



Journeys of Deeper Joy

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About This Curriculum

Welcome Lorekeepers, or as they say in your distant land, “teachers” or “facilitators.”

This PDF contains all of the information you will need to facilitate your group through the “Journeys of Deeper Joy” Curriculum.

This is a curriculum designed around “Table-Top Roleplaying Games.” Roleplaying games offer us a special opportunity for learning. In being able to play as a different character, we can explore actions, ideas, group dynamics, and roles that we might not consider in regular life.

In combining roleplaying with the community building focus of [Deeper Joy](#), this curriculum seeks to offer to our young people and our whole congregational communities an opportunity to creatively develop a sense of community.

If you are nervous about leading a roleplaying game, I hope you are able to nudge out of your comfort zone. In this facilitation guide you will learn how to operate this roleplaying system, and how our lessons (also known as Journeys) work.

-Ember Oak Kelley (any pronouns), Youth and Emerging Adult Ministry Staff



Facilitator Guide for Journeys of Deeper Joy

Journeys of Deeper Joy is a table top roleplaying game (RPG). If you've never engaged with a tabletop roleplaying game, they are a type of imaginative storytelling game where participants create characters to interact with an imagined world. In these games everyone helps make the story together.

A facilitator (in our case they are called Lorekeepers) describes the world and challenges, and participants decide how their characters act. Dice and rules are used to add structure, surprise, and chance. For Journeys of Deeper Joy, the goal isn't to "win" or "defeat a boss" but to collaborate, explore, and have fun telling a story as a group.

As the Lorekeeper, you hold the threads of the story. You are weaving them together so the group can journey through the land of Covenantia (which can be pronounced "kuh-vuh-NAN-chee-uh"). The Lorekeeper:

- **Sets the scene:** Describes the world, locations, and challenges.
- **Offers prompts:** Asks questions like, "What does your character notice here?" or "How do you respond?"
- **Plays the world:** Voices the non-player characters (NPCs), creatures, or even the Beloved Community Airship itself.
- **Guides the gameplay:** Helps the group use the dice system, discerning Grounded and Flow actions.
- **Holds the space:** Makes sure everyone has a chance to play and keeps the space safe, inclusive, and welcoming.

The Lorekeeper is not a judge or opponent for our participants. Instead they are a companion, inviting participants to build a shared story (and community).

Journeys of Deeper Joy is a modular and flexible curriculum. While there is an overarching narrative, we understand that attendance may vary from session to session, and designed each session to be able to make sense as an individual journey. We have built in systems to help support participants who are not attending every week, ranging from story review sessions to the Airship itself. We have also designed the curriculum to be adaptable for online play as well and offer ideas on alternates for online activities. You'll find prompts for special online

considerations throughout the journeys and advice about how to run the curriculum throughout this Facilitator Guide. We also have created a special appendix for considering how to use the curriculum in alternate settings, like shorter classroom sessions, or a shorter amount of weeks as well as a more rule and dice intensive ruleset for facilitators and groups that want more play complexity.

We also invite you to see the curriculum as flexible for experimentation. You are welcome to be creative in following the story concepts presented as well as to use the roleplaying system for your own imaginative ideas. The presented structure is to provide a starting point.

Besides this modular and adaptable focus, this curriculum is built on some key beliefs:

- **Play as Spiritual Practice:** Play is how we learn to be human with one another.
- **Shared Storytelling:** Everyone's voice matters. The story is co-created, not controlled.
- **Inclusion & Accessibility:** Every participant belongs. Differences are celebrated as strengths, and the game adapts to the needs of the group.
- **Whole Church:** While designed with Youth and Emerging Adults in mind, the curriculum is envisioned as multigenerational because belonging is a thing all ages crave, and play is for all ages.
- **Grounded & Flow:** Life requires both logic and intuition, both planning and improvisation. The dice system reflects how our varied gifts balance and support one another.
- **Living Document:** The curriculum is flexible, evolving as groups use it. Adaptation is part of the design.
- **Community Building:** The goal isn't to "win" but to practice covenant, trust, and care, skills that extend beyond the game into real life. A cohesive and compassionate community is grown over time, not created overnight. Community building can help us build capacity for shared cooperative leadership.
- **Deeper Joy:** Joy is found in connection, authenticity, resilience, and wonder.

In our facilitator guide, you'll find information on:

- Core dynamics and character design
- Rolling the dice

- Lesson structure
- Supplies needed
- Additional resources and advice for Lorekeepers, including a Quick Start Guide (great for printing), and a team building exercise to run with those who will be facilitating.

We would love to hear what you think about the curriculum! [Please use this form](#) to share your feedback with us. We will be using this link for feedback during Winter 2025 and Spring 2026.

Get to Know Us! (Core Dynamics & Character Creation)

Note that this section is written in the voice of Teapot, one of our “Non-Player Characters” (NPCs). This is done to encourage you to get into the practice of interacting with these characters like you will in the curriculum itself. It also gives you an additional resource if you would like to use any parts of this for a script when facilitating your group.

Journeyers and Lorekeepers, I want to introduce myself, and a few of my friends you will get to know on your journeys. In getting to know us, I hope we can better explain how our journeys will function.

On this page is an image of my Character Profile.


The first key element of a profile is **the Grounded-Flow Dynamic**

In our journey, our actions, personalities, and decisions will be evaluated on a spectrum.

On one end, there is **grounded**: things that involve lots of thinking, rational planning, contemplation, science, calm actions, or precise movement.


On the other end, there is **flow**: impulsiveness, intuition, charismatic appeal, wild and unexpected actions, guessing, or passion.

When you develop your character’s profile, you need to choose a number between 1 and 6. A 1 character is entirely flow, and a 6 character is entirely grounded. Well, I am a 3. I suspect it is



JOURNEYS OF DEEPER JOY

CHARACTER PROFILE




Grounded

Roll At or Below
Your Number

3

Flow

Roll At or Above
Your Number



Name: Teapot

Group Role: The Greeter

Style: Friendly to everyone

Motivation: They want to make sure everyone has a friend.




Special Item: Various unique tea mixtures




Description: Teapot (they/them) is a jovial young soul, and a member of the Kitchen species. They prioritize connecting and community.

due to all the water in my head that I tend towards the flow side of things. But I'm not entirely flow. I fall in the middle between flow and grounded. Every person expresses themselves in different ways and that is something we want to celebrate. It is good that we are different!

Once you begin your journeys, the Lorekeeper will be responsible in discerning whether an action you take counts as a flow or grounded action. We will talk more about that soon.

But for now, I have two really great friends that I'd like to introduce you to: Misty, an occasional student at the Beloved Community Collective, and Rockenroll, one of the Beloved Community Collective's distinguished professors. All three of us will be tagging along on your journeys. Misty and Rockenroll demonstrate the far ends of our Grounded-Flow Dynamic.

JOURNEYS OF DEEPER JOY CHARACTER PROFILE	
 Grounded Roll At or Below Your Number	 Flow Roll At or Above Your Number
	
<hr/> Name: Misty	
<hr/> Group Role: The Artsy One	
<hr/> Style: Occasionally Forgetful	
<hr/> Motivation: Wants to explore the world, looking for the most beautiful sunset.	
<hr/> Special Item: Can't carry any items	
<hr/> Description: Misty (she/her) is quite literally a living cloud of mist. Her family wanted her to stay in one place, but she's always wandering around.	

JOURNEYS OF DEEPER JOY CHARACTER PROFILE	
 Grounded Roll At or Below Your Number	 Flow Roll At or Above Your Number
	
<hr/> Name: Rockenroll	
<hr/> Group Role: The Professor	
<hr/> Style: Rock Solid	
<hr/> Motivation: Passing on eons of knowledge to learners.	
<hr/> Special Item: A pair of glasses	
<hr/> Description: Rockenroll (he/him) is a sentient rock who has lived for millennia and now teaches at the Beloved Community Collective.	

In the lower portion of the profiles, you will notice a variety of information.

The first thing to think about when creating your character is a **Name** for them. This goes just below your number on your character profile sheet. Although some folks do like to save deciding on their character's name until they've thought about other features of their character.

Character profiles are further elaborated by the Group Role, Style, Motivation, Special Item, and Description. These will also inform how your Lorekeeper decides to discern the results of their actions. It's part of our way of telling the story of our journeys together. So let's take a look at these pieces.

Group Role: I described myself as “The Greeter,” Misty described herself as “The Artsy One,” and Rockenroll described himself as “The Professor.” **The group role is the role you imagine your character inhabiting in the dynamic of your group of journeyers and while learning at the Beloved Community Collective.** It could be a specific job, but it can also be more of a way that you understand yourself.

Here are potential ideas to inspire you in thinking about your group role:

Engineer, inventor, new kid, collector, chaotic one, storyteller, healer, athlete, actor, nature lover, leader, shy one, supporter, caregiver, entertainer, extroverted one, planner, philosopher, protector, optimist, pessimist, or realist.

Style: For style, I described myself as “friendly to everyone,” Misty admitted that she is “occasionally forgetful,” and since Rockenroll always loves a good pun, he described himself as “rock solid.” **The style is something like your “first impression.” What is part of your personality, appearance, fashion sense, or sense of self that most people notice first.**

These might complement your role, but can also be unrelated to the role you will be filling in the group.

Here are some potential ideas to inspire character style descriptions:

Unique, fashionable, casual, friendly, energetic, talkative, quiet, intelligent, relaxed, active, chill, charming, confident, nervous, stubborn, bossy, sensitive, chic, glam, minimalist, maximalist, sporty, formal, artsy, warm, eclectic, or bold.

There are so many potential ways to describe your style and remember that you can be realistic about your characters strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes people judge Misty for being “occasionally forgetful,” but I personally love that she always has fresh ideas because she doesn't hold onto old ways! Parts of ourselves can be both beneficial and challenging at the same time!

Motivation: For my motivation, I said that I want to “make sure everyone has a friend;” Misty often tells me about how she is “exploring the world looking for a beautiful sunset;” and in shocking news for a professor of the Beloved Community Collective, Rockenroll is passionate about “passing on eons of knowledge.” (*I’ve asked him his exact age and he always insists it is beyond comprehension.*) **Motivation is the thing that makes your character want to wake up in the morning, or perhaps a specific goal they hope to reach. It can be as general or as specific as you’d like!**

Here are some potential ideas to inspire character motivations: To be the very best like no one ever was, to obtain them all, a family quest, training for a competition, travel, searching for a lost relic, teaching, finding your destiny, making friends, fame, independence, fighting injustice, wanting to invent something totally new, grow reputation, a sense of duty, or exploring identity.

Special Item: When you landed here, you were given a universal translator, which enables us to communicate with each other across languages and ways of communicating. You were also permitted one special item for your travels. A reminder that we do not carry weapons here in Covenantia. So what items do the three of us have?

I have a collection of special tea mixes. I am always looking to make new friends but specifically I am looking for another Teapot of the Kitchen species. The kitchen species is filled with many unique types. I grew up amongst friends who were Spatulas, Pans, Forks, and Spoons, and I even knew a Whisk! But I have never stumbled upon another Teapot. Once I do, I hope to share some of these tea mixes with them. They also come in handy for nourishment on long journeys!

Misty lacks the ability to carry any items. I have offered to her that I would carry items for her, but she is far too much of a flowing spirit to be tied down to belongings.

Rockenroll has a pair of eyeglasses that he wears. From what he has explained, he likes that they look very professorial.

You are welcome to think of any unique item that your character might carry! You never know what might be useful on our journeys!

