



STUDY GUIDE:

WORSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION

A UU Institute Training

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General Planning Notes:

This Study Guide is for the UU Institute Training [Worship for Transformation](#).

Facilitators are encouraged to review the workbook to get an understanding of the arc of learning.

Depending on your congregational culture, you may want to:

- view the video presentations together, then use the workbook discussion/activity guidelines
- view the video presentations on your own, then meet and use the workbook discussion/activity guidelines

Option 1: Schedule Individual Sessions

This option has your worship team doing a session at a time, grouping each part's four sessions into a "semester" of bi-weekly or monthly gatherings.

(These could happen on Zoom or other video conferencing service.)

Option 2: Schedule Three Half-Day Workshops

This option enables you to divide the course's video sessions into three parts.

Each of these thirds—viewing four sessions, completing their activities and prompts, and discussing the sessions as a group—will take between 3 and 4 hours.

- Part 1: Sessions 1-4 focus on relational dynamics as a container for worship
- Part 2: Sessions 5-8 explore how a text can be transformed into creative content
- Part 3: Sessions 9-12 present important dynamics that affect how worship leaders' decisions extend far beyond an hour on Sunday morning



Option 3: Weekend Retreat

This course can be used by worship teams over the course of a (full) weekend. If you choose this option, we recommend the following schedule and processes—as well as ample breaks so that people can approach each unit with clear minds:

Prework

Session 1: An Invitation to Learn Together

Friday Evening

Session 2: Meaning Making

Session 3: Worship as Relationship

Saturday

Review

Prepare for caucus groups

Session 4: Decolonizing Worship using caucus groups.

Break

Session 5: Shaping “The Worthy”

Lunch

Session 6: Sensory-Rich Worship

Session 7: Building Blocks

Session 8: Liturgy as “Creative Interchange”

Homework

From Session 8: “Minding the Rest” Video and Worksheet

Sunday Afternoon

Spend 30 minutes reviewing what you found helpful about Sessions 5, 6, 7, and 8. Use another 15-30 minutes to review your worksheets for “Minding the Rest” (your homework).

View Sessions 9, 10, and 11:

Ritual and Embodiment

Bridges of Relationship

The Tangled Blessing

For each session, complete the activities and prompts before going to the next Session. When your group has completed their discussion of Sessions 9, 10, and 11, close by viewing Session 12 (Returning to the Service of Life), completing its prompts to create action plans.

PART I: BUILDING A RELATIONAL FOUNDATION

Session 1: An Invitation to Learn Together

(21 minute video presentation)

In which Erika presents a road map for your “Worship for Transformation” journey so you know what to expect (and can’t complain that you didn’t know what’s coming).

Snapshot

This session includes a preview of some of the ideas and concepts you’ll encounter throughout the course, and an introduction to the Worship for Transformation teaching collective (all fifteen of them!). As a learning community, you’ll also have your first encounter with some of the participatory reflection exercises that appear throughout the twelve sessions.

Opening

Watch “An Invitation to Learn Together,” including the second video montage of the teaching collective introductions.

Observations

Pause to write down (or discuss in a group) your observations from what you’ve watched:

- What inspired you?
- What excited you?
- What, if anything, confused you?

Takeaways and Wonderings

At the end of the session, make notes—for yourself, or shared with team members—about one or more takeaways from this introductory session. Then cultivate curiosity and make another set of notes about things you’re wondering about.

1. What are you taking away from this session? It could be an “aha” or something you’d never thought of before.
2. What are you wondering? What do you hope to learn more about?

Session 2: Meaning Making

(28 minute video presentation)

In which we remind you that no stack of books can help you craft worship that's embodied and engaging—because information doesn't equip us to be spiritual stewards.

Snapshot

If the point of worship isn't to convey information, what *is* its purpose? In addition to offering some answers to that question, our first full session explores how worship craft might begin by identifying a “text,” which we then shape into meaningful, worthy material.

