

Exploring Intimacy/ Belonging and Ultimacy/ Transcendence: a faith formation reframe

by Rev. Tandi Rogers

This group exercise bakes many loaves in one oven. It gets people talking about things that deeply matter. And it serves as a sort of audit, an exploration of the powerful places that faith formation lives in our lives. Once we see how it naturally occurs, we can leverage it and be more intentional.

Supplies & set up:

If you are doing this exercise in person, jump ahead and create a grid on the wall with painters (blue) tape. Pass out sticky notes. If you are doing this exercise virtually you can recreate the grid in a Google Doc or similar application.

Script:

This exercise was designed by religious educator Tandi Rogers for her class *Faith Formation in a Changing World*. It is a way to help us truly understand the quote “everything we do is faith formation” from the lens of our own lives, with the invitation to then boldly plan accordingly.

Reflect through journaling, doodling or daydreaming about the following:

- When did you first feel like you belonged to your religious community or religious tradition (whichever is juicy)?
- How old were you?
- How did that happen?
- How did you know?

<pause>

Choose a title for this experience and write about it on a sticky note, either actual or virtual.

<pause>

Reflect through journaling, doodling or daydreaming about the following:

- When in your life have you experienced transcendence, the knowing that you are one with something bigger than yourself.
- How did that happen?
- How old were you?
- Where were you?
- Who was with you?

<pause>

Choose a title for this experience and write about it on a sticky note, either actual or virtual.

<pause>

Notice how that feels in your body. Do you notice anything different than before you reflected on these two examples of intimacy and ultimacy, of belonging and transcendence? Just notice. How often do we talk about such things, and share with each other in our congregations? Why do you suppose that is? Get curious.

Pair Share

Introduce yourself and then share your experiences of intimacy/belonging and ultimacy/transcendence. Tell each other about how old you were, where it happened, who was involved, how it affected you... Enjoy!

In the Group & on the Grid

Earlier you wrote on two sticky notes. Now add those sticky notes to a grid like this. Not every sticky note will fit perfectly into one box. That's okay. Which one does it fit best into at this moment of your thinking? You can always move it later if you want to.

	Intimacy / Belonging	Ultimacy / Transcendence	How did you learn to be UU?
Sunday school classroom			
Worship			
Leadership			
Service / volunteering			
Family			
Friends			
Nature			
Work			
Camp			
Other!			

Learning to be UU

There is a third column in the grid. (You can do this as part of this exercise or another time.) For this column think of a way, of many ways, you learned to be Unitarian Universalist.

- How did this happen?
- How old were you?
- Where were you?
- Who was with you?

Choose a title for this experience and write about it on a sticky note, either actual or virtual. And then add it to the framework.

Share in Triads

Introduce yourself and then share your experience of learning to be UU.

Group Processing

Looking at the grid with all our sticky notes added what do you notice?

More group reflection questions:

- What does this tell us about where powerful faith formation lives?
- What does it tell us about how we are currently approaching faith formation?
- What is powerful about what we are currently doing?
- What does this current context (these times) ask of us as individual and as a religious community?
- What else might we consider trying as faith formation?
- What changes to how we “do congregation” will this require?
- Whose expectations will need to change? How?
- In order to experiment with these changes what will we need to learn? To let go of?
- What will we center by trying something new?
- What will success that matters look like?

Closing prayer:

May we give ourselves permission to experiment and be messy.

May we be brave and intentional in that messiness to stretch into new and liberating ways of being and becoming.

And in this deepening, may we bring honor to those who came before.

May we be loving and nourishing to those with us on this journey.

And may we make the way brighter and more joyful for those yet to come.