An important thing to mention is that if your character has an item for accessibility (cane, wheelchair, glasses, support animal, etc...), those items do not count as your special item so you can have your accessibility item as well as a special item.

Here are some potential ideas to inspire your special item:

An umbrella, a backpack, a watch, a waterbottle, a guitar or any instrument, a potted plant, a sports item, a candle, a block of sticky notes, a paintbrush, a magnifying glass, a rubber band ball, a yoga mat, magnets, marbles, a photo album. You could also use a set of items (e.g. first aid kit, a juggling set).

Note that there is a [handout of accessibility and special items](#) for inspiration.

Description: Now that you've thought a lot about your character and what they do, it's time to think about a description for your character. What does your character look like? What are some of their physical features? Go ahead and write about that in the description section. You can include their preferred pronouns in this section, too.

Are they a unique species like Misty, Rockenroll, and myself? Describe that species! Do they have a specific history or family connection? Perhaps you want to draw a picture of your character on the blank back of the profile. This section is useful for both you and those you journey with to understand who exactly the characters are. Many find it best to save the description until the last place, but it is up to each of you how you write their character's profile.

In looking at the profiles above, we learn that Misty is a living cloud of mist, and Rockenroll is a sentient rock. Many things are possible in the world of Covenantia. The limit for your character is your own ideas and dreams! Of course, it is entirely fine to be a regular human too. But all three of us would encourage journeyers to have fun in developing the story of your journeyer.

So, now that we have explained how the characters of this world function, let's examine how our actions work.

Rolling the Dice: How Do Actions Work?

To play our role playing game, all we need is a six sided dice (that has some form of numbers or spots from 1 to 6 on it). It can be helpful to have multiple six sided dice to speed things up, or you could use a dice rolling website or app. It is also useful to consider using a tactile dice or large dice for accessibility. Dice rolling trays are useful as well. They can be fancy ones made for just that purpose or just a box or plastic container that keeps the dice from flying when it is rolled.

Our dice isn't just a random chance. It's a reminder that just like people, dice can roll many different ways. Sometimes our strengths line up perfectly with the challenge. Other times, we miss, stumble, or even surprise ourselves. The dice remind us that different gifts matter in community.

When one of our Journeymen (participants) performs a specific action, the Lorekeeper (facilitator) will ask them to roll a dice to find out the result of their action. It is up to the discretion of the Lorekeeper to decide if an action should be decided as grounded or flow, but it is important to let the journeyer know what they are aiming for a high or low number.

For a grounded action, you want to roll at or below your number. For a flow action you want to roll at or above your number. This means that Misty has a lot of luck with flow actions, and Rockenroll has a lot of luck with grounded actions. However they struggle completing actions that aren't their specific type. In fact, they only succeed at them by rolling their exact number! It's more ideal for your character's number to not be a 1 or 6.

Lorekeepers, do not pre-plan for a specific outcome. Be prepared for the possibilities of the dice roll. Let the dice roll what it rolls, and if an action fails, let it move the story along. Sometimes failed dice rolls make for more interesting twists and challenges in stories than successful ones.

At the discretion of the Lorekeeper, journeyers can roll two dice if you think they are uniquely qualified. And other journeyers can help out as a group action, but you have to explain how you are helping, and the help needs to make sense! You are allowed to have 3 dice being rolled for any given action.

What happens once the roll happens?

If there is no dice that successfully rolls, things actively become more challenging. For example: You meant to say something nice, but it comes across as really mean. However, we learn by failing, so perhaps new opportunities will present themselves.

If there is one dice succeeding, the action works, but occasionally it barely happens correctly.

As an example: Misty (Number 1, very flow) wants to interpret an abstract painting for the group. That is a Flow action. She rolls a 4, above her number, so she succeeds! Lorekeepers, you can also decide on varying degrees of success depending on how close/far the number is to the goal as well.

If two dice succeed, things go even better than you expected.

As an example, Rockenroll and another very grounded journeyer work to figure out a logic puzzle on a door and find a treasure chest inside.

If three dice succeed, the Lorekeeper grants you a special bonus positive effect of your action!

As an example, in the previous Rockenroll scenario, perhaps they are easily able to unlock the puzzles on the rest of the doors in the building without needing to roll for them. Here's how you might script that: "The puzzle makes so much sense to you that you know you will have no problem figuring out any of the other puzzle doors."

As a bonus: If you roll your exact number, it always counts as a success, AND you get to ask the Lorekeeper a question for special information about what is going on. Perhaps you ask about someone's feelings or who is behind a certain activity. Be creative with your question, since it's a chance to discover more about what's going on in the story!

Journeying (Lesson Plan Structure and Other Notes)

This section is particularly important for our Lorekeepers, but it can also give our journeyers an idea of what the average journey experience will be like. However, think of this journey flow as a guide rather than a rigid script. You are welcome to share the Facilitators Guide with journeyers if they request it, but we encourage you not to share the session plans themselves as that would spoil surprises in the experience for them.

The opening sessions establish expectations and give time for understanding how to role play together. Following those sessions, most of the Journeys in this curriculum structure will contain certain key information:

- **What is happening:** Something is going on in Covenantia or a task is given to the Beloved Community Collective.
- **Who:** Is there a specific person doing an action? Is there a group with which the characters will be doing something? What interaction focused dynamics might be in play?
- **What does that person or group want to do?** Is there a nefarious plot? Are some other goals motivating the characters or group involved?
- **Leading to/Setting into Motion:** Are there positive, negative, or neutral things that are happening or will happen during the session's gameplay?
- **Challenges they will face:** Is there an unexpected challenge that might come up in the midst of the actions? Are there geographical challenges they might need to overcome?

We will also offer ideas, dialogue, area descriptions, and side quests to inspire the Lorekeepers in how to guide the session. This section of the lesson plan will offer a few learning goals to help in framing what information to share with the journeyers.

Our journeyers will likely want to structure their sessions with this framework:

- **Previous Session Recap:** Start by saying, "When we last met," and invite participants to briefly share highlights or key events from the last session. The Lorekeeper can contribute as needed, but it is good to encourage the participants to do so.

- **Start on the *Airship*:** Invite journeyers to describe what they're doing as the journey begins: tinkering with gadgets, sleeping, sketching clouds, etc. This grounds everyone in character as the journey begins. Then present the scenario: share the mystery, request, or opportunity. Who needs help? What strange thing has appeared? Why is this moment important?
- **Investigate:** Let participants ask questions, observe, and roleplay. Introduce non-player characters (NPCs) and places with details that invite imagination. Keep it open-ended whenever possible. The goal is to spark curiosity not to funnel participants toward a single solution.
- **Develop an idea:** Encourage lots of ideas and suggestions. Multiple solutions are possible. Invite participants to think creatively, even wildly. Remind them that failure is part of the fun. If an idea doesn't work, it just makes the story richer.
- **Act out potential ideas and solutions:** Participants attempt their chosen actions. The Lorekeeper names whether the action is Flow or Grounded and asks for a roll. The Lorekeeper narrates what happens as a result of the roll. Let outcomes shape the story, whether it's a success or a failure.
- **Resolution based on the actions:** The situation shifts based on the group's actions. Did they solve the problem, open a new one, or uncover a deeper mystery? If the situation is not solved, if there is time to try something else in the session, then encourage another type of attempt. If you run out of time, you can extend the challenge into a later session. In the end, something in Covenantia is now different because of the participants.
- **Return to the *Beloved Community Collective Airship*:** This is your chance to shift to share takeaways, tie in learning goals, and make note of any threads to continue in the next session.

This format is not a strict requirement for sessions but can offer a great structure to keep things moving and help facilitators run sessions.

All of our scenarios are designed with non-violent solutions in mind which might be different from the role playing games that others are used to. We welcome you to encourage the participants' creativity in finding non-violent solutions. By non-violent, we mean both actions that are literally thought violence as well as principles of non-violence and non-violent communication exemplified by Gandhi and others. The former might need to be established up front with your group since many folks will think of games like Dungeons & Dragons and other similar games when they think of roleplaying, and those are usually based on violent actions in the game.

We encourage you to develop a turn order for smooth decision making and action taking. However it is beneficial to allow flexibility to change or interrupt turn order in case someone has a new idea, action, or opportunity they want to share with the team. Be aware of group dynamics and group power dynamics to make sure all feel they have equal ability to contribute to the group. This includes the reality that some groups may be more or less talkative, and some participants may be less talkative. You can still have a great time with a quiet group.

While a few of the journeys are connected by sharing the same area, all of the stories are designed so that both Lorekeepers and participants can change from session to session. We know that life can often stop us from being able to have the same people present for all of the sessions. We have designed this curriculum intentionally to allow coming and going.

Lorekeepers, if a participant can't join for a session, perhaps you can declare that they are spending time resting on the *Airship*. Or you could ask for the participant's permission ahead of time if they would like their character used as a non-player character while they aren't present. Make sure to be aware of any limitations of how they would like their character to act.

- Each lesson plan will contain a check in section which is a great time for sharing a brief summary of the systems of the game for new arrivals to the group, as well as a time to remind the group of expectations and any group covenant. Covenant will be discussed in depth during one of the early lessons.

A tool to empower participants and make it easy to speak up when uncomfortable is the X-Card. The X-Card is a simple concept designed by game designer John Stavropoulos. It is quite simply a note card with an X on it. This card, when raised or tapped on, enables participants to

let people know that things are uncomfortable, so that a change can happen. As explained on the [Wikipedia page for the X-Card](#):

The X-Card is a technique for moderating content while playing tabletop role-playing games, also known as a safety tool. Gameplay pauses when a player touches a card marked with an X, enabling the group to remove any uncomfortable material from the narrative and/or address players' mental and emotional wellbeing.

You can present multiple options for invoking the X-Card, including the traditional method of touching the card but also saying “X” or “X-Card,” which allows for immediate accessibility to the option no matter where someone is in proximity to the card or if they have mobility challenges. If playing online, typing “X” into the chat can also be encouraged as an option.

We hope this tool enables those who use the curriculum to ensure active and enthusiastic consent of all participating participants. It is purposefully explained in depth in an early session.

Many of the lessons will also have selections from our Deeper Joy catalog of group activities. These will be noted in our lesson plans with the information provided about the dynamics of the game or activity. These provide a space for community building outside of the roleplaying experience itself. Links will be included to the full activity descriptions including more details and activity variations.

We have included a Lorekeeper journal with a summary of each session and prompts for writing down key elements from the session. A journal is important for tracking important story and character developments that can be continued on in the next session, especially with different Lorekeepers potentially leading from session to session. While the sessions are designed to work independent of each other, it is beneficial to provide narrative continuity, and that makes it more fun when the participants can notice their actions playing out in the world of Covenantia. We recommend either printing this journal or, if you are sharing notes digitally between Lorekeepers, keeping a running online shared document. Links to the downloadable and digital versions are available in the Materials List near the end of the Facilitators Guide. Remember that it's important to take notes as soon as possible after the session in order to more easily remember what happened as well as to remember to take the notes!

The journal also includes an overview of each session as well as a list of the non-player characters that appear in each session. These are helpful for Lorekeepers to keep handy as reference when running the journeys.

Additionally, while the curriculum includes entire sessions dedicated to reflecting and processing together, there is also a small time to reflect together at the end of the session. Lorekeepers can ask the journeyers what are important things to remember, as well as to ask them their takeaways, or to ask how they are feeling at the end of the session. You could also encourage more participant reflection by giving each journeyer a journal for reflection and note taking.