Opening words

Watch the video of opening words.

Warm-up Activity: Who's in the room?

It's Sunday morning. Who is in the room, and what are they bringing with them? Spend five minutes creating an imaginary person who's coming to worship on Sunday. Use your imagination to give them a name and specific qualities.

Using index cards for notes, or a sheet of newsprint in a group, or even using a sketchbook and art materials, create and develop your imaginary guest as you answer the following questions:

Why are they coming to church?

Are they bringing anyone with them?

What are that person's needs and hopes? Are they grieving? Celebrating? What are they longing for?

If you're doing this session with a group, share your “imaginary worshippers” with one another. Notice the breadth and diversity of the people you've conjured.

Keep those imaginary people close as we move forward: their needs, their hopes, their longings.

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika's conversation with Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd about “meaning-making in the context of community.”

Observations

Take a moment to write down, or talk about, anything you're noticing.

What surprised you or intrigued you?

What's new to you?

What's confusing?

Try to stay with your “noticings” instead of being attached to answers as this session continues.



Teaching Segment 2

Watch Nancy and Erika continue their conversation, which centers around their riffing on a spontaneous concrete example of how an otherwise informational topic can provide angles, metaphors, “resonant purpose,” and Big Questions that allow us to explore our own lives and faith journeys.

Reflection Exercise

“I don’t start with what I want to say; I let the text take me where it wants to take me.” Rev. Nancy’s statement invites us to think about “text” in relational ways.

Use your personal journal, group conversation, or reflection time to brainstorm examples that could serve as a “text” in worship from which to extract meaning. (If you’re tempted or distracted by *how* to make meaning from that text, know that we’ll get there in later sessions.)

Takeaways and Wonderings

Name at least one thing that you’ll be thinking or talking about after the session ends.

Write down or talk about anything you’re wondering about. Did anything make you go “Hmmmm”?



Session 3: Worship as Relationship

(31 minute video presentation)

In which we use the word "relational" dozens of times (and remind you that this is a worship course, not a drinking game).

Snapshot

Worship leaders foster connection—with one another, with the congregation, and with the Holy. Relationship is also at the heart of creating worship. As one of our instructors suggests, it could even be considered a spiritual practice! But it requires a commitment to make room, and to create time for one another, as stewards of a congregation's worship life.

Opening Words

Watch the video of opening words.

Warm-up Activity

Worship teams model communication, collaboration, and other forms of right relationship for the rest of the congregation, inviting others to cultivate those qualities.

To help clarify how team relationships are strengthened, think about a team of people or partnership you admire (interpret those terms as you like).

What qualities contribute to the strength of that partnership or team?

How could those qualities be applied to your worship team?

What interferes with smooth teamwork?

What expectations or wishes do you have for your worship team?

Journal by yourself, or talk together, about your observations.

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika's conversation with Rev. Dayna Edwards, Rev. Katie Romano Griffin, and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi. If something from their setting doesn't apply to you, try to focus on their relational process and how they describe it.

Observations

What did you notice? For example, what does it mean for Revs. Abhi, Dayna, and Katie to "make room" for worship planning as a spiritual practice?

Make a note of your observations from the session so far. You can write down or talk about things that have grabbed your attention, or leave you with questions.



Worship Leaders' Responsibilities

Whether you already think of yourself as a worship “leader” or not, Erika describes some of our primary responsibilities, as worship leaders—or spiritual stewards.

Write down words or phrases that resonate with you, leave you wanting to know more, or elicit your craving for group conversation.

- We brainstorm, plan, and create content for worship that’s meaningful and inspiring.
- We convey our message creatively, clearly, and responsibly
- We hold the worship space responsibly so that people can go deep with trust in us
- We practice spiritual stewardship by putting the needs of The Whole ahead of our individual preferences.
- We set tone, and hold the space, by planning together as a team
- We cultivate a culture of trust in one another and in the process of our collaboration
- We don’t try to get the congregation to *do* things or to *feel* things. We invite people to engage with what we’ve prepared—without coercing them.

