

# The Convergent Congregation

*A Unitarian Universalist Journeys of Deeper Joy single session journey*

[Full curriculum and resources available online here](#)

## Welcome to Journeys of Deeper Joy

Journeys of Deeper Joy is a Unitarian Universalist roleplaying game where participants create characters and tell a story together in the land of Covenantia. Instead of trying to “win,” the group collaborates, makes choices, and explores UU values like covenant, inclusion, and community through shared adventure.

A facilitator, called the Lorekeeper, describes what is happening in the story, plays the world and its non-player characters, and invites participants to say what their characters do next. Simple dice rules add surprise and structure, but the heart of the game is listening, imagination, and making space for everyone.

These mini-offerings work well with youth groups, young adult groups, and other like-age gatherings, and they also shine in mixed-age or fully intergenerational settings. They are designed to be flexible and multigenerational, so you can adapt them for children, youth, and adults together by drawing on the ‘Facilitating Different Ages Together’ guidance in the Facilitators Guide.

## Before You Begin: What Facilitators Need

You do not have to be a gamer or an expert storyteller to run these sessions. Curiosity, care for the group, and willingness to improvise are enough. To get started, Lorekeepers should review:

- From the Facilitators Guide: ([most recent version can be found here](#))
  - “How to Facilitate: A Guide” (what a Lorekeeper is, core philosophy)
  - “Get to Know Us! Core Dynamics & Character Creation” (character basics and the grounded/flow number), although the character creation section can be skipped if you are using pregenerated characters
  - “Rolling the Dice: How Do Actions Work?” (the simple 1 to 6 system)
  - “Journeying: Lesson Plan Structure and Other Notes” (typical session flow, X-Card, covenant)
  - “Accessibility in Journeys of Deeper Joy” and “Facilitating Different Ages Together” (key inclusion practices)
  - “Lorekeeper Cheat Sheet”
- Quick-reference PDFs: [Quick Start Guide \(one-page rules overview\)](#) and [Grounded/Flow Discernment Guide](#)

A brief review of these pieces is usually enough for a successful one-shot or mini-campaign, especially if you keep the focus on conversation and collaboration.

# Running a Session: Simple Step-by-Step

## 1. Prepare your space and materials

- At least two six-sided dice per group, X-Card (or equivalent safety tool), character sheets or pregenerated characters, and any specific supplies listed in the session.
- Choose a space where everyone can see and hear each other and where movement, fidgets, and side activities are welcome.

## 2. Open and set the tone

- Begin with a brief check-in and a short chalice lighting line such as “Welcome, journeymen, to the Beloved Community we’re building...” adapted to your group’s ages.
- Explain or review the X-Card and, if you’re using it, the Step Away option.

## 3. Remind the group of behavioral covenants

- Before you begin play, briefly review the covenant that will guide your time together.
  - If this group has its own covenant, name it and highlight 2–3 key promises.
  - If not, remind participants of your congregation’s or program’s existing covenant and how it applies in this space (for example, how you listen, speak, and care for one another during the game).

## 4. Introduce the game and characters

- In one or two sentences: “This is a collaborative storytelling game. You each have a character in Covenantia, and together we decide what happens next.”
- Use either:
  - Pregenerated characters (fastest), inviting people to choose one and share their character’s name and one detail, or
  - A simplified character-creation process (name, grounded/flow number, role, style, motivation, special item).
- For mixed-age or younger groups, offer to read options aloud, use simpler character sheets, or picture-based cards.

## 5. Explain the grounded/flow and dice mechanic (briefly)

- Every character has a number from 1–6 that shows how grounded (careful, thoughtful) or flow (intuitive, impulsive) they usually are.
- When someone tries something risky:
  - Decide if it’s Grounded (slow, careful, logical) or Flow (gut-feeling, bold, creative).
  - Roll one die:
    - Grounded: succeed on your number or lower.
    - Flow: succeed on your number or higher.

- Extra dice can be added when other characters help, up to 3 total.
- Emphasize that failed rolls move the story forward; they are story twists, not mistakes.