During our early sessions we will have time for character creation. We will have space during this journey to create a few alternate characters. These are great to give to new participants if there is not enough time for character creation, if participants want to switch characters, or if they aren't feeling ready for character creation. If you have multiple facilitators, it is also useful to have them create their own characters.

There will also be sessions where we can modify characters, though Lorekeepers can feel free to let participants modify their characters during sessions if they can provide a reason for the character's change or growth. Specific notes about it are included in those session plans.

A final reminder, these journeys are designed to be able to be used both in-person, online, and multiplatform. While designed with youth groups in mind, they are able to be used with participants in the upper elementary grades all the way through age 99+. This could be a great multigenerational experience! While we imagine our sessions to be around 45 minutes to an hour, the structure is flexible enough to be shortened or lengthened. Check out the Alternate Editions/Appendix for more examples of how to potentially shorten sessions if needed.

Deeper Joy Journey Inspiration

In addition to the journey formats shared in our Facilitator's Guide, this information will be provided to you in our journeys. However you are invited to consider using these prompts to be creative in imagining the journeys on your own or to create your own journeys. Using this template, you can plug in details to create new NPCs, different environments, and story conflicts.

Scene Setting (Worldbuilding/Description)

- Where are the characters? (Describe the environment with sensory details: sights, sounds, smells, textures. Or create a tactile three dimensional version of the location with something like clay or Lego bricks.)
- Who is present when the characters arrive?
- What is happening right now? (conflict, problem, or situation to engage with)

Character Introductions (non-player characters)

- NPC Name (pronouns, role, personality)
 - Short physical description
 - Sample dialogue lines (both in-scene and direct to participants)
- Repeated for each key NPC.

Possible Side Quests and Interactive Branches

- Small puzzles, mysteries, or roleplay opportunities connected to the scene
- Things characters might notice if they investigate
- Optional extra activities (physical, creative, or storytelling based)

Branching Resolutions (Outcomes)

- What happens if participants succeed, fail, or choose a creative alternative?
- What if something totally unexpected happens?

- How does the scene connect back to the *Airship* and larger story?

Learning Goals

- What real-world values, skills, or reflections is this journey highlighting?
- How might this tie back to Unitarian Universalist values, covenant, equity, justice, or community?

Graphics and the Map

Here you can see the map, a print with four character sheets, and a larger one page character sheet. The larger character sheet can prove useful for having space for more information, as well as providing an accessible option, if needed. Links to printable pdf's of these resources are included in the Compiled Materials List at the end of the Facilitators Guide.




Our Map of Covenantia


[Download the map here.](#)

[Order a printed copy of the map here.](#)


JOURNEYS OF DEEPER JOY
CHARACTER PROFILE



Grounded
Roll At or Below
Your Number



Flow
Roll At or Above
Your Number



Name:

Group Role:


Style:

Motivation:


Special Item:

Description:


JOURNEYS OF DEEPER JOY
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Grounded
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Special Item:

Description:



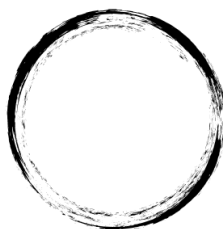
JOURNEYS OF DEEPER JOY

CHARACTER PROFILE



Grounded

Roll At or Below
Your Number



Flow

Roll At or Above
Your Number



Name:

Group Role:

Style:

Motivation:

Special Item:

Description:

Making Character Minis

Many participants enjoy bringing their characters to life with a physical mini, even if your RPG does not focus on tactical grids. Having character minis helps with storytelling, visual engagement, and group immersion.

The Shrinky Dink Method

The easiest way to create custom minis is with shrink plastic (such as Shrinky Dinks), which can be safely printed on with a regular home printer. (Use search terms: printable shrink plastic sheets, shrink film for crafts, or Shrinky Dinks printable sheets.)

Steps for Creating Minis:

- **Choosing and Printing Outlines:**
You can find printable character outlines online, create ones that suit your world, or encourage participants to draw their character directly onto the shrinking paper. Designs should be bold and clear; thin lines may fade as the mini shrinks.
- **Decoration:**
Use permanent markers (such as Sharpies) for coloring and detailing minis. This yields the brightest and most durable results after shrinking.
- **Shrink Process:**
Cut out the decorated shapes and lay them flat on parchment paper or a nonstick tray in a toaster oven. Use the temperature and time recommended by the shrink paper manufacturer (usually around 325°F, for 1-3 minutes). Watch as the designs shrink by about a factor of three.
- **Scaling:**
Standard tabletop RPG minis stand around 25–32mm tall, or roughly 1–1.25 inches tall. If you want slightly larger, up to 2 inches is practical for display. Print or draw your original outline at 3 times the final desired height to achieve the right size after shrinking.
- **Character Bases:**
Glue or tape your finished mini onto a small circular base, such as a plastic token or a

cut piece of cardboard, for extra stability. Alternately, you can purchase bases (search terms: plastic figure bases, plastic token stands) to use for the bases for the minis.

Design Tips

- Encourage participants to add unique character details like items, colors, symbols, or features that highlight personality or role.
- Experiment with character poses or backgrounds for added flair.
- For younger participants, offer templates or stencils for easier outlining.

Alternative Approaches

- If shrinky dink materials aren't available, you can use heavy craft foam, cardstock, or even clay (such as oven-bake polymer clays) to make simple 2D or 3D figures.
- For digital or remote play, participants might design character avatars using drawing apps or websites, and display them in a shared document or virtual table.

Alternate or Additional Option: Creating Table Name Cards

If making character minis isn't practical or if you want to offer participants a quick and meaningful way to showcase their characters, invite everyone to create a tabletop name card. Each card should include the character's name (printed clearly), preferred pronouns, and a small picture, either drawn by the participant or printed from a digital design. Name cards can be folded tent-style to stand upright in front of each participant, allowing easy reference and helping everyone learn about each other's characters at a glance. These cards also make it easier to invite, address, and include every character in conversation and in-group activities and can add a personal and inclusive touch to your roleplaying table.

Resources and Advice for Running The Curriculum

Informational Links

- The role playing dynamics were inspired and based on Lasers & Feelings by John Harper, licensed for use under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license](#).

To learn more about the Lasers and Feelings game, [it can be found here](#).

- The Lifespan Faith Engagement Team is currently planning a series of videos to show the curriculum in action, links will be provided when those are developed.
- [The Deeper Joy section of the UUA Website](#).
- [Check out this description of the Deeper Joy map](#) created by Jennica Davis-Hockett.
- Learn more about [some common table top role playing game safety tools](#).
- [Learn More about the X Card](#).
- Check out this video about how to lead a roleplaying session: [“Yes And/Yes But/No And/No But”](#)
- [A post and subsequent thread](#) exploring non-violence in role playing games, and how those who lead the game have to incentivize non-violence
- [A Dungeons and Dragons themed guide](#) to improving your skills in leading campaigns
- Dungeon World, another table top role playing game [offers 12 Principles for leading a campaign](#).

- [Read more about non violent conflict resolution](#) as it relates to a live action role playing game.
- [Read about CB Beal's concept of Pre-Emptive Radical Inclusion](#) and consider how to make your time together an inclusive space.
- [Informational videos about the various regions of Covenantia](#)

General Advice

As a Lorekeeper, you are guiding a story, not enforcing rules. The structure we give you is meant to spark creativity, not limit it. Here is some general advice on how you can succeed and experiment with this curriculum as a Lorekeeper. While the previous information was a basic explanation of the system, think of this section as more advanced considerations.

Invite Everyone to Play

Encourage volunteers and co-facilitators to create characters, too. This helps them stay engaged and gives you flexibility. Sometimes they can rotate in as participants, sometimes as co-Lorekeepers. In youth group settings, this models that adults can play alongside youth, and that storytelling is intergenerational. Remember to make sure that we are journeying at the pace of participants, especially if the facilitators are adults and the participants are youth. We must center youth voices.

Turn Order with Flexibility

Turn order, a planned order for characters to take actions, is a helpful tool for making sure everyone is included. However, it doesn't need to be rigid. If someone has a burst of inspiration or if their character is better suited to a situation, let them jump in. Then return to the order so the game stays balanced. The goal is not a perfect balance of every detail but rather belonging for everyone.

Complicate Decisions

Easy answers make for short and unsatisfying stories. When you feel the group is cruising, introduce a complication: a change in weather, a rival opinion, or a sudden challenge.

Complications add depth and give characters additional chances to collaborate.

You Have Permission to Create

You don't need to memorize every detail of the world. If something new emerges in play, go with it! The curriculum is a framework, a place to play where new characters, sidequests, and places can be invented. Embrace the surprises and trust the story to unfold. Embrace your creative storytelling self. Check out our special Alternate Models section for alternate ways you could offer this curriculum.

Journeys Can Stretch or Shrink

Sometimes a session wraps up in 30 minutes. Sometimes a single journey stretches across two or three sessions. Both are fine. Multi-session arcs give depth; one-off journeys give variety. You're welcome to adjust based on your group's energy and needs. Our goal was to create journeys that were connected by story, but that could be understood even if someone wasn't present for every action. Keep in mind that if you run multiple sessions on the same journey, it may require extra effort to welcome a new participant and to recap previous sessions at the start of new ones in the continuing arc. In our appendix we also provide a special one time roleplaying session and a shorter 4 or 5 session story if you'd like to try a different format.

Related to this, this curriculum is designed with a specific overall story that provides the "plotline" in the Journey. If you are comfortable with inventive roleplaying, you are welcome to open things up and allow unique and more "open-world" journeys that only loosely follow the structure. We are providing the format for the setting as well as ideas for dialogue, the location, potential sidequests, and ideas about the learning goals. It is up to you to decide how flexible or strict to the story you'd like the time together to be. Facilitators and participants with more experience in roleplaying games will likely feel more comfortable with experimenting with more flexible storytelling, but all options are valid uses of Journeys of Deeper Joy curriculum.

Failed Rolls Are Part of the Fun

Don't fear failed dice rolls. Use them for humor, learning, or unexpected detours. Sometimes a fumbled attempt creates the most memorable moment of the journey.

In *Journeys of Deeper Joy*, a failed attempted action is never the end of the story. A missed roll might mean the action happens in a messy, surprising, or sideways way. A twist often makes the game richer. Remember, the goal of this RPG isn't to "win" every roll but instead is to co-create a story that reflects joy, resilience, community, and creativity.

Imagine a journeyer rolls to try calming down a group of frightened birds in *Covenantia*. They want to sing softly to show the birds it's safe but their Flow roll fails. Instead of the Lorekeeper saying, "It doesn't work, the birds stay scared," the story could take a playful turn: the singing is off-key which startles the birds into flapping wildly... spilling a hidden map from a nearby nest! Or maybe their silly song accidentally makes another character laugh, easing group tension even if the birds are still nervous.

Every "failure" moves the story forward. It's an invitation for humor, surprise, and deeper connection, exactly what this curriculum is built to model.

Unresolved Session Arcs

It's common for a session's storyline or challenge to remain unfinished when time runs out. As Lorekeeper, use your judgment to determine whether to continue this arc at the start of the next session or to move planned content back to allow the unresolved story its proper space. If you sense the group needs closure, let the unresolved arc lead off next time before new material begins. Alternatively, you might fold the leftover storyline into a future session, bringing it back in a new form, for example, a character or need that wasn't fulfilled (like Dew Drop still seeking a crew) can emerge again, offering new chances for engagement and growth.