Teaching Segment 2

Watch Erika’s conversation with Rev. Gretchen Haley and Eleanor VanDeusen about the core qualities of their congregation—Foothills UU in Ft. Collins, CO—that allow their staff team to take faithful, creative risks. What’s the intentional invitation they offer?

Takeaways and Wonderings

What did you notice about these worship teams and their relationships with one another? Be specific about what you witnessed.

What qualities and practices would you like to cultivate into your worship team, or into the larger congregation?

Does your team have a covenant—and if so, is it serving you, or do you feel inspired to create a new covenant that includes greater vulnerability and a broader vision?

What else are you still wondering?

Session 4: Decolonizing Worship

(50 minute video presentation)

In which those with privilege might get uncomfortable (and that's okay)

Snapshot

This session is an exploration of the privilege and responsibility entailed in disrupting the norms of white supremacy culture—both in and out of worship. (Note our assumption that participants have already begun to understand the urgent, core-of-our-faith work of wrestling with white supremacy culture.) Our teaching collective addresses worship in general, and also specifically begins to address music and the ways we choose and lead music in worship.

Opening Words

Watch the video of opening words.

Observations

The opening words may have provoked thoughts or feelings, which you're welcome to note in individual notes.

If you're reviewing this session as a team, and since the intention and impact of our language don't always align, you're urged to process and discuss your observations for this session in caucus groups: discussion groups separated by racial identity.

To learn more about caucusing in race-based reflection groups, see this [activity from the UUA curriculum Building the World We Dream About](#).

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika's conversation with Julica Hermann de la Fuente and JeKaren Olaoya about what they wish worship leaders understood about weaving our anti-racism values into worship, and into our relationships with one another.

Reflection Exercise

If you wish, take a moment to journal or talk in caucus groups about the previous segment and the paradox presented therein: in this work, we who are white need to do our own work, *and* we who are white are called to cultivate relationships of accountability (and sometimes compensation!) with Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.

Teaching Segment 2

Watch Erika's conversation with Rev. Marisol Caballero about her experience of sometimes feeling like an "afterthought" in worship because of how worship leaders use the word "we."

Reflection Exercise

The previous segment included conversation about what "we" can mean. Reflect on an example of a time when "we" reflected a fully welcoming, diverse, liberated Unitarian Universalism. If you can, also think of an example of how a "we" statement could exclude people whose identity (or identities) differs from that of the speaker.

Teaching Segment 3

Watch Erika's conversation with Eric Lane Barnes and Francisco Ruiz about how they approach the selection of music, advocacy for staff members, and how those decisions impact the members of their congregations. Notice the ways that they continually invoke the relational aspect of their professional roles.

Takeaways and Wonderings

Having witnessed all three of these teaching segments, make a note of at least two things that you'll take away from this session.

Also take note of questions that have been raised. What are you still curious about?

Create a plan to seek out new wisdom, or help learning, for at least one of those questions.

Bonus Playful Experiment: Media Audit

For those who are willing, your in-depth homework assignment consists of two parts. You can do this privately, without sharing the results with your team.

First, review the media you've consumed over the past few weeks (books, movies, TV shows, podcasts, YouTube channels, etc.). Try to generate a thorough list of most of what you've actively sought out, as well as the media that you consumed passively. This list could include music you've heard in worship, but is intended to reflect your personal life.

After you've generated that list of media, conduct an "identity audit" for each item: for each author, TV star, podcast host, and the like, list the identities that are apparent or named.

With compassion and curiosity, notice how those identities align with your own. For example, if you're white, are most of the actors and authors and musicians that you enjoyed also white? Do you tend to choose books or movies "in your lane," or is there an opportunity to expand your "menu" of media?