## 6. Follow the basic story rhythm

- Previous Session Recap (for Love Archipelago) or brief intro for a one-shot.
- Start on the Airship or boat: describe what characters are doing as the scene opens.
- Present the situation: read or summarize the “What is happening / Who / Challenges” section for the specific session.
- Repeated loop:
  - Ask, “What would you like to do?”
  - Let participants investigate, talk, and suggest actions.
  - Name actions as grounded or flow, roll if needed, then narrate what happens.
- Resolution and reflection: once the key problem is addressed (or time is nearly up), bring the group back together to notice what changed and what they learned.

## 7. Close and debrief

- Use a short chalice extinguishing line, adjusted for age, and invite one simple reflection question (for example, “What did your character learn about community today?”).
- Note key story decisions and any emotional moments in your Lorekeeper Journal so future sessions have continuity.

## Keeping Inclusion Central

Whether you are running a single Convergent Congregation session or all five Love Archipelago journeys, treat inclusion and accessibility as core design elements, not add-ons.

- Use multiple ways to participate: speaking in character, suggesting ideas, drawing, building, or using side activities are all valid contributions.
- Plan for mixed ages: use concrete, sensory language; keep descriptions shorter; and pause to check for understanding, especially with younger participants.
- Normalize safety tools: remind the group that using the X-Card or stepping away is welcomed, not disruptive. People matter more than plot.
- Invite but don’t pressure: offer chances to share feelings or reflections, and allow passing at any time.
- Consult the full Facilitators Guide as needed: “Accessibility in Journeys of Deeper Joy,” “Facilitating Different Ages Together,” the Lorekeeper Accessibility Checklist, and “Introducing Side Activities” all offer concrete practices you can bring into these short formats.

# The Convergent Congregation

This Journey is a special session structured for a one time session of the curriculum. It is inspired by Whole Church Religious Education and creating belonging in community.

## Prior to the Journey

- Review and print (or have digitally available) pregenerated characters and be ready to share them. Review the structure of this journey.
- **Supplies Needed:**
  - Dice
  - X-Card (prepare beforehand or use [printable version](#))
  - Duct tape and a posterboard; alternately use Washi tape for a colorful alternative
  - Permanent markers or some other writing utensil that will write on duct tape
  - Papers, any necessary other art supplies, and writing utensils
  - Any tactile storytelling tools you wish to use

## Modification Notes for Lorekeeper:

- For characters: If offering in person, print out the [pregenerated characters](#) to hand out ([this version](#) is more accessible for younger participants). For virtual, it will be useful to have a document where you can assign a participant to each character sheet when they choose them.
- For X-Card: Offer that virtual participants can type x in the chat or say “X” or “X-Card” aloud.
- For activity: Use a whiteboard feature to have everyone share their word. (Optionally, decorate the whiteboard in a fun way!)

## Opening Segment

*(Suggested time: 5-7 minutes)*

Since this is a one-time offering, it is important to use this time to establish the X-Card and choose a pregenerated character. But first, take some time to light a chalice together.

## Chalice Lighting

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.

## Introducing the X-Card

- **Present the X-Card:** An index card with a big “X” on it (or a [printed version](#)).
- **Share:**  
“This is called the X-Card. It’s a way for us to keep our game safe and comfortable. If at any point something in the story makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe you can raise the card, tap it, or say ‘X-Card’ out loud. We’ll stop, no questions asked, and adjust.”
- **Share:**  
“You don’t have to explain why. You can just X it. Maybe the story reminds you of something hard, maybe it’s too intense, or maybe it’s just the direction the story is going makes you uncomfortable. Any reason is valid. The X-Card is here so we all know that the people at the table matter more than the game.”
- **Optional Example:**  
“For instance, if we were about to roleplay being stuck in a cave and you have an intense fear of caves, you could X-Card it. We’d shift the story and maybe be outside under the stars in the dark instead.”
- **Share:**  
“Does everyone understand how to use it? You can also say ‘pause’ or ‘X’ as well as make an X with your arms if you prefer. The important part is that you always have permission to keep yourself safe and comfortable. We’ll respect it every time. That’s how we keep this game a community that we can all feel like we belong in.”

## Activity

*(Suggested time: 5-10 minutes)*

### Duct Tape Tapestry

Give each participant a strip of duct tape (silver, or colorful if available) and a marker. Invite them to write a word, phrase, or symbol for a gift they bring to the community (ex. “laughter,” “listening,” “hope,” “creativity”).

