

Journeys of Deeper Joy Lorekeeper Orientation

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Agenda

- Welcome & Chalice Lighting
- Activity: Improv Introductions
- Safety Discussion
- Inclusion Discussion
- Character Creation Process
- Bonding Teashop Mini Challenges
- Anatomy of a Journey
- Anatomy of a Review Journey
- Lorekeeper Journal and how to communicate as a team
- Lorekeeper/facilitator scheduling
- Tour of curriculum materials, location of regularly needed materials (writing utensils, coloring utensils, paper, etc)
- Sequential storytelling exercise
- Distribution of “Teapot Approved” certificates
- Closing & Chalice Extinguishing

Timing for the Orientation

This entire orientation will likely take two to two and a half hours to complete. If you need to need to shorten it, here are some suggestions:

- Ask participants to try out creating their characters on their own as part of their preparation for the orientation. Instead of creating characters during the session, invite participants to introduce their characters during that segment. Then ask if anyone has any questions about the character creation process. If someone isn’t able to create a character ahead of time, you can invite them to use one of the pregenerated characters for the Bonding Teashop Mini Challenges activity.
- Skip the Improv Introductions activity. There is another chance for some practice roleplaying with the Bonding Teashop Mini Challenges.
- Instead of going through the Anatomy of a Review Journey in the orientation, include it in your packet and simply refer participants to that section to review on their own later. Note that this is different from the Anatomy of a Journey and that one is recommended to be included even in shorter orientations.
- Plan to touch base about team scheduling in the orientation but do the actual scheduling at another time.

Homework for participants

- Review the Facilitator Guide prior to the orientation.
- If youth will be participants in the curriculum, consider asking Lorekeepers to view the UU Institute program on working with youth (<https://uuinstitute.org/courses/dreyouthvolunteer-810/>). If you are asking your volunteers to do this, consider having funds available to cover the cost.
- You can suggest they view the introduction and demo videos for the curriculum ahead of time, or at least make sure they have the links.

Handouts and materials needed for the orientation

- X-Card ([preprinted](#) or index card and marker for making one)
- Name tags, writing utensils
- [Printouts of pregenerated characters](#) and [Teapot's character sheet](#) (if you will have younger participants in your group, you may want to have the [simplified pregenerated character sheets](#) additionally or instead)
- Map of Covenantia (the one you'll be using for the curriculum itself)
- Six-sided dice (recommend having a pile of them available)
- "Teapot Approved" completion certificates ([Canva template](#) or [printable pdf](#))
- Box or location where curriculum materials will be stored, prepped with materials that will typically be found there
- [Improv character descriptions](#)
- [Bonding Teashop mini scene handouts](#)
- [Menu for the Bonding Teashop](#)
- Couple of copies of the [sample items handout](#) (or [simpler version](#)) for character creation process
- [Table card for sequential storytelling exercise](#), numbers to distribute (numbered index cards or pieces of paper, one for everyone in the group)
- Whatever is needed for populating your Facilitator/Lorekeeper schedule
- [Sample text for initial and reminder emails for the orientation](#) (copy the file and save it to your own drive so that you'll be able to edit it)

Contents for Participant Packets

- [Orientation welcome letter](#)
- Blank character sheets ([full page](#) and [half page with quick reference notes](#))
- [Facilitator quick reference sheets](#)
- [Anatomy of a Journey](#)
- [Anatomy of a Review Journey](#)
- [Sample pages from Lorekeeper Journal](#)
- [Participant preference sheet](#)

- Other items for the specific to your congregation or community which may include: incident response form, sample guest registration form, teacher roles & responsibilities, process for substitutes and switching dates

Setting Up Your Space (in person orientations)

- Recommend sitting around a table where everyone can interact with each other easily.
- Have curriculum materials nearby for the tour.
- Have a chalice available.
- Set out name tags and markers and invite participants to make one for themselves when they arrive.
- Lay out some pregenerated characters on the table where you are meeting.
- Place six-sided dice in a pile on the table, if available.
- Make sure the space is as accessible as possible (clear paths for mobility devices, seating options with and without arms, good lighting, and as little background noise as you can manage).
- If possible, provide a quiet corner or side room where someone can step away briefly if needed.
- Suggestion: Include child care (preemptively arrange it and offer it, whether or not it has been requested in advance).
- Suggestion: Provide lunch or snacks during the orientation; if lunch, it often works to consider it a working lunch and simply take a quick break after the improv activity for participants to get their lunch and then proceed with the orientation while everyone is eating.

Online Orientation Recommendations

- Invite participants to have a chalice or candle near where they will be joining the session.
- Consider inviting participants to log in 5–10 minutes early to check audio/video, practice using the chat, and settle in before you formally begin.
- Name how to use the X-Card and Step Away tools in an online setting, for example, typing “X” in the chat, using a reaction, or turning off camera and stepping away when needed. This helps to model use of the safety tools for the curriculum.
- Send the participant packet out digitally ahead of time (or even mail or deliver printed copies). Share links to digital copies of key materials (character sheets, map of Covenantia) in the chat and in a follow-up email so participants interact with them in ways that they need.
- Have a plan for sharing instructions for the improv and mini challenges with participants. You may want to plan to send individual assignments for those (the text of each handout) ahead of time so that you will not need to worry about that during the session.
- Use clear turn-taking practices (like a visible participant list for who’s “up” next or inviting people by name).

- Ask ahead of time if anyone needs specific access supports online (captions, slower pacing, repeating questions in chat, preference for audio-only, etc.) and briefly name those supports at the start.