PART 2: FILLING THE VESSEL

Session 5: Shaping “The Worthy” (33 minute video presentation)

*In which we tune our antennae towards the question, “What shimmers?”
(...and then blast off)*

Snapshot

Using a number of concrete examples, we explore the related processes of recognizing sparks and seeds for our creative process—how we find a “text” to relate to—and how we then pass that text through generative questions to *make meaning* as worship leaders.

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika’s conversation with Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd.

Reflection Exercise:

Following the first teaching segment, take some notes—or share discussion in your group—about “what shimmered” for you in that conversation. Did it shift the way you think about how ideas arise, or how inspiration finds us?

Teaching Segment 2

Watch Erika’s proposal of generative questions, any of which (alone or layered together) can help worship leaders shape a text—a shimmering nugget of an inspiring idea—into material for worship.

(Note: for these questions to make sense, you might need to have a “text” in mind)

- Does your text engage one or more of the Big Questions that we humans wrestle with? (If so, which ones?)
- What does your text have to do with relationships (your personal relationships, or relationships in general)?
- Does your text inform the way we engage (or connect with) That Which Is Larger Than Us?
- Does your text have any connection to our Unitarian, Universalist, or UU tradition?
- What UU values are present in your text? Or could be deepened by your text?
- How does your text embody hope?
- Does your text contain an invitation for transformation?
- How does your text invite people to engage in new or different ways with others, with the world around them, and/or with Mystery?



Activity: Playful Experiment

Choose one generative question and apply to it a “text” that you’ve identified. (You could do this alone or with a teammate.) Give yourself time, compassion, and a spirit of playfulness. You might have to begin with your text and see which of the generative questions are more relevant before you apply it to your text.

(If you’re stuck, use the “text” for one of Rev. Nancy’s favorite services: her “*Oh!*” occurred when she realized that flotsam is *carried* away by the ocean, while jetsam is *cast* away. Which of the Generative Questions come alive when held up to that text?)

Teaching Segment 3

Get ready to blast off! Erika will guide you through a concrete example of how we can brainstorm our way into exciting material for worship. She’ll filter a goosebumpy, “I love this stuff” video—which, on the surface, has nothing to do with UU worship – through this session’s generative questions, resulting in meaningful content for a worship service for all ages.

Session 6: Sensory-Rich Worship

(27 minute video presentation)

In which your UU leaders eat in the break room while our wonderful guest does all the work

Snapshot

The neurobiology of worship? Yes! Our guest instructor helps us understand how our brains are wired to take in the world and make meaning from it. Given the many different ways to bring the worship message alive, Dr. Marcia McFee provides a crucial tool—the use of an anchor image—to create worship that’s sensory-rich, and that extends radical hospitality for different needs and learning styles.

Instructor:

Dr. Marcia McFee

Reflective Question:

Share a conversation, or make notes for yourself, around the two questions posed by Dr. McFee:

- When it comes to “getting the message” in worship, where do you locate yourself on the list of multiple intelligences? (It might be more than one or two!)
- In the worship services you lead and/or attend, which categories get a lot of attention and effort? Which categories don’t get a lot of attention? What does that mean about opportunities to be more inclusive?

“Metaphorizing” Exercise:

Find an ordinary object near you and share with your group how that object could be a sign of hope for your community, or your world.

Anchor Images Exercise:

Before you leave this session, or as homework, brainstorm some anchor images for any of the monthly themes that appear on screen, or that you find [on the WorshipWeb calendar](#). Be playful! And find ways to go beyond the literal to the symbolic: anchor images that could be engaged through the Verbal, the Visual, and the Visceral over the course of a month.



Session 7: Building Blocks

(34 minute video presentation)

In which we talk about worship teams, and then dive into de-chonka-fying worship

Snapshot

As worship leaders, we are ourselves “building blocks” of a collaborative team. The first half of this session covers important expectations and practices for worship teams with regard to responsibilities and accountability. The second half of this session explores the arc of worship as a flexible, dynamic whole rather than a string of obligatory modular segments (“chonka-chonka-chonka”).