As they finish, they place their strip onto a shared posterboard, overlapping and weaving the tape into a collage tapestry. At the end, the group has a single, shimmering “patchwork” tapestry that holds all their gifts together.

Variation: Use Washi tape instead to make a smaller scale tapestry.

Note: If you want to get right into the roleplaying instead of doing the activity first, you can do the weaving of the tapestry during the story itself as the roleplaying unfolds.

## Roleplaying Framework

You are invited to go into more or less depth with this adventure depending on how much time you have for your session.

### Meet Teapot (Introduction for Participants)

- **Facilitator reads aloud (or paraphrases):**  
Steam rises gently as a figure approaches. Their head is shaped like a teapot, always warm and welcoming. This is Teapot, guide of the *Beloved Community Collective Airship*. Teapot is curious, community-minded, and loves rituals of welcome.
- **Teapot speaks:**  
“Greetings, journeyers. I am Teapot. I travel with the *Beloved Community Collective Airship*, helping companions like you discover your gifts and share them with the world. Every voice is a thread, and today you will add your own to the weaving of the Convergent Congregation.”

### Character Selection Ritual (5–7 minutes)

- **Step 1: Present Characters (2 min)**  
Lay out pregenerated character sheets (Ripple, Solenne, Drift, Spork, Luma, etc.).
- **Teapot says:**  
“Here are journeyers who have sailed with the *Beloved Community Collective Airship* before. Today, you will step into one of their stories. Each carries unique gifts. Which one will you become today?”
- **Step 2: Invite Connection (2 min)**  
Facilitator prompt:  
“Look at these companions. Which one do you feel drawn to? Which gift matches what you’d like to explore today?”

- **Step 3: Claiming Ritual (2–3 min)**

When participants choose, invite them to:

- Share the character's name.
- Share one thing they like about the character.
- Optional: Add a flourish (nickname, doodle, token).

- **Teapot responds:**

"By sharing their name, you become their guide in the Convergent Congregation. They are yours for today's journey."

## Scene Setting

- **Share:**

The *Beloved Community Collective Airship* arrives at the Convergent Congregation, a great gathering at a glass castle in the sky where beings come to contribute to the Tapestry of Belonging. However, the tapestry seems to be fraying.

- **Teapot (facilitator voice):**

"Welcome, journeyers. Each year, beings from all across Covenantia gather here to weave the Tapestry of Belonging. But this year, some groups have hesitated. Without every gift, the tapestry is unraveling."

## Quick Dice Tutorial (woven into scene)

- **Share:**

As you approach the tapestry, you notice that the tapestry's glimmer is wavering.

- **Teapot explains:**

"Each of you carries a number, a balance between Grounded (careful, steady) and Flow (imaginative, wild). When you take a Grounded action, roll the dice and succeed by rolling at or below your number. When you take a Flow action, you succeed by rolling at or above your number. If you roll your exact number, not only do you succeed, but you also gain a special insight."

- **Invite participants:**

"Try a small action to test this out! Maybe steady your hands or think logically about something (a Grounded roll) or share encouragement (a Flow roll). Let us see how the world responds."

- **Provide feedback** to the participants based on their rolls.

## Introducing the Representatives

- **Share**

As we interact with the tapestry, we notice four different individuals who are also approaching the tapestry, all of whom seem troubled or uncomfortable in some way.  
(*Lorekeeper introduces the characters. No need to use the dialogue immediately; that is inspiration for you as the scene unfolds.*)

- **Echo of the Stone Choir (they/them)**

- Appearance: A stone figure with glowing cracks, voice deep and slow.
- Dialogue: “*Our songs take time. No one waits for us. Why should we sing?*”

- **Zephyra of the Sky Dancers (she/they)**

- Appearance: Bird-cloud hybrid, feathers shifting like wind currents.
- Dialogue: “*We improvise with joy, but they call us chaos. Why should we stay?*”

- **Brook of the Riverfolk (he/they)**

- Appearance: A watery figure with ripples shimmering.
- Dialogue: “*We want to belong, but our gifts slip through the loom like water.*”

- **Kindle of the Flamekeepers (she/her)**

- Appearance: A small candle-person, flame flickering nervously.
- Dialogue: “*Our light is small, and others outshine us. Why should we offer it?*”

- **Prompt:**

Your group approaches theirs. What would you like to do?