Remember that not all stories need a tidy ending. If the group struggles or fails to overcome a session's challenge, this is a real and meaningful type of resolution. It's important for participants to experience that not every adventure wraps up perfectly, and some outcomes reflect complexity and disappointment, just like life itself. Allow space for reflection and support,

and affirm that coping with challenges, feeling strong emotions, and sometimes accepting “unfinished business” are valid and valuable parts of the journey.

Lastly, reassure both yourself and your group that stories can be revisited, adapted, and evolved as the game continues. Every outcome, whether triumphant, bittersweet, or unresolved, offers players a chance to grow and deepen their experience, and your flexibility as Lorekeeper helps turn each moment into meaningful play.

Optional Dice Variations

The core system uses a single six sided dice, but you could try other dice for flavor. A twenty sided dice allows for wider probability, though it can make rules and action decisions more complex. There is also an additional set of mechanics in the appendix that uses three six-sided dice for all rolls with bonuses, plus has three abilities rather than the standard two. If you want to experiment, talk with your group about what feels fun and accessible. For Lorekeepers who have never played a roleplaying game before, it is highly recommended you stick to a six sided dice. If you are using a twenty sided dice, you will have to consider a much broader possibility of outcomes while a six sided dice enables new facilitators to feel more comfortable. If there will be multiple Lorekeepers, be sure to make these choices while being inclusive of the experience and comfort levels of all facilitators.

There is an alternate dice mechanic available as well using three 6 sided dice instead of just one. You can find it in the Alternate Models/Appendix section.

Flexible Check-In Time

Check-ins are important for grounding, but they don't need to be rigid. If someone overshares or shares for too long, gently redirect. If the group's energy is low, shorten check in. The goal is connection and community, not completion of a script. We are providing a list of Deeper Joy inspired check in questions here in the Facilitator Guide for you to consider using. Remember that sometimes check in may need to run longer, for instance if a participant is facing particular challenges at the moment or if there has been a challenging event locally or on a wider scale. Use your discretion, and do what your group needs.

On Cultural Respect and Character Creation

When creating characters, it's essential that participants avoid cultural or racial appropriation. For example, white participants should not create characters that mimic or borrow from real-world cultures or racial identities that are not their own. This includes accents, clothing, spiritual practices, or stereotypes tied to marginalized peoples.

Instead, encourage all participants to draw on their own imagination, personality, and creativity. Characters can be inspired by fantasy, nature, or entirely new inventions that don't borrow from lived identities. If participants want to celebrate a culture they admire, guide them to focus on universal values (like hospitality, music, courage, or artistry) rather than copying specific cultural markers.

Participants are absolutely welcome to use the game to explore gender and sexuality, as roleplaying games are often a safe space for identity exploration.

[Learn more about Cultural \(Mis\)Appropriation.](#)

Having Multiple Facilitators

We know that most settings that use this curriculum will likely have a rotation of volunteers involved in the group, so it is quite likely you will have a rotation of Lorekeepers. In this case, it is important to provide a place for being able to pass along information about progress and developments in the story. We have provided a Lorekeeper Journal which can be printed or used as a shared online document. If you have a team of Lorekeepers/facilitators, it may also be helpful to have a planned monthly conversation to check in about progress of the adventures and campaign. Having sessions close with a return to the *Airship* also helps facilitate flexibility for both participants and facilitators to not be there every week.

Participants Come and Go, New Participants, and Setting Expectations

We have structured multiple sessions in the curriculum where participants will take time to review the “lore” that has been created. These are a great way to make sure everyone is aware of what is happening in the story that is being told.

If a participant knows they will be missing a session, it is recommended to talk with them about

how they would like their character to be used during those sessions. Should they be away from the group? Should the Lorekeeper play them as a non-player character? If so, what preferences do they have about what their character will and will not do. Without permission, plan on simply having the character stay on the *Airship* or at some other location. Conversations about this are also good to do near the start of a campaign. Be sure to take notes in your Lorekeeper Journal on participant preferences so that you can honor their decisions.

If a participant needs to step away during a journey/session, be creative in inventing what happened to their character: A sleep spell? Aliens? They wandered away? Your mind is the limit on what happened to their character that caused them to suddenly disappear.

New participants are welcome, and the Quick Start Guide can be a useful tool for them. You can give them time to create a character while the journey is starting and then have their character suddenly appear. It may also be helpful to have a few pre-written characters for a new participant to use without the pressure of immediately creating a character themselves.

Finally, we have structured the curriculum so that the first few sessions involve setting up the systems and creating the world together. It takes a few weeks to begin the roleplaying, so be sure to set expectations with your participants at the start so they know what to expect.

Accessibility in Journeys of Deeper Joy

Accessibility is not an “add-on.” Instead it’s central to Journeys of Deeper Joy. We believe everyone belongs at the table and that play and imagination are richer when all voices are included. Planning with inclusion in mind from the very beginning makes the game safer and more fun for all. Here are some ideas to improve the accessibility of your sessions.

Theater of the Mind or Visual Maps

Some people may prefer to imagine scenes purely through description (sometimes called [Theater of the Mind](#)). Others may benefit from visual supports like maps, props, or tactile tools. Lorekeepers can adapt based on your group. Perhaps you use Lego bricks, Wiki sticks, or raised/tactile boards so blind or low-vision participants can engage fully or simply to engage with

participants who are more tactically oriented. Try to give good verbal descriptions as well, both for folks who are blind or low-vision but also to appeal to the imaginations of all participants.

As an example: Instead of only showing a map of Covenantia, you can describe it: “The river bends sharply here, and the cliffs rise on the horizon.” Then invite participants to build their own version with clay or blocks.

Accommodations for Diverse Needs

Disabilities show up in many ways. These may include auditory processing differences, mobility needs, visual impairments, or various forms of neurodivergence. Be proactive in naming common accommodations to normalize inclusion and remove pressure from participants to self-advocate.

As an example: “If you’d like me to read things aloud more than once, just let me know.”

Tactile tools could also apply to having a larger dice or a tactile dice with textured numbers or spots. It is also useful to keep fidgets around.

Accessible Safety Tools

Safety tools should work for everyone. For the X-Card, don’t assume everyone can see a physical card or can physically get to the card. The group can also say “X-Card” aloud to allow for equal access to the use of the X-Card. In the online format, if the Lorekeeper doesn’t see an X in the chat, invite a participant to help monitor the chat so that it can be named verbally or invite all participants to say X aloud if they see it posted in the chat.

The “Step Away” tool means anyone can leave the game space at any time if they need to take care of themselves with no explanation required. The Lorekeeper will seamlessly weave their character’s brief absence into the story, finding ways to make it natural until they’re ready to return. Be explicit with your group about expectations for where participants can go when stepping away, adapting guidelines to fit your physical or virtual play space.

Inclusive Characters

Participants can reflect real-world access needs in their characters. As mentioned in our character creation, a wheelchair, glasses, hearing aid, or communication device is not a “special item.” Rather it’s part of who they are. If a participant wants their character to have a mobility scooter, it’s included automatically without costing them their special item. Their special item is in addition to that and can be something fun, like a musical lantern or magical compass.

Accessible Covenant

When writing your group’s covenant, don’t assume everyone can read the poster or board. Offer to email or provide a typed copy so all participants can engage. This makes sure the covenant belongs to everyone.

Alternative Input Methods

Not everyone can write or use paper. We have provided the alternative Google Doc for creating character sheets. You can also provide options like:

- Typing in a shared Google Doc
- Voice recording or dictation software
- Having another participant act as “scribe”
- Example: If someone struggles with handwriting, invite them to describe their character aloud while a peer or facilitator writes it down.

Screen Sharing Notes

Screen sharing can help some participants, but never assume it works for all. Screen readers cannot always parse visuals. Always describe aloud what is on the screen and offer alternate formats. Instead of just sharing a map slide, describe it verbally, and provide the description in writing for later.

Name Possible Needs Proactively

Participants may not feel comfortable asking for accommodations. Instead, normalize options by offering them from the start:

- “Would anyone prefer a bigger-print sheet?”
- “If writing isn’t comfortable, you can just tell me your ideas.”
- “We’ll say the X-Card aloud so everyone can use it at any time.”

By naming needs and options ahead of time, you create a space where all are included and all is welcomed. You are also modeling inclusion in line with UU values. Accessibility in Deeper Joy means everyone can participate in the way that works best for them.

Actively Discuss Participant Preferences

Creating a joyful, collaborative, and inclusive play space means making space for participants to share their personal preferences and boundaries. Opening a conversation about these topics before and during your campaign helps ensure everyone has their needs met and feels safe exploring the story together. The following are key areas to discuss with your participants:

If a Participant Misses a Session: Some participants may want their character to “rest on the Airship,” be run by the facilitator, or have another participant temporarily play their character. Ask each participant for their preference, including any limits on how their character can be portrayed while absent (for example, “please don’t make major decisions for my character”).

Relationships Between Characters: Discuss if participants want to explore friendships, rivalries, romances, or family ties between their characters. Make space for participants to opt in or out of any of these types of relationships, and remind everyone that consent always matters for in-game relationships and storylines.

Inter-Character Conflict & Pranks: Clarify how participants feel about pranks, teasing, or in-character conflict. Some enjoy dramatic moments or light-hearted rivalry, while others find it uncomfortable. Encourage honest sharing and establish group norms for how intense, silly, or serious these interactions can become.

Content Boundaries and Topics to Avoid: Invite participants to name any topics, creatures, or scenarios they prefer not to encounter in the game (such as spiders, phobias, or emotionally difficult themes). Make it clear these preferences will be honored without question or need for explanation.

Out of Character Talk: Some groups enjoy a lot of out-of-character discussion and laughter during roleplay, while others prefer to stay “in character” as much as possible. Invite participants to share how much side talking or table chat feels comfortable, and agree as a group what balance works best.

Immersion and Play Style: Ask how important deep immersion is to the group. Do participants want to create a highly atmospheric, theatrical space, or keep things light and playful? Let participants express their preferences for mood and environment so everyone can support the shared vibe.

Prompts for this discussion are included in Journey 2. Plan to regularly revisit these preferences, since needs and comfort levels can change over time. This collaborative approach helps everyone feel valued and included, and supports the spirit of beloved community at the heart of the game.

Check In Questions

Here are some Deeper Joy themed check in questions for you to consider using in your sessions. This is also available [as a pdf](#).

What brought you joy this week: deep joy, not just fun?

How are you arriving today: in body, in heart, in spirit?

What's something small that made you feel seen lately?

What fun or rest did you find in your life this week?

What's one way you are like your character today?

What's one word that describes how you're arriving today?

If you had a magical item right now, what would it be and why?

Do you feel more grounded or in flow today and why?

What's something that feels true about you right now?

What's a boundary you've set that helps protect your energy or values?

What's a moment recently when you felt fully yourself?

What song or sound feels like your mood right now?

What's something that made you smile unexpectedly this week?

If your mood today were a color, what color would it be?

What's a small act of kindness you gave or received recently?

If your energy today were an animal, what animal would it be?

What's one thing you're curious about right now?

What's a word or phrase that's been living in your head lately?

Journeys of Deeper Joy Chalice Lighting

We set out not knowing what journeys may come,
With dice in hand and wonder near.
We craft our way ourselves and explore who we are.

We name our promises and choose how to return.
We share ourselves, offering and receiving vulnerability.
We may drift when purpose fades,
but we grow through the journeys we face.

We are witnessed with gratitude,
and we widen our circle with care.
We practice loving ourselves whole,
as our truths are revealed.