Opening Words

Watch the video of opening words, making a note of anything that especially intrigues or excites you.

JeKaren Olaoya
Starr Austin
Rev. Jude Geiger
Julica Hermann de la Fuente
Francisco Ruiz

Teaching Segment 1

This segment is for worship teams who want to strengthen their collaboration and practices. Erika surveyed a large number of parish ministers to present a number of patterns and practices that could enhance your relationships and your team dynamics.

Erika concludes her teaching segment with opportunities for transformation, including the creation of a worship team’s purpose or mission statement (see example).

Observations

Thinking about the practices and processes—or “opportunities for transformation”—that Erika suggested, are any of them already part of your team’s work? If not, do any of them feel interesting to try? Which of these opportunities, if any, feel uncomfortable to implement? If you’re not viewing this course as a group, how might you propose changing or supplementing your upcoming meetings to include some of these practices?

Teaching Segment 2

Collective Exercise: Relational Purpose:

Choose one element of a typical worship service. Practice introducing it—spontaneously, imperfectly—by naming its relational purpose. That is, replace the phrase “Now is the time when we...” with a statement about *why* a particular piece of worship is practiced.

Teaching Segment 3

Watch Erika's conversation with Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout.

Reflective Exercise:

What did you notice about the teaching segment with Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout? What will you want to talk about with your worship team, or try out on your own?

“Holiness Everywhere” Group Exercise:

Either during your viewing session or before you launch into Session 8, please have your worship team support one another in taking creative risks in a “holiness everywhere” activity that will be explained more in Session 8.

Choose one element of worship; a random theme; and a physical object that's in the room with you. (You can choose these yourself—or for an additional challenge, your team can assign them to you.) Weave those three things together into an introduction of that worship element.

For example: lead the (1) chalice lighting for a service about (2) beauty by referring to (3) a seashell.

You're not trying to stump one another: be gentle and encouraging with one another. Decide whether each person will choose their three items, or whether you want to assign (simple!) items to one another. Have fun, allowing imperfections!

Participant Resource:

Sample Worship Committee Purpose/Mission Statement

This statement is referred to by Erika in the first teaching segment.

We understand the power of worship, and strive to cultivate that experience for all. We believe that when we come together in worship, we create and experience a unique energy and connection.

As Worship Associates, we hold the space for listening to the wisdom that arrives in the form of stories, perspectives, music, and sharing. We intend for people to receive that wisdom, reflect on how it relates to them, and risk discomfort that might challenge us all to grow.

We also invite hearts to quiet, and to experience all the emotions that are part of spiritual growth and fulfillment. Through our collaboration and trust, we are committed to our shared ministry, and to supporting one another.

Session 8: Liturgy as “Creative Interchange”

(36 minute video presentation)

In which we replace our need for control and certainty with practices of flexibility, attention to the flow of energy, and a willingness to be changed.

Snapshot

After unpacking the “holiness everywhere” exercise from the end of Session 7, we continue to learn from Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout—and other members of the teaching collective—about all of the forms that “creative interchange” can take. This session invites participants beyond the words we select for worship, by thinking about energy, tone, and transitions.

“Holiness Everywhere” Explained:

View Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout’s description of why he developed the “Holiness Everywhere” exercise, how it helps teams commit to themes for worship, and the faith statement it embodies.

Reflection

Reflect on the activity assigned at the end of Session 7. Does the faith statement behind the activity (from Session 7) change the way you think about that activity? How is our UU theology made manifest in the exercise?

Opening Words

Watch the video of opening words.

Julica Hermann de la Fuente

Rev. Gretchen Haley

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd

Eric Lane Barnes

Francisco Ruiz

Takeaways and Wonderings

During or after the opening montage, jot down things that you’re noticing: what do you want to weave into your role as a worship leader? What do you want to learn or talk about more?

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika’s video connecting Henry Nelson Wieman’s concept of *creative interchange* with the act of creating and leading worship.