## Branching Structure

- **Echo of the Stone Choir**

- **Fear:** Being too slow, left behind, unheard.
- **Possible Approaches:**
  - **Grounded:** Show patience, slow down the pace, create a rhythm where Echo's deep voice can be the heartbeat.
  - **Flow:** Turn Echo's slowness into a dramatic chant that anchors everyone else's weaving.
- **If successful:** Echo hums a steady bass note that strengthens the Tapestry.
- **If failed:** Echo withdraws, but leaves behind a single glowing pebble, a reminder that even slow voices matter.
- **Dialogue Inspiration**
  - **Opening Fear:** “*Our songs take too long. No one waits for us. Why should we add our voices?*”

- **If participants are patient (Grounded):** “You... you slowed down for me? Perhaps my voice can be the heartbeat after all.”
  - **If participants join in Flow (dramatic chant):** “Ahh... you’ve turned my slowness into rhythm. Together, we can hold the weaving steady.”
  - **If participants fail / dismiss Echo:** “You are like the others. I will sit in silence. But here, take this pebble. Even small stones carry memory.”
- **Zephyra of the Sky Dancers**
  - **Fear:** Being seen as chaotic, too unpredictable to belong.
  - **Possible Approaches:**
    - *Grounded:* Show how improvisation can be patterned, like jazz or swirling leaves.
    - *Flow:* Join Zephyra in improvising a silly or joyful movement/song until it becomes infectious.
  - **If successful:** Zephyra’s feathers burst into radiant color, weaving brightness into the Tapestry.
  - **If failed:** She flies away in frustration but drops a feather, still adding beauty.
  - **Dialogue Inspiration**
    - **Opening Fear:** “We swirl and improvise with joy, but they call us chaos. Why should we stay where we’re not wanted?”
    - **If participants Ground improvisation into pattern:** “You found structure in our dance? Then perhaps our wild colors have a place in this weaving.”
    - **If participants Flow with her in joyful movement:** [laughs] “You fly with me! Then our song is not chaos, but celebration. Let us spin color into the cloth.”
    - **If participants fail / reject improvisation:** “You fear the wind’s freedom. Then I will ride it elsewhere. But here, take this feather. Beauty still falls from my wings.”
- **Brook of the Riverfolk**
  - **Fear:** Their gift slips away, nothing they offer can “hold.”
  - **Possible Approaches:**
    - *Grounded:* Create a container (a bowl, a channel) for Brook’s water showing that flow can be held without being diminished.
    - *Flow:* Invite Brook to “flow between the threads,” binding them together like water soaking cloth.
  - **If successful:** The tapestry shimmers as if alive, water flowing through its weave.
  - **If failed:** Brook ripples away, but leaves behind a single shell, still a sign of connection.
  - **Dialogue Inspiration**
    - **Opening Fear:** “Whatever we bring flows away. Nothing we offer can be held. Why weave water into cloth?”

- **If participants create a container (Grounded):** “You made a place for me... you show that flow can still be cradled. Then I will pour into the weaving.”
  - **If participants invite Brook to flow between threads (Flow):** “Between, around, through... I can bind the fibers together! My ripples will carry the tapestry’s song.”
  - **If participants fail / ignore Brook:** “Then I will ripple back to the river. But take this shell, a memory of water’s song.”
- **Kindle of the Flamekeepers**
  - **Fear:** Their light is too small, overshadowed by brighter fires.
  - **Possible Approaches:**
    - *Grounded:* Demonstrate how even small flames are crucial, a candle can guide in darkness.
    - *Flow:* Gather everyone to shield Kindle, then celebrate her spark until it flares brighter.
  - **If successful:** Kindle’s flame becomes the glowing thread that illuminates the entire Tapestry.
  - **If failed:** Kindle flickers out of sight but leaves a trail of smoke, reminding others of her spark.
  - **Dialogue Inspiration**
    - **Opening Fear:** “My flame is so small. Others burn brighter. Why should I offer light that is always outshone?”
    - **If participants show small flames matter (Grounded):** “Even a candle can guide in the dark? Then my spark has worth. Let me shine within the tapestry.”
    - **If participants celebrate and shield Kindle’s spark (Flow):** “You cheer for me, you shield me — and my flame grows! Together we blaze bright.”
    - **If participants fail / dismiss Kindle:** “Then I will flicker out of sight. But even as smoke, my spark drifts. Remember me.”