Welcome, journeyers,
to the Beloved Community we're building,
room for laughter, change, and connection.
Whatever you carry, bring it here.
Whatever you fear, name it here.
We go forward,
toward the deeper joy we create together.

(For a shorter chalice lighting, you can start at "Welcome journeyers.")

Journeys of Deeper Joy Chalice Extinguishing

We played. We pondered.
We noticed. We named.
Stories spun,
We held a sacred, shifting space,
not perfect, but real.

Now we depart, no longer the same as when we arrived.
We carry stories and names, hopes and dreams.

Theirs. Ours. Yours.
A tale to relay
that joy is deeper
When we create it together.

(For a shorter chalice extinguishing, begin at "Theirs. Ours. Yours.")

Lorekeeper Accessibility Checklist

Before the Session

- Prepare **multiple formats** of materials (digital, large-print, tactile if possible).
- Plan to **describe visuals aloud** (maps, slides, drawings).
- Print or email the **group covenant** so everyone can access it.
- Have **tactile tools** (Lego bricks, Wikki Stix, clay, raised boards) ready as map and scene alternatives.

During the Session

- **Name access options upfront** (big print, verbal input, no need to write, etc).
- **Normalize differences**: “Not everyone writes so feel free to tell me and I’ll scribe.”
- Use **Theater of the Mind** when needed: Describe settings with sensory detail.
- When using the **X-Card**, say “X-Card” aloud as well as tapping or holding it up.
- Invite **ability-inclusive characters** (wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc. don’t count as special items).
- Check in gently: “Would a repeat or written note help?” “Want me to describe that map again?”

After the Session

- Share notes in **multiple formats** (typed, audio, or visual summary).
- Use the prompts in the Lorekeeper Journal for taking notes about the session.
- Reflect on what worked access-wise. Ask: “What would help make next time easier?”

Remember: Accessibility is about proactive care, not waiting for someone to ask. Every choice you make toward inclusion helps create a space where all can play and belong.

Incorporating Magic & Technology

Magic and Technology: How to Include Creative Solutions

Magic and technology are both ways for participants to engage in creative problem-solving, add flavor, and imagine new solutions. Many mainstream tabletop roleplaying games include magic, so this is something your group may enjoy. You can have the spells set as a flow roll, and the ability to create advanced technology as a science grounded roll.

The group should discuss together how common magic or advanced technology is in their setting. Is it rare and wondrous, or a daily tool, or somewhere in between? Decide together what fits your story best.

Framing Difficulty and Challenge

Creating powerful magic or advanced technology should be exciting, but it shouldn't always be easy! When participants attempt a spell or invention that would solve a major challenge or have a big impact, increase the degree of difficulty in meaningful ways. Some ways to do this include:

- **Dice Rolls:**

Magic actions are resolved using Flow rolls. Technology inventions use Grounded rolls. The more ambitious the effect, the harder the roll. Consider using multiple rolls or higher success requirements.

- **Gathering or Crafting Components:**

To work magic or build technology, participants might need to find, create, or combine special items or materials. The bigger the effect, the more items they might need, and each item could require its own search or crafting task (often with a roll).

- **Connection to Character Features:**

The spell or invention should fit the character's skills, motivations, or background. Magic feels more meaningful when it relates to a character's talents, history, or special items.

- **Describing the Logic:**

Challenge participants to explain how or why the spell or technology works in your world.

Reasonable, story-driven descriptions strengthen the experience and invite everyone's creativity.

- **Exceptional Creativity:**

Remarkably inventive, collaborative, or entertaining solutions can reduce the challenge level or unlock unique outcomes. Facilitators can reward out-of-the-box thinking with narrative benefits or easier rolls.

Group Spellbooks and Inventor's Notebooks

Consider inviting the whole group to create a shared spellbook or tech notebook, where everyone can add their magical or technological discoveries. This can be built as a collaborative project with drawings, notes, and shared ideas. Make space for silly spells and inventions too. Sometimes humor or whimsy is just as valuable as practical solutions! We'd love to see what you create, so please consider [sharing it with us!](#)

Types of Spells and Inventions

Think broadly about magic and technology:

- Utility: "Unlock door," "create light," "send message"
- Protection: "Barrier of wind," "healing patch," "detect trouble"
- Sensory: "See in the dark," "find emotion," "hear distant voices"
- Alteration: "Turn water to ice," "change shape," "magically repair"

Inventions can mirror magic but use logic, science, craft, or clever engineering.

If you are including magic, it's important to also include technology so that there is creative space for both the flow focused characters as well as the grounded focused characters.

Creating In-Game Rituals

Effective in-game rituals can build connection, deepen immersion, and highlight key values or themes for your group. Use the guidelines below to craft meaningful rituals, whether spontaneous or planned, that fit your game's world and the personalities of your players.

Key Elements of a Ritual

Intention Setting and Value Clarity

Begin by encouraging the group to set a clear intention for the ritual. Discuss and name the values, hopes, or ideas they wish the ritual to embody (for example: unity, healing, gratitude, courage). This shared clarity gives every subsequent choice shape and meaning.

Sequence

Guide participants to create a structure: opening, central actions, closing. Rituals often begin with a gathering and welcoming, move into purposeful shared activity, and end with an intentional closure.

Participation Roles

Encourage specific roles such as leader, reader, object holder, or sound maker, or at least rotating who guides each segment. Ensure that everyone who wants a part can participate meaningfully. This inclusivity helps the ritual feel owned by the whole group.

Senses and Atmosphere

Encourage the use of multiple senses through music, chanting, gentle sounds, imagined or real scents, tactile objects, visual elements, or movement. Even simple props or collective gestures can evoke a powerful atmosphere.

Symbolism and Meaning

Invite participants to select physical or imagined items, or create visualizations and actions, that symbolize the purpose or message of the ritual. Ask why each element is chosen, fostering a deeper sense of connection and relevance.

Reflection and Debrief

After the ritual, build in a moment for group reflection. Ask what stood out, what the ritual

changed, or how it felt to participate. This debrief can draw out meaning and support group cohesion moving forward.

Facilitator Guidance

- **Normalize Experimentation:** Remind everyone that rituals don't need polish. What matters is sincerity and effort, not perfection.
- **Encourage All Forms of Expression:** Allow rituals to be solemn, playful, silent, or energetic, based on the group's mood and needs.
- **Blend the Spontaneous and Planned:** Support both rituals invented on the spot as well as those planned in advance.
- **Foster Collaboration:** Gently draw in quieter members and emphasize the value of every contribution.
- **Cultural Sensitivity and Consent:** Ensure all participants are comfortable with the ritual's elements, and check for cultural or personal boundaries. Participation should always be by choice, not pressure.
- **Scaling for Time and Group Size:** Adapt the ritual's complexity and length to fit the group's context, considering quick blessings for large groups, more elaborate ceremonies for small, focused gatherings.
- **Intentionality with Humor:** Decide as a group whether humor is appropriate during rituals. Some participants may prefer to keep these moments serious, while others enjoy playfulness.
- **Closure and Debrief:** Encourage clear ways to mark the end of the ritual (ex. a shared breath, a hand motion, or a group word)to help transition back to gameplay.

Optional Approaches

- Support rituals involving in-game magic or technology (talismans, tech-artifacts, visualized gadgets) if that is an element of your gameplay.
- Offer accessible options for participants who can't or don't want to act out every part (for example, "choose," "describe," or "imagine" rather than physically enact).

Quick Start Guide

1. The Grounded–Flow Spectrum

1 = All Flow (impulsive, intuitive, passionate)

6 = All Grounded (calm, precise, logical)

Middle numbers are a mix of both.

2. Rolling the Dice

Decide if your action is Grounded or Flow.

Grounded Action → Roll at or UNDER your number.

Flow Action → Roll at or OVER your number.

Exact Number → Success AND you get to ask a special insight question or the result of your action is extra successful.

Results:

0 successes → Things get harder.

1 success → Things work out.

2 successes → Works better than expected.

3 successes → Works amazingly + bonus effect.

Helping:

We start with one dice, if another participant describes how they help, they can add a die (max 3 dice).

3. Examples

Grounded: Specific questions, quietly investigate a clue, measure ingredients, recall a studied fact, science and technology.

Flow: Open ended questions, leap across a gap, charm someone into helping, improvise a solution, magic.

4. Typical Session Flow

Discover what is happening → Investigate → Develop Idea → Act → Resolution →
Return to Airship/Camp

5. Tips for Lorekeepers

Ask: Is this action Grounded or Flow?

Let the dice decide and embrace failure as story fuel.

Keep turns moving and encourage creativity.

Reward creative solutions. Track story details for continuity.

Grounded/Flow Discernment Guide

1. Physical Actions

- **Grounded:** Carefully balancing on a narrow ledge, patching a hole in the ship with measured strokes, building a raft with precise knots.
- **Flow:** Leaping across a collapsing bridge, catching something mid-fall without thinking, improvising a shelter out of whatever is nearby.

2. Social/Relational Actions

- **Grounded:** Asking a thoughtful, specific question to uncover truth, quoting rules or prior agreements, carefully mediating a conflict step-by-step.
- **Flow:** Asking an open ended question, telling an inspiring story that changes someone's mind, cracking a joke to diffuse tension, winning someone over with raw enthusiasm.

3. Creative/Problem-Solving

- **Grounded:** Quietly investigate a clue, drawing a detailed map, analyzing the mechanics of a machine, measuring ingredients for a ritual exactly.
- **Flow:** Singing a new song to open a hidden door, throwing paint wildly to make a mural, trying an untested idea just to see what happens.

4. Knowledge/Discovery

- **Grounded:** Recalling studied facts, following a logical chain of evidence, taking careful notes.
- **Flow:** Guessing an answer based on gut instinct, feeling the “vibe” of a situation, letting intuition guide what’s true.

5. Spiritual/Community-Building

- **Grounded:** Quietly reflecting, honoring covenant by reading commitments aloud, keeping rituals structured.
- **Flow:** Leading spontaneous song, sharing vulnerable feelings in the moment, inviting playfulness to open the circle.

6. Science vs. Magic

- **Grounded:** Running experiments, using tools or machines, inventing new tech.
- **Flow:** Casting a spell, improvising a charm with whatever’s nearby, singing or dancing to channel energy, letting imagination reshape reality.

General Advice for Running Sessions

How to Use Elements of the Session Plan

1. Framework and Flow:

Each session plan in *Journeys of Deeper Joy* offers a ready-made structure: beginning with check-in/Chalice Lighting, then Deeper Joy group activities, the main roleplaying segment, time for learning goals and reflection, and a closing/Chalice Extinguishing. Use this structure as a roadmap, but feel free to adjust pacing, combine steps, or add your own touches to match your group’s needs and energy.

2. “What is happening?”

This section sets up the story’s premise and initial situation for the session. Read it in advance and use it to launch the scenario. When you introduce it to players, set the scene with as much detail or drama as you like—describe the setting, who’s present, and any mood or tension.

3. “Who is involved?” and Character/Dialogue Prompts:

This element lists key NPCs, sometimes with sample dialogue and personality notes. Run these introductions yourself or delegate them to participants. Use the sample lines to get conversations started or to create in-character moments.

4. “Challenges / What do they want?”

Highlights the goal or conflict at the session’s heart. Use this to focus player action and as a reference throughout: it’s what should guide your questions when players get stuck (“What are you hoping to accomplish?”).