Welcome & Chalice Lighting

- Welcome everyone to the orientation and thank them for their commitment.
- Invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves & name something that brings them joy.
- Chalice lighting (below)
- Review agenda

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.

Activity: Improv Introductions

Explain that they will be getting into the game playing mood with a little bit of improv. You will be distributing descriptions of characters from the curriculum. They should introduce themselves as if they were that character, including some physical details about the character and embodying the personality of the character. Encourage them to have fun.

To start, you'll be shifting into roleplaying mode yourself and acting as Teapot, one of the core non-player characters in this curriculum.

Pause for a distinct shift, then say: *"Welcome 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. My name is Teapot, and I'll be helping to guide your participants through their journeys in Covenantia. I may look a little funny to you with my porcelain skin and my teapot head, but here in Covenantia, we have far more variety than you do in your human world! Could you each introduce yourselves?"*

After the round of character introductions, ask them to share (in character) what's their favorite thing to do in Covenantia.

Afterwards, invite participants to share things they liked about what other folks did in this activity.

Characters Included

- Misty (Core NPC)
- Rockenroll (Core NPC)
- Chalix (Core NPC, introduced in Journey 7)
- Dew Drop (Journey 8)
- Sky the Porpoise (Journeys 10 & 11)
- Bob the Cyborg Beaver (Journey 14)
- Robin Willow (Journey 15)
- Spinney the Spatula (Journey 18)
- Innkeeper Pillow (Journey 21)

Safety Discussion

Move through these topics, ensuring adequate coverage of each. Allow for brief questions as needed.

- Fire: review your procedures, evacuation routes, meeting points.
- Medical: review locations of first aid kits and emergency contacts numbers, as well as your procedures.
- Intruder: explain your procedures.
- Note any needed overall emergency contact information (congregational staff, security, local emergency services).
- If your program has a standard incident report form, review that (and include it in the participant packet). Emphasize the need to be in communication with leaders if anything has happened, and who to be in touch with. When in doubt about whether to communicate about something, choose to communicate.

- Child protection policies (for instance, always have two unrelated background checked adults in the room with children and youth, any mandated reporting requirements, etc).
- Review your program's sign in (regular attendees and guests) and dismissal procedures.
- Review your program's disruptive behavior procedures.

Safety Resources

- [https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/safety-for-re](https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/safety-for-religion-and-ministry)
- <https://www.uua.org/lifespan/re-sources/youth-safety-guidelines>
- <https://www.uua.org/safe/youth>
- <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/ten-non-negotiable-rules-for-child-safety-in-churches/>

Inclusion Discussion

- Introduce the X-Card:

The X-Card is a tool to empower participants and make it easy to speak up when uncomfortable. This card, when raised or tapped on, enables participants to let people know that things are uncomfortable, so that a change can happen. 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 cannot physically get to the card easily. 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 participants.
- Introduce "Step Away" as an option, and discuss whether you would like to use this:

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 can 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.
- Journeys of Deeper Joy is designed with inclusion at the forefront, and this includes a number of elements. These are discussed in the Facilitator Guide:
 - Naming needs proactively rather than waiting for participants to request accommodations
 - Providing accommodations for diverse needs, for instance preferences and needs around visual and auditory descriptions and information input methods
 - Having accessible safety tools, including the X-Card and Step Away
- Actively discuss participant preferences. Review the participant preference sheet where these can be recorded. If you have rotating facilitators, decide on how this information

will be shared with the team and how to add to it over time.

All-Ages Inclusion

Note to presenter: Adapt this section based on the age groups that will be present in your program. Skip if working with a single age group.

If your program will include participants of different ages, take a moment to discuss age-inclusive practices. Invite discussion:

- What needs might different age groups have? (For example: younger participants may need more movement breaks, simpler vocabulary, or visual aids; adults may need to practice stepping back to center youth voices)
- How can we create space where everyone belongs, regardless of age?
- What are some ways Lorekeepers can encourage and center younger voices in mixed-age settings?

Key practices to name:

- Adjust language and pacing for your youngest participants
- Use multiple participation pathways (storytelling, side activities, movement)
- Check in frequently to ensure understanding
- Model active listening and turn-taking across age differences

Refer Lorekeepers to the "Facilitating Different Ages Together" section in the Facilitators Guide for detailed strategies and suggestions.

Character Creation Process

Acting as Teapot, use the directions and suggested script from either the Facilitators Guide ("Teambuilding Exercise: Who Do You Want to Be?" or "Get to Know Us! Core Dynamics & Character Creation") or the Curriculum Journey #1 ("Character Creation Introduction" and "Character Creation Activity"). You can use the linked Table of Contents in the Facilitators Guide to find the section, if needed.

Bonding Teashop Mini Challenges

Say: Now that you have characters, I'd like to introduce you to someplace special in the land of Covenantia. This is a place in Bonding Harbor. (Indicate where that is on your display copy of the map of Covenantia.)

Bonding Teashop sits near the dock of Bonding Harbor, painted in cheerful seafoam green with a bell on the door. This is the community hub and social heart of the town. Upon entering, you

meet the owner Briney, an elderly sea turtle whose shell is carved with intricate swirling patterns that look like waves.

There are some things that have gone wrong in the Teashop, and we need your help to fix them! We are going to have a chance for each of you to help lead the rest of our characters through one of the challenges. (Distribute mini challenge handouts.)

Next: One by one, invite Lorekeepers to