Teaching Segment 2

Watch Erika’s conversation with Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout about the worship service that he led in July 2022 for the Association of UU Music Ministries (AUUMM) gathering—and the act of inviting worshippers to “discover” themselves in worship.

(You will get to watch and reflect on a recording of this video as homework.)

Activity: Playful Experiment

Build a worship sequence of three pieces—one of which should be a piece of music—with the intention of shifting the tone/energy/vibe as the three elements progress.

This could be an opening song, a welcome, and a chalice lighting. Or, an invitation to silent meditation, a prayer, and a hymn.

Make specific choices for this experiment. For example, if you include music, what song or hymn is it? What would the “feel” and pace be? What kind of energy do you want to create or invite?

Also plan your transitions between Element 1 and Element 2, and again between Element 2 and Element 3. (Avoid “now is the time when we....”). How will you move from Element 1 into Element 2? Will you do it with words, with silence, with movement?

Homework

Note: this homework assignment could take up to 45 minutes to complete. But it's also very enjoyable!

Using the provided worksheet, review the provided worship service led by Dr. Rideout. What do you notice about the energy or tone of each element? What do you notice about the transitions from one element to the next?

Remember that the point of this exercise is not to “be like Glen Thomas,” but rather to observe how a worship leader’s energy and intention can create strong, graceful transitions in worship.

PART 3: DYNAMICS & DIMENSIONS

Session 9: Ritual and Embodiment

(38 minute video presentation)

In which we center our bodies as tools for spiritual depth

Snapshot

What if worship were an experience for our bodies—all different kinds of bodies—and not just our minds? This session explores the opportunities to transform worship as a participatory experience for our many senses—not merely the logistics of centering ritual and embodiment in worship, but the depth of connection and spirituality that embodiment provides.

Opening words

Watch the video of opening words.

Julica Hermann de la Fuente

Rev. Dayna Edwards

Introduction

As Erika explores the notion of “embodiment,” you might reflect on whether your notes from Session 8’s homework – the worship service led by Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout – contain any references to how he and others in the worship space used their bodies. Was anything surprising? Inspiring? Confusing?

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika’s conversation with Francisco Ruiz. What do you notice about how he connects the “natural drum in us” and the different comfort levels for movement that people bring to worship?

Observations

Pause, if you’d like, to make note of your “aha” moments or wonderings.



Teaching Segment 2

Watch Erika's conversation with Rev. Gretchen Haley and Eleanor VanDeusen. Some of this conversation is presented without much context, so try to attend to the themes of ritual and embodiment.

You'll also hear Eleanor and Gretchen refer to the book *My Grandmother's Hands*, in which Resmaa Menakem examines the damage caused by racism in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology, and presents somatic practices that heal our damaged nervous systems.

What do Eleanor and Gretchen suggest about leaving the "sermon sandwich" behind and "building a new culture" in worship – with ritual, for example – and how that disrupts white supremacy culture?

Observations

If you need to, pause to jot down your observations, wonderings, or ideas you'd like to discuss with your team.

Teaching Segment 3

Listen to Rev. Jude Geiger and Starr Austin situate ritual and embodiment within the container of worship for all ages. How did ritual create bridges of communication between parents and children? How did it contribute to leadership development in children? What do you understand about embodiment's role in strengthening UU identity?

Closing Exercise

No homework, no "work"! But take an inventory of what you appreciate about your participation in this course. List whatever you're grateful for: the people taking the course with you, the teaching collective and their wisdom, etc.

Session 10: Bridges of Relationship

(28 minute video presentation)

In which you might rethink everything you thought you understood about multigenerational worship

Snapshot

What does it mean to put the needs of families at the center of worship? How can worship help build relationships across the generations? This session will invite you to think about “accessibility” in new ways, and how the connections formed in worship can make the difference in retaining our UU children and giving them a strong religious identity.

Opening words

Watch the video of opening words.