5. “Framework for the Journey”:

Detailed, step-by-step prompts for sequencing your session:

- **Previous Session Recap:** Start by saying, “When we last met,” and invite participants to briefly share highlights or key events from the last session. The Lorekeeper can contribute as needed, but it is good to encourage the participants to do so.
- Previous session recap: brief sharing of highlights or key events from the last session.
- Start on the *Airship* or in the chosen location: have players describe what they’re doing.
- Move into investigation: let players ask questions and interact.
- Develop ideas together; encourage creativity and collective brainstorming.
- Move into action: have players attempt solutions or challenges (often using dice).
- Allow resolution or partial solutions, and circle back to the *Airship* or group reflection at the end.

6. Branching/Side Quests:

Most sessions include possible side quests or alternate activities. Use these if the group finishes quickly, wants to explore, or needs extra prompts for deeper engagement.

7. Reflection and Takeaways:

Be sure to make space (short or long) at the session’s end for group reflection, key learnings, and questions that tie back to real-world values or group goals.

8. Lorekeeper Notes:

Each session plan includes a spot for your notes at the end. Use this for tracking outcomes, unresolved storylines, major decisions, or group dynamics for continuity—especially if facilitators rotate.

Branching, Options, and Creative Choice in Journeys

Every session and challenge in Journeys of Deeper Joy is designed with multiple possible approaches and solutions. While each session lists some expected ways participants might work through challenges, roleplaying always leaves room for surprises! Players are naturally creative, and often their ideas will go beyond anything written in the curriculum.

The session plan will provide you, the Lorekeeper, with examples of possible actions, options, and side quests—these are starting points, not exhaustive lists. Read through the suggested branches before the session. When participants come up with new strategies or propose fun, unexpected solutions, welcome and encourage them. Part of the magic of roleplaying is seeing what the group invents together, so always look for ways to say “yes” or “yes, and...” to creative efforts.

As Lorekeeper, you’re also invited to create your own options and add twists or challenges as inspiration strikes. Maybe a participant’s wild idea opens an unexpected door, or you think of a new character or obstacle in the moment. Your storytelling is as valued as the group’s!

If some participants want to do one thing while others want to do another:

You can either encourage the group to stay together, or embrace the differences, since different characters have different interests and abilities. If splitting, be sure to go back and forth between the subgroups to help keep things balanced and so that no one feels like they are being left out for too long.

Above all, keep the energy encouraging and collaborative as everyone is getting the hang of creative problem-solving and roleplay. Invite everyone to describe what they’re trying to do, help translate their ideas into game-based actions, and celebrate every inventive approach—even ones you didn’t see coming!

Conversations and Using NPCs

As Lorekeeper, you’ll bring the world of Covenantia and its adventures to life by voicing all of the non-player characters (NPCs). NPCs play many essential roles in sessions: they welcome and orient participants, provide information and background, pose challenges, offer help or obstacles, and reflect the themes and values of each adventure. Some are wise guides (Teapot, Rockenroll), some are quirky townsfolk, some are reluctant helpers, and some may even cause trouble or push the story forward in unexpected ways.

Running NPCs is your time to embrace improv and storytelling—step into their quirks, have fun choosing how they sound and react, and let yourself be surprised just as much as the participants! Even a simple line delivered with playfulness or drama can spark the story and make a scene memorable.

Sample dialogue is provided for many NPCs in the curriculum. These script snippets or “starter lines” are entirely optional and are intended as inspiration for Lorekeepers. You can use them word-for-word, mix and match them, adapt them on the fly, or invent your own responses that fit the moment and the group’s energy. What matters most is that you enjoy the process of bringing these characters to life.

Remember, you are not required to use every NPC or every suggested line. Sample dialogues are tools for support and creativity, not requirements. Feel free to focus on the interactions that move your session forward, and let unused NPCs fade into the background or save them for another day if needed.

Striking the Right Balance

As a Lorekeeper, one of your most important roles is to offer challenges that feel meaningful. Avoid making things too easy—if every challenge is solved instantly, the session won’t feel impactful or memorable. At the same time, don’t push things so far that players feel stuck or frustrated. Good stories involve setbacks and surprises, and some challenge is necessary for both character and participant growth. If the group is “cruising,” introduce complications—a shift in the weather, a new dilemma, or a rival perspective. When participants fail or fumble, let it move the story in new directions; failure is just another chance for deeper connection, learning, or humor.

Using Opening Scripts & Encouraging Agency

Each session begins with an opening script designed to set the tone and context. These can be read aloud as written, or you’re encouraged to improvise and adapt them for your group. At the end of each scene setting, you’ll find the prompt, “What would you like to do?” This question is your springboard to participant agency—invite the journeyers to describe what their characters want to investigate, try, or say. Encourage all ideas, and be ready to help translate them into

game actions.

Supporting Participant Choices

Some players will jump right into action; others may need encouragement. When the group seems uncertain or stuck, gently offer suggestions: “Would you like to ask an NPC for more information, explore the area, look for clues, talk to each other, or try something unexpected?” If needed, remind them that creative, even wild, ideas are welcome as there is rarely one “right” answer!

Keeping Sessions Moving

- Keep an eye on energy and interest; if momentum drops, offer a twist or new option.
- Don’t feel pressured to use every NPC, side quest, or challenge—flow with the group’s interests.
- Always circle back for group reflection, takeaways, and closing rituals.
- Remember: your biggest job is to support collaborative storytelling, help everyone have a chance to contribute, and make sure the group’s journey feels like their own.

Optional Mechanic: Waycoins

Waycoins are a collaborative reward that Lorekeepers can give to the group during play. They celebrate moments of exceptional creativity, teamwork, inclusion, kindness, or problem-solving. The intent is to boost engagement, reinforce group values, and create a fun reason to take creative risks or support one another.

Examples of When to Award a Waycoin

- A participant proposes a solution to a challenge that’s especially outside-the-box or imaginative.
- The team works together in a way that is unusually effective or cooperative.
- Someone models inclusion by inviting a quieter participant into the action or making the play space more welcoming.

- A moment of genuine support, empathy, or kindness stands out, either in-character or out-of-character.
- The team roleplays creative use of their abilities, special items, or teamwork tools.
- The group demonstrates resilience or positive attitude when things don't go as planned.
- Collective storytelling adds depth, humor, or beauty to the session, celebrating moments that lift up the shared experience.
- Any behavior that you would like to encourage or reinforce in the group.

Waycoins are owned by the whole group, not individuals. Whenever the team earns five Waycoins, they may exchange them for a Waypoint Scroll. A powerful item or benefit that helps them at a future moment of challenge by allowing a reroll of a dice or enabling the group to gain additional information about a challenge. There are [printable versions available here](#), or you can have plastic gold coins or the like to distribute as physical items. This file also includes printable Waypoint Scrolls that can be used when Waycoins are turned in.

Once you've introduced them, remember to be awarding them regularly, even up to one or two in a session. They are a great way to encourage your group's participation and reinforce values and good roleplaying.

You can use this script to introduce waycoins into your group's gameplay:

"Today I'm adding something special to our game: a Waycoin! Throughout our sessions, I'll be watching for moments when someone comes up with a creative idea, shows great teamwork, or goes out of their way to include or support others. When that happens, I'll award a Waycoin to the group. These are a team reward, and you're all collecting them together. Whenever you gather five Waycoins, you can trade them for a Waypoint Scroll, which helps you in a future challenge."

Lorekeeper Cheat Sheet

Session Structure

- Welcome, check-in or chalice lighting
- Start with opening script (read aloud or improvise): end with “What would you like to do?”
- Roleplay, investigate, act, resolve
- Closing reflection, group takeaway, chalice extinguishing

Encouraging Action

- Invite participant ideas (“What do you want to do?”).
- If stuck: suggest talking to NPC, investigating, exploring, brainstorming, teaming up
- Celebrate creative solutions, especially the unexpected ones!

Actions & Dice

- Grounded: success = roll your number or lower
- Flow: success = roll your number or higher
- Exact number = special insight question
- Helper/team action: describe teammate’s help, gain extra die (max 3 dice).

NPCs & Dialogue

- You voice all NPCs. Use sample dialogue for inspiration, improvise as desired.
- Not every NPC or sample line must be used.
- Switch between subgroups if the group splits.

Branching & Challenges

- Multiple paths possible; encourage participant ideas and creativity.
- Feel free to invent options, obstacles, and scenes.
- Don’t resolve everything perfectly. Failure or unfinished arcs are valuable too.

Maintaining Flow

- Keep story moving; adapt pacing to group energy.
- Use complications to challenge but avoid excessive frustration.
- Allow side quests, but focus on core adventure unless the group prefers to wander.

Safety & Support

- Use X-Card: anyone can tap, say, or hold up if uncomfortable.
- Prioritize accessibility and inclusion for all participants.

Reflection

- Close sessions with group insights, optional discussion questions, and the chalice extinguishing reading.

Your Role

- Facilitate collaborative storytelling, encourage contribution.
- Be playful, supportive, and open to surprise!

Teambuilding Exercise: Who Do You Want To Be?

This exercise is great for many settings but is particularly useful for onboarding any volunteers who will be helping as Lorekeepers. Consider setting it up as a slide show presentation activity.

Introduction

Ask: Have you ever played a roleplaying game?

Explain: They are games where you take on the role of a character in another world. The Deeper Joy Roleplaying Game is a Unitarian Universalist curriculum that explores elements of community building through the medium of roleplaying games.

Share the character profile printouts.

Explain: This is where information about your character is kept. We are going to use character creation as a creative way to build connections and familiarize you with this new resource.

Name

Share: So who exactly will your character be? While you are welcome to create a fantasy clone of yourself, I invite you today to let your creativity flow and ponder: Who do you want to be?

Ask one or two people to share: What are the names you've chosen for your characters? Toward the end of the exercise we will have the opportunity for everyone to share their completed character profile.

The Grounded-Flow Dynamic

Share: In our Deeper Joy RPG journeys, our actions, personalities, and decisions are evaluated on a spectrum: we use numbers from 1 to 6 to simplify this process.

- **Grounded:** thinking, rational planning, contemplation, science, calm actions, precise movement.
- **Flow:** impulsiveness, intuition, charisma, unexpected actions, guessing, passion.

Take a moment to fill out your character's number. You may need to take a moment to explain how the rolling works and how different number choices blend the two dynamics.

Ask one or two people to share: Where would you place yourself (not your character) on the grounded and flow spectrum? Why?

Group Role

Share: The group role is the role your character inhabits in the group that is going on a journey. It could be a job or simply the way you understand yourself.

Some examples: engineer, inventor, new kid, collector, chaotic one, storyteller, healer, athlete, actor, nature lover, leader, shy one, supporter, caregiver, entertainer, extrovert, planner, philosopher, protector, optimist, pessimist, realist.

Take a moment to fill out your character's role. It can be similar to roles that you fill yourself or something entirely different.

Ask one or two people to share: How have you filled roles in your own life?

Style

Share: Style is your first impression. These are things like personality, appearance, or fashion sense that people will likely notice first.

Some examples: unique, fashionable, casual, friendly, energetic, talkative, quiet, intelligent, relaxed, active, charming, confident, nervous, stubborn, bossy, sensitive, chic, glam, minimalist, maximalist, sporty, artsy, warm, eclectic, bold.

Be realistic. Style can be both helpful and challenging! Take a moment to fill out your character's style.

Ask one or two people to share: Are you someone that people consider to have a distinct style? What would you say people's first impression is of you?

Motivation

Share: Motivation is the thing that makes your character wake up in the morning or their main goal.

