inhabited by the Hopi since at least 1150 CE.

Part One

The world at first was endless space in which existed only the Creator, Taiowa. This world had no time, no shape, and no life, except in the mind of the Creator. Eventually the infinite creator created the finite in Sotuknang, whom he called his nephew and whom he created as his agent to establish nine universes. Sotuknang gathered together matter from the endless space to make the nine solid worlds. Then the Creator instructed him to gather together the waters from the endless space and place them on these worlds to make land and sea. When Sotuknang had done that, the Creator told him to gather together air to make winds and breezes on these worlds.

The fourth act of creation with which the Creator charged Sotuknang was the creation of life. Sotuknang went to the world that was to first host life and there he created Spider Woman, and he gave her the power to create life. First Spider Woman took some earth and mixed it with saliva to make two beings. Over them she sang the Creation Song, and they came to life. She instructed one of them, Poqanghoya, to go across the earth and solidify it. She instructed the other, Palongawhoya, to send out sound to resonate through the earth, so that the earth vibrated with the energy of the Creator. Then Spider Woman sent Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya to the poles of the earth to keep it rotating.

Finally, Spider Woman made all the plants, the flowers, the bushes, and the trees. Likewise she made the birds and animals, again using earth and singing the Creation Song. When all this was done, she made human beings, using yellow, red, white, and black earth mixed with her saliva. Singing the Creation Song, she made four men, and then in her own form she made four women. At first they had a soft spot in their foreheads, and although it solidified, it left a space through which they could hear the voice of Sotuknang and their Creator. Because these people could not speak, Spider Woman called on Sotuknang, who gave them four languages. His only instructions were for them to respect their Creator and to live in harmony with him.

Part Two

These people spread across the earth and multiplied. Despite their four languages, in those days they could understand each other's thoughts anyway, and for many years they and the animals lived together as one. Eventually, however, they began to divide, both the people from the animals and the people from each other, as they focused on their differences rather than their similarities. As division and suspicion became more widespread, only a few people from each of the four groups still remembered their Creator. Sotuknang appeared before these few and told them that he and the Creator would have to destroy this world, and that these few who remembered the Creator must travel across the land, following a cloud and a star, to find refuge. These people began their treks from the places where they lived, and when they finally came together Sotuknang appeared again. He opened a huge ant mound and told these people to go down in it to live with the ants while he destroyed the world with fire, and he told them to learn from the ants while they were there. The people went down and lived with the ants, who had storerooms of food that they had gathered in the summer, as well as chambers in which the people could live. This went on for quite a while, because after Sotuknang cleansed the world with fire it took a long time for the world to cool off. As the ants' food ran low, the people refused the food, but the ants kept feeding them and only tightened their own belts, which is why ants have such tiny waists today.

Part Three

Finally, Sotuknang was done making the second world, which was not quite as beautiful as the first. Again he admonished the people to remember their Creator as they and the ants that had hosted them spread across the earth. The people multiplied rapidly and soon covered the entire earth. They did not live with the animals, however, because the animals in this second world were wild and unfriendly. Instead the people lived in villages and built roads between these, so that trade sprang up. They stored goods and traded those for goods from elsewhere, and soon they were trading for things they did not need. As their desire to have more and more grew, they began to forget their Creator, and soon wars over resources and trade were breaking out between villages. Finally Sotuknang appeared before the few people who still remembered the Creator, and again he sent them to live with the ants while he destroyed this corrupt world. This time he ordered Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya to abandon their posts at the poles, and soon the world spun out of control and rolled over. Mountains slid and fell, and lakes and rivers

splashed across the land as the earth tumbled, and finally the earth froze over into nothing but ice.

Part Four

This frozen world went on for years, and again the people lived with the ants. Finally Sotuknang sent Poqanghoya and Palongawhoya back to the poles to resume the normal rotation of the earth, and soon the ice melted and life returned. Sotuknang called the people up from their refuge, and he introduced them to the third world that he had made. Again he admonished the people to remember their Creator as they spread across the land. As they did so, they multiplied quickly, even more quickly than before, and soon they were living in large cities and developing into separate nations. With so many people and so many nations, soon there was war, and some of the nations made huge shields on which they could fly, and from these flying shields they attacked other cities. When Sotuknang saw all this war and destruction, he resolved to destroy this world quickly before it corrupted the few people who still remembered the Creator. He called on Spider Woman to gather those few and, along the shore, she placed each person with a little food in the hollow stem of a reed. When she had done this, Sotuknang let loose a flood that destroyed the warring cities and the world on which they lived.

Part Five

Once the rocking of the waves ceased, Spider Woman unsealed the reeds so the people could see. They floated on the water for many days, looking for land, until finally they drifted to an island. On the island they built little reed boats and set sail again to the east. After

drifting many days, they came to a larger island, and after many more days to an even larger island. They hoped that this would be the fourth world that Sotuknang had made for them, but Spider Woman assured them that they still had a long and hard journey ahead. They walked across this island and built rafts on the far side, and set sail to the east again. They came to a fourth and still larger island, but again they had to cross it on foot and then build more rafts to continue east. From this island, Spider Woman sent them on alone, and after many days they encountered a vast land. Its shores were so high that they could not find a place to land, and only by opening the doors in their heads did they know where to go to land.

When they finally got ashore, Sotuknang was there waiting for them. As they watched to the west, he made the islands that they had used like stepping stones disappear into the sea. He welcomed them to the fourth world, but he warned them that it was not as beautiful as the previous ones, and that life here would be harder, with heat and cold, and tall mountains and deep valleys. He sent them on their way to migrate across the wild new land in search of the homes for their respective clans. The clans were to migrate across the land to learn its ways, although some grew weak and stopped in the warm climates or rich lands along the way. The Hopi trekked and far and wide, and went through the cold and icy country to the north before finally settling in the arid lands between the Colorado River and Rio Grande River. They chose that place so that the hardship of their life would always remind them of their dependence on, and link to, their Creator.

SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 16: LEADER RESOURCE 1: BREATH MEDITATION

Read at a measured pace, pausing between sentences.

With your eyes closed, relax your body, starting at your head.

Relax your face muscles, and then your neck, letting balance keep your head upright, rather than tension in your neck. Pull your shoulders up to your ears, and then let them drop, feeling all tension drop away.

Relax your belly, your hips, your legs, your feet, letting each part of your body become still. Now bring your attention to your skin, one of the places that our bodies interact with air. We forget that at every moment air is touching our skin. Can you feel the air on your face? Your arms? Is it warm or cool?

Now turn your attention to your breath, the most important way that our bodies interact with air. For a moment, just pay attention to the rhythm of your breath entering and leaving your body. Through the air we touch everything around us. We breathe in oxygen. We breathe out carbon dioxide. The plants nurture us with oxygen. We nurture the plants with carbon dioxide.

Through the air we are connected. The air molecules in this room have been around the world many times, have passed through the lungs of sports heroes and war heroes, presidents and queens, Jesus and Mohammed and Buddha. Breathe in, and breathe in good will toward all beings. Breathe out, and breathe out forgiveness.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Offer thanks for the air, and open your eyes.

**SING TO THE POWER: SESSION 16:
LEADER RESOURCE 2: "POWER TO MAKE CHANGE" CIRCLE**



FIND OUT MORE

The original text of the Hopi story "The Four Creations" is located [here](http://www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSFourCreations.html) (at www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSFourCreations.html).

The book [Circle Round](http://www.amazon.com/Circle-Round-Raising-Children-Traditions/dp/0553378058) (at www.amazon.com/Circle-Round-Raising-Children-Traditions/dp/0553378058) by Starhawk, Diane Baker, and Anne Hill is an excellent resource for leading earth-based ritual with children.