## Optional Teapot’s Facilitator Prompts

- Potential Teapot dialogue for interacting with Echo of the Stone Choir (with a fear of being too slow):
  - **Grounded Nudge:** “Echo worries their voice is too slow. Could you show patience, or create a rhythm that lets their slowness shine?”
  - **Flow Nudge:** “Or perhaps you could join Echo in a chant or song, turning their deep tones into something bold and joyful?”
- Potential Teapot dialogue for interacting with Zephyra of the Sky Dancers (with a fear of being chaotic)
  - **Grounded Nudge:** “Zephyra longs for others to see the pattern in their swirling. Could you help shape their flight into something steady?”

- **Flow Nudge:** “Or might you leap into their dance, embracing their improvisation so they feel celebrated instead of scorned?”
- Potential Teapot dialogue for interacting with Brook of the Riverfolk (with a fear of slipping away)
  - **Grounded Nudge:** “Brook worries their gift cannot be held. Could you build or imagine a container to hold their flowing waters?”
  - **Flow Nudge:** “Or could you invite Brook to ripple through the threads themselves, binding the weaving together in motion?”
- Potential Teapot dialogue for interacting with Kindle of the Flamekeepers (with a fear of being too small)
  - **Grounded Nudge:** “Kindle fears her flame is too small. Could you remind her that even small lights guide us in darkness?”
  - **Flow Nudge:** “Or perhaps you could celebrate her spark, cheer it on, and help it blaze brighter by surrounding her with encouragement?”

## Resolutions

- **If 3–4 groups join:** The Tapestry of Belonging is strong and radiant. Teapot: “*There is something beautiful about everyone being able to share their gifts with the Convergent Congregation.*”
- **If 1–2 groups join:** The Tapestry is patchy but still holds, showing imperfection is part of community. Teapot: “*Even frayed threads can bind us.*”
- **If none join:** Teapot helps weave in the duct tape collage from the participants, and the lesson becomes: “*Even when groups fear each other, your threads can still begin the weaving.*”
- **Twist:** The tapestry awakens and offers the wisdom “*Community is never finished. Keep weaving.*”

## Possible Additional Elements

- **Repair the “Connections Loom”**  
Participants discover the ornate Connections Loom, a magical or symbolic weaving device central to the community’s harmony, is damaged. Each group (or representative) finds a way to offer something (ex. thread, gesture, word, or item) needed to repair a strand or section of the loom. Collaboration is essential: the loom repairs only when contributions are offered together and with intention. The process may reveal stories of old connections or spark new ones.
- **Create a Ritual, Chant, Gesture, or Rhythm Blending the Four Groups**  
Journeymen collaborate to invent a group ritual, a shared chant, gesture, clapping rhythm,

or dance that weaves together the essence of all four groups. Each group contributes a movement, word, or sound that symbolizes their unique gift. The result is a ritual that's performed together, reinforcing unity through joyful participation. Facilitators can encourage repetition, echoing, or layering to make the ritual feel meaningful and whole.

- **Construct a Shared Symbol**

Participants design and create a physical or imaginary symbol (such as a flag, mosaic, or sculpture) that features motifs or materials from each group. The act of choosing colors, shapes, and placement involves cooperation and compromise, producing an artifact the community can display or carry as a reminder of their shared purpose.

- **Hold a Compassion Circle**

The group invites all characters to participate in a "Compassion Circle," where each participant shares a strength or challenge, and receives words of support from the others. This activity can use talking sticks, touchstones, or symbolic objects, and can be framed as a way to make every member of the four groups feel seen, valued, and included before the final challenge or celebration.

## Guiding Framework for the Journey

- **Start the Journey:** Set the scene by describing what is going on first.
- **Investigate:** Let participants ask questions, observe, and roleplay. Introduce non-player characters (NPCs) and places with small details that invite imagination.
- **Develop an idea:** Encourage creative ideas and attempting to do things.
- **Act out potential ideas or solutions:** Participants attempt their chosen actions. The Lorekeeper names whether the action is Flow or Grounded and asks for a roll.
- **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, they can keep trying or the situation can develop further in later sessions.

## Closing Reflection

*(Use the remaining time)*

- **Ask:** What does the tapestry look like for our community with the gifts of all of its members?

### 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.”)*