Some examples: becoming the best, completing a quest, training, travel, searching for a relic, teaching, finding destiny, making friends, fame, independence, fighting injustice, inventing, reputation, duty, exploring identity.

Ask one or two people to share: What is a principle or goal that motivates your life?

Special Item

Share: Each character starts with a universal translator and one special non-weapon item. You are allowed to pick an additional special item.

Examples: umbrella, backpack, watch, water bottle, guitar, plant, sports item, candle, sticky notes, paintbrush, magnifying glass, rubber band, yoga mat, magnets, marbles, photo album, rubber chicken.

An important note: if your character needs an item for accessibility, that does not count as your special item and you can have both your accessibility item and a special item.

Ask one or two people to share: Besides food or legal documents, what is an item that you treasure the most?

Description

Share: Now that your character has been elaborated on, I invited you to write 1–2 sentences about their core features.

Invite everyone to share their completed characters with the group.

Optional Reflection Questions

- In what ways is this character like or unlike you in real life?
- What surprises came up in other participant's characters?
- Did you learn something about your group?

Pregenerated Characters

A participant having trouble with creating characters? Need to introduce an additional non-player Character? Here are 10 Pregenerated Characters for you to use. Twenty more Pregenerated Characters are available in our Alternate Models appendix. A printable version [can be found here](#).

1. Luma the Firefly Archivist

- **Number:** 5
- **Description:** A humanoid firefly with a glowing abdomen that brightens and dims depending on their mood. Carries scrolls strapped to their wings.
- **Group Role:** The Archivist (collector of stories and forgotten songs)
- **Style:** Thoughtful but a little scatterbrained and always mumbling quotes from old tales.
- **Motivation:** To record every story before it fades, hoping to pass on wisdom to future journeyers.
- **Special Item:** A lantern that, when lit, reveals words that were once spoken in that place.

2. Ripple the River Otter Explorer

- **Number:** 2
- **Description:** An otter with a patched explorer's vest, always damp from swimming, with a mischievous grin.
- **Group Role:** The Scout (always finding hidden paths or secret doors)
- **Style:** Bubbly, playful, constantly juggling pebbles.
- **Motivation:** To discover something no one has seen before, especially places that feel like home.
- **Special Item:** A compass that points not north, but toward the place where the group feels most connected.

3. Solenne the Sunflower Bard

- **Number:** 3
- **Description:** A tall sunflower-person whose petals shift color with the seasons. Plays a lute carved from a gourd.
- **Group Role:** The Encourager (uplifts the group when morale is low)
- **Style:** Warm, dramatic, loves making up songs on the spot.
- **Motivation:** To remind people of their worth through music and stories.
- **Special Item:** A songbook where blank pages fill themselves with new verses after each journey.

4. Spork the Tinkerer

- **Number:** 6
- **Description:** Spork straddles worlds: part spoon, part fork, never fully one or the other. They sometimes feel out of place, but in the right moment their unique mix saves the day.
- **Group Role:** The Inventor (always fiddling with gadgets)
- **Style:** Practical, cautious, occasionally sarcastic.
- **Motivation:** To build something lasting that makes life easier for others.
- **Special Item:** A bag of clinking spare parts that can become almost anything in a pinch.

5. Drift the Dreaming Cat

- **Number:** 1
- **Description:** A soft blue cat who often seems half-asleep, but their dreams sometimes spill into reality.
- **Group Role:** The Dreamer (sees possibilities no one else imagines)
- **Style:** Gentle, absent-minded, but strangely wise at times.
- **Motivation:** To explore the line between dreams and waking life, believing both have truths to share.
- **Special Item:** A patchwork blanket that lets others glimpse a dream when wrapped around them.

6. Bramble the Hedgehog Healer

- **Number:** 4
- **Description:** A hedgehog in a patchwork cloak, carrying herbal pouches. Their quills are tipped with tiny blossoms.
- **Group Role:** The Caregiver (tends to others' hurts, physical and emotional)
- **Style:** Gentle, steady, sometimes shy.
- **Motivation:** To help others grow stronger after hardship.
- **Special Item:** A mortar and pestle that hums when the right ingredients are mixed.

7. Nimbus the Cloud Rider

- **Number:** 2
- **Description:** A small figure with hair made of drifting cloud, always hovering a few inches above the ground.
- **Group Role:** The Adventurer (always ready to leap into the unknown)
- **Style:** Energetic, daring, a little forgetful.
- **Motivation:** To chase horizons and see what's beyond the next mountain.
- **Special Item:** A tiny storm in a jar that can be released to clear the air or water thirsty plants.

8. Quarry the Living Statue

- **Number:** 5
- **Description:** A stone statue brought to life, with ivy curling around their arms and shoulders.
- **Group Role:** The Protector (quiet strength, willing to take the hit)
- **Style:** Slow to act, but when they do it matters.
- **Motivation:** To find beauty in unexpected places, and help others feel safe.
- **Special Item:** A shard of marble that glows faintly when someone nearby feels afraid.

9. Lyric the Moth Scholar

- **Number:** 6
- **Description:** A moth-person with patterned wings like old maps, wearing oversized glasses.
- **Group Role:** The Researcher (asks endless questions, digs for truth)
- **Style:** Polite, excitable, loves facts and details.
- **Motivation:** To gather knowledge and connect it into new ideas.
- **Special Item:** A magnifying glass that shows hidden details others miss.

10. Zephyr the Trickster Fox

- **Number:** 3
- **Description:** A fox with silver fur and a mischievous sparkle in their eyes, cloak stitched from mismatched fabrics.
- **Group Role:** The Entertainer (keeps spirits up with jokes and tricks)
- **Style:** Witty, playful, sometimes overconfident.
- **Motivation:** To make others laugh, and to reveal truth through humor.
- **Special Item:** A deck of cards that always produces a surprise, sometimes useful, sometimes not.

Special Items Inspiration List (Plus Accessibility Items)

[Printable pdf version is available here.](#)

Accessibility & Support Items

(Any character can have these in addition to their special item. Includes mobility devices, sensory supports, and comfort items)

- Wheelchair (manual or powered)
- Mobility scooter
- Seeing cane
- Hearing aid
- Weighted blanket or lap pad
- Noise-cancelling headphones
- Fidget spinner
- Sensory putty or modeling clay
- Chewelry/chewable necklace
- Large print or Braille notetaker
- Communication board/tablet
- Visual timer
- Tinted glasses or overlays
- Stress ball
- Calm jar or glitter tube
- Stuffed comfort animal
- Personal cooling fan
- Ear defenders
- Reminder bracelet with words or symbols
- Pocket-sized anxiety stone
- Adaptive scissors/tools

Special Items: Everyday Treasures

- Umbrella
- Backpack
- Watch

- Water bottle
- Guitar or other instrument
- Potted plant
- Sports item (like a soccer ball)
- Candle
- Sticky notes
- Paintbrush
- Magnifying glass
- Rubber band ball
- Yoga mat
- Magnets
- Marbles
- Photo album
- Scarf
- Book of poetry
- First aid kit (counts as one item)
- Juggling set (counts as one item)
- Friendship bracelet kit
- Analog camera
- Picnic basket
- Set of dice
- Sketchbook
- Cooking utensils set (counts as one item)

Special Items: Somewhat Magical

- Lantern that reveals old words left in a place
- Compass that points where the group feels most connected
- Songbook that fills with new verses after journeys
- Storm in a jar that clears the air or waters plants
- Marble shard that glows when someone's nearby fear rises
- Magnifying glass for seeing hidden details
- Deck of cards that always gives a random surprise
- Blanket that lets others peek at a dream
- Spare-parts bag that turns into almost anything

- Eyeglasses that always reveal the truth of a situation
- Cloak of shifting colors (helps with blending in or hiding)
- Seed that grows into a tiny shelter overnight
- Bottled starlight, providing soft light in darkness
- Quill that writes whatever words are most needed
- Acorn that, when planted, calls nearby animals to help
- Ribbon that ties broken things together, even feelings
- Journal whose written entries can be sent to a friend, wherever they are
- Boots that leave no tracks except in moonlight
- Herb pouch that brings gentle sleep to those nearby
- Crystal bead that chimes faintly when someone tells a lie

Special Items: Technological Wonders

- Smart glasses with live research notes
- Solar-powered multitool
- Collapsible drone scout
- Programmable LED badge (sends short messages)
- Synthwave headphones (mask ambient noise, play mood music)
- Modular utility bracelet (snap-on tools for any need)
- Foldable e-ink map (refreshes with new routes)
- Mini projector pen (shows holographic images)
- Self-warming mug
- Digital padlock (voice/unlock code of your choice)
- GPS token that flashes when near hidden paths
- Smart sticky notes (remind you at the right place/time)
- Portable water purifier straw
- Voice-recorder pin (saves and replays important phrases)
- Compact solar lantern (charges anything with a USB port)
- Collapsible climbing hook and rope
- Emergency signal beacon (for help or locating friends)
- Pressure-sensitive gloves (adjust grip for fine/strong work)
- Pocket-sized mini fan with aroma diffuser
- Digital compass that points to “home”
- Pocket 3D printer (makes tiny replacement parts)

- Pen-sized DNA scanner (reveals plant/animal identity instantly)
- Heartbeat sensor sticker (shares real-time pulse)
- Anti-gravity shoes (briefly reduce weight for easy climbs)
- Hologram photo cube (projects family or group photos in 3D)
- Biofeedback ring (lights up to reflect mood or stress levels)
- Self-unfolding tent (deploys shelter automatically)
- Mini compost pod (breaks down food scraps safely wherever you go)
- Quick-paint sprayer (covers surfaces or marks trails with eco-friendly paint)
- Personal weather monitor (accurate readouts for microclimate needs)
- Noise zone dome (creates a zone of quiet for study or rest at the push of a button)

Compiled Materials List

Needed for all sessions

- At least 4 or 5 six sided dice (or a dice rolling app downloaded on one or more devices)
 - Note that the dice used in roleplaying games are usually the ones with numbers on their sides rather than pips (dots), but either will work for this curriculum.
 - Tactile dice or large dice are great for accessibility.
 - (Optional but helpful) Dice rolling trays of some sort (search term: hexagon dice rolling tray) or use something like wide takeout containers
 - It's great to provide a pile of colorful dice which participants often like being able to choose from (search term: polyhedral six sided dice, and look for the options with numbers rather than pips/dots)
 - Dice bag, either a drawstring bag or even just a plastic zipper freezer bag (can be especially helpful if you have a pile of dice to store)
- Index card (for the X-Card) or a [pre-printed X-Card](#)
- Markers, colored pencils
- Paper, index cards, and writing utensils
- Printed [pregenerated character sheets](#)
- [Printed character sheets for core NPCs](#) (Teapot, Misty, Rockenroll, and for the full campaign, Chalix)
- Folder to hold character sheets
- Printed or digital version of the Lorekeeper Journal for your sessions:
 - Printable versions: [full curriculum with journeys 1-25](#), [abbreviated 10 session track](#), [Journeys of Love Archipelago 5 session set](#), [extra reflection pages](#)
 - Digital versions: [full curriculum with journeys 1-25](#), [abbreviated 10 session track](#), [Journeys of Love Archipelago 5 session set](#)
- Chalice and chalice lighting materials
- Any items for accessibility needs of your group

Needed for full campaign (Journeys 1-25)

- Copy of group covenant once it is made
- Printed map of Covenantia

- Printed blank character sheets (good to have a mix of [full page](#), [half page](#) (either just the half page or the half page with the quick reference guide), and potentially also [quarter page versions](#)). If you'd like to type directly into the formatted character sheets, you can use [this Canva template](#).
- Plastic gold coins (if using the Waycoin mechanic) or [printed coins](#)
- Waypoint scrolls (either crafted or [printed](#))

Recommended additional supplies

- Storage bin for the regular items (except the map and posterboard)
- Printed version of key facilitator resources from the Facilitators Guide (Quick Start Guide, Flow-Grounded Discernment Guide, Facilitator Cheat Sheet)
- Printed [Facilitator Resource Suggested Check In Questions](#)
- Lamination or plastic page protectors for character cards, or print them on heavier cardstock to make them more durable
- Character minis (crafting instructions in the Facilitators Guide)
 - Shrinky Dink plastic sheets (search terms: printable shrink plastic sheets, shrink film for crafts, or Shrinky Dinks printable sheets)
 - Plastic stands (search terms: plastic figure bases, plastic token stands)
 - Markers, toaster oven, foil or parchment paper
- Journals for participants
- Fidget toys

For Online Groups

- For character sheets, you will need digital copies of the [Google Doc character sheet](#). You may want to make a Google folder for your group's character sheets and any other supporting materials, and you can share the files from there.
- [Digital map of Covenantia](#)
- Access to digital versions of pregenerated characters (10 are in the Facilitators Guide and all 30 are in the Alternate Editions/Appendix) and various informational handouts
- Some sessions benefit from use of a digital whiteboard
- Some sessions suggest use of an online word cloud maker, like [mentimeter.com](#), [wordclouds.com](#), or similar)

Full Curriculum Campaign

- **Orientation Journey:** printed version of [story prompts](#)
- **Journey 1:** few copies of the [special item suggestion sheets](#), copies of the [universal translator item card](#)
- **Journey 2:** cardboard sheet or hard surface, crafting materials for map making (air dry clay, Play-Doh, Lego bricks, Wikki Stix, pipe cleaners, paper scraps or other crafting materials), [facilitator resource for recording participant preferences](#)
- **Journey 3:** 2 pieces of poster board or butcher paper, markers or writing utensils, paper, sticky notes, optional tactile items (Lego bricks, blocks, pipe cleaners, Wikki Stix)
- **Journey 4:** no additional materials needed
- **Journey 5:** [Size-O-Meter item description](#)
- **Journey 6:** no additional materials needed
- **Journey 7:** [Sequential Storytelling exercise table card](#), art materials for drawing rooms, Waypoint Scroll ([printed](#) or crafted), (optional) group journal or poster
- **Journey 8:** printed [Bonding Teashop Menu](#)
- **Journey 9:** (in person) collage making supplies including markers, glue sticks, scissors, magazines or other art supplies, and posterboard or some other medium for participants to make their collages on, (online) access to a word cloud maker
- **Journey 10:** everyday random item for the Deeper Joy Activity
- **Journey 11:** optional tactile materials for the ritual in this session: physical representations of items for the healing ritual: a small bottle of oil, a coin, a conch shell, and a rough brick or stone
- **Journey 12:** [Sequential Storytelling exercise table card](#), Waypoint Scroll ([printed](#) or crafted), (optional) group journal or poster
- **Journey 13:** optional craft sticks
- **Journey 14:** printed [information sheet for a tour of Bob's tower](#), (if use the Deep Talk blocks activity) prepared Jenga blocks or similar with values listed on them and a bag for the blocks; the alternate activity needs no materials
- **Journey 15:** (optional) means of playing music during the activity
- **Journey 16:** (if doing in person maze activity: four colors of markers, four tokens per four participants, prepare mazes in advance), printed [Forest Maze Challenges list](#), [item card for Charm of Honesty](#), (optional) false affirmation signs to post around your space
- **Journey 17:** [Sequential Storytelling exercise table card](#), Waypoint Scroll ([printed](#) or crafted), [handout for Cup and Saucer activity](#), (optional) group journal or poster

- **Journey 18:** printed [Cliffs of Exclusivity challenges resource](#), printed [treasure note](#)
- **Journey 19:** printed Get To Know Me/Us Manual, either copies of the [individual manuals](#) for all participants or one copy of the [group manual](#) (online: [individual digital version](#) and [group digital version](#))
- **Journey 20:** hoop or long pole for the activity; an alternate activity is included that requires no materials
- **Journey 21:** printed [signs for the inn](#), optional small stones or leaves for the ritual
- **Journey 22:** [Sequential Storytelling exercise table card](#), Waypoint Scroll ([printed](#) or crafted), (optional) picture of a boundary marker, (optional) group journal or poster
- **Journey 23:** preselected Would You Rather questions which can be written on index cards or printed and cut apart
- **Journey 24:** paper (regular or butcher) and art supplies
- **Journey 25:** [Sequential Storytelling exercise table card](#), (optional) group journal or poster, certificates of graduation ([downloadable pdf](#) or [Canva template](#)), (optional) supplies for making an Archway of Belonging (ribbons, streamers, cut out flowers, decorations), (optional) craft graduation caps (cardboard craft ones, paint pens, shapes to glue, glitter, crafting gems), any celebration supplies desired

Abbreviated Campaign

- **Session 1** (orientation, character creation, and journey 2): printed version of [story prompts](#), few copies of the [special item suggestion sheets](#), cardboard sheet or hard surface, crafting materials for map making (air dry clay, Play-Doh, Lego bricks, Wikki Stix, pipe cleaners, paper scraps or other crafting)
- **Session 2** (journeys 3 & 4): 2 pieces of poster board or butcher paper, markers or writing utensils, paper, sticky notes, optional tactile items (Lego bricks, blocks, pipe cleaners, Wikki Stix)
- **Session 3** (journey 5): [Size-O-Meter item description](#)
- **Session 4** (journey 8 character info & journey 9): no additional materials needed
- **Session 5** (journey 10 & 11): optional tactile materials for the ritual in this session: physical representations of items for the healing ritual: a small bottle of oil, a coin, a conch shell, and a rough brick or stone
- **Session 6** (journey 12 story & journey 13): optional craft sticks
- **Session 7** (journey 16): printed [Forest Maze Challenges list](#), [item card for the Charm of Honesty](#), (optional) false affirmation signs to post around your space

- **Session 8** (journey 18): printed [Cliffs of Exclusivity challenges resource](#), printed [treasure note](#)
- **Session 9** (journey 21): printed [signs for the inn](#), optional small stones or leaves for the ritual
- **Session 10** (journey 23 & 25): [Sequential Storytelling exercise table card](#), certificates of graduation ([downloadable pdf](#) or [Canva template](#)), (optional) supplies for making an Archway of Belonging (ribbons, streamers, cut out flowers, decorations), (optional) craft graduation caps (cardboard craft ones, paint pens, shapes to glue, glitter, crafting gems), any celebration supplies desired

Convergent Congregation single session

4 or 5 six sided dice

X-Card (created or [printed version](#))

[Pregenerated character sheets](#) (print about twice as many characters as the number of participants you expect for the session; no need to print them all though)

Duct tape (or washi tape as an alternative)

Permanent markers or some other writing utensil that will write on duct tape

Posterboard or something else to weave duct tape tapestry on

Papers and writing utensils

Any tactile storytelling tools you wish to use

Five Session Love Archipelago Campaign

Touchstone Activity Materials (for sessions using Touchstones):

- Smooth stones (from craft, garden, or hardware store)
- Acrylic paint markers
- Paper plates
- Permanent markers
- Sealant spray
- Optional: Wikki Stix

Flower of Love Activity Materials (for sessions using Flower of Love):

- Large butcher paper or poster board
- Markers
- Large paper cut into a circle (for the center)

- Large paper petals (for each value)
- Tape, glue, or staples (for assembly)

Single list of all other materials needed for the five sessions:

- [Pregenerated character sheets](#) or blank character sheets ([full page](#), [half page with quick references notes](#), [quarter page](#) versions)
- A few copies of the [special item & accessibility item suggestion sheets](#)
- Folders or envelopes to store character sheets and petals/stones
- Lorekeeper Journal: [printed version](#) or [online version](#)
- Optional: [facilitator resource for recording participant preferences](#)
- Paper or supplies for drawing character rooms (optional, session 1)
- Sticky notes (for covenants, session 2)
- Optional: tactile objects like vines (ribbon), fake or paper flowers, shells (to enrich description, session 2)
- Simple building supplies (paper, tape, blocks, Lego bricks, session 4)
- Optional: Craft supplies for bridge-building in session 4
- Bulletin board and staples, or extra poster board and tape (for Flower of Love display, session 5)

Glossary of Curriculum and Gaming Terminology

Airship: The home base for journeyers between adventures; a narrative anchor for starting and ending sessions.

Action: What a player describes their character doing; can be "Grounded" (logic/planning) or "Flow" (intuition/creativity).

Accessibility: Adapting play, materials, and communication so every participant can fully join in (e.g., large print, verbal descriptions, fidgets).

Campaign: A linked series of game sessions that tell an ongoing story (sometimes called a "season" or "arc").

Chalice, Chalice Lighting, and Chalice Extinguishing: Unitarian Universalist specific elements of Journeys. If your group is not Unitarian Universalist, feel free to substitute another ritual or reading for opening and closing sessions.

Character Sheet/Profile: Where players record details about their character's name, number, pronouns, style, group role, motivation, special item, and description.

Check-in Questions: Prompts for participants to share how they're feeling, arriving, or what they need as a session begins.

Collaborative Storytelling: The core ethos of RPGs; everyone participates in creating the unfolding story.

Covenant: A group agreement about how participants will treat each other, including values and boundaries.

Dice/Dice Roll: Used to resolve uncertain or significant actions; most often a six-sided die (d6).

Exact Number (on a roll): Rolling your character's chosen number exactly. It's always a success and lets you ask a special question.

Facilitator: The person running the game (“Lorekeeper” in this curriculum); guides the world, adjudicates rules, supports safety and inclusion.

Flow: A type of action or way of problem-solving relying on intuition, creativity, risk-taking, or spontaneous choices.

Grounded: A type of action or approach focused on logic, planning, careful observation, or precision.

Group Role: A character’s primary function or personality niche in the group (examples: “healer,” “planner,” “supporter,” “leader,” “entertainer”).

Helper Roll/Team Action: When one player assists another’s action, providing an extra die (max 3 dice); must describe how help is given.

Journeys: The name for sessions/adventures in Deeper Joy.

Journeyer: A player character participating in the story.

Lorekeeper: The game facilitator; sets the scene, describes the world, voices NPCs, guides actions and safety.

Motivation: A character’s core goal or what drives their actions.

Non-Player Character (NPC): Characters controlled by the Lorekeeper, not by players.

One-Shot: A stand-alone game session, not part of an ongoing campaign.

Player Character (PC): A character controlled by a player.

Pregenerated Character: A ready-made character profile supplied by facilitators for quick entry or new players.

Roleplaying Game (RPG): A game where players create characters to tell a story together, with decisions shaped by rules and chance.

Safety Tool/X-Card: A method for pausing or changing play if someone feels uneasy; anyone can tap, hold, or say “X” at any time.

Scene: A contained stretch of gameplay, like a scene in a book or film, focused on a location, problem, or event.

Session: One full time of play; may cover part or all of a journey.

Session Flow: The general steps of each meeting: check-in, open in character, encounter scenario, investigate, act, resolve, reflect, return.

Special Item: A unique item each character possesses; must not be a weapon.

Style: The distinctive way a character presents themselves: appearance, attitude, energy.

Turn Order: The pattern in which players take actions (can be flexible in this game).