Starr Austin
Rev. Jude Geiger
Rev. Gretchen Haley
Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika’s conversation with Rev. Jude Geiger and Starr Austin about how they gauge whether and how worship for all ages is “successful” or effective.

Observations

What do you think about the “theological message” that Jude names? How do you feel about the expectations that Starr voiced? Write down, or talk over as a group, anything that struck you as thought-provoking or important.

Teaching Segment 2

Watch Erika’s conversation with Rev. Gretchen Haley and Eleanor VanDeusen about how their congregation’s mission and culture support a move away from the “time for all ages” model of worship. How do they integrate people of all ages into worship using embodied experiences? As Eleanor described one of their services, what thoughts or questions arise for you?

Optional Discussion

Consider the capacity in your congregation to make changes in your culture that would allow the Whole to embrace the needs of families and children. Is it possible that those needs are currently siloed as “other”? Where is there potential for building new connections across the life of your congregation?

Session 11: The Tangled Blessing

(42 minute video presentation)

In which we dive into the crafty, connective power (and responsibility) of worship leaders

Snapshot

As stewards of a congregation's trust, worship leaders wield a sacred power. This session explores the many responsibilities conferred by that power—including how it shapes our intentions, informs our choices, and even demands boundaries.

Opening words

Watch the brief video of opening words

Teaching Segment 1

Watch Erika's conversation with Julica Hermann de la Fuente and JeKaren Olaoya.

Observations

What did you take away from that conversation? What do you wish you could talk more about with your worship team? How do you feel about the intersection of responsibility and trust?

For those struggling with the notion of saying “no”—to potential speakers, or in response to harm that occurs in worship—Erika revisits Session 2's “Who's in the Room?” exercise.

Teaching Segment 2

Watch Erika's continued conversation with Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout.

Observations

If you need to, pause for note-taking or discussion about what you've witnessed thus far.

Teaching Segment 3

Watch Erika's conversation with Rev. Gretchen Haley & Eleanor VanDeusen. How do they (and other leaders at Foothills Church) create a culture of worship that offers comfort and safety? What other responsibilities do they name in the “emotional journey” that is worship?

Takeaways and Wonderings

What will you take away from this session? What are you still wondering about?

Session 12: Returning to the Service of Life

(19 minute video presentation)

In which we orient you to what's next, and reveal a li'l treat for you

Snapshot

In our farewell session, Rev. Erika Hewitt helps you integrate your learning into action plans.

Three Sets of Questions

For each set of questions that Erika presents, pause for discussion or journaling about how you might move forward with your worship team.

1. When you assess the needs of your worship team, what do you need (as a team)? How can you keep deepening your relationships of trust and teamwork? Have you already created a mission or purpose statement (Session 7)? Do you need to revisit or rewrite your team's covenant? Are you satisfied with your regular meeting agenda or format?

Create an action plan to attend to the needs that you've identified.

2. When you think about everything you've learned in this course, where do you feel the most energy? This might be a sensation in your body, or a sense of aliveness. Use that energy to fuel your service, and communicate with your team members about their own sense of aliveness. Where do those areas overlap?

Again, create an action plan to move towards.

3. We lead worship for the benefit of others. What does your congregation need from its worship life in the coming season or year? What's possible, given the intersection of your congregation's needs and your gifts?

As an action plan, put yourselves in the seats to imagine how the congregation could be served most effectively by the services you create in the coming year.

Reflection

Do you feel good about your action plans? Did Erika's "insider" wisdom make sense to you, or resonate with you? Have you noticed the "secret signal" that she describes?

Erika's Offers

If you were to write some appreciation or affirmation of someone in our teaching collective (and send it to worship@UUA.org), who would it be?

If you were to write to Erika with three "aha" experiences or takeaways or learnings—from the entire course—to receive your treat, what would you list?

MUCH GRATITUDE TO OUR INSTRUCTORS

Starr Austin

[Eric Lane Barnes](#)

[Rev. Marisol Caballero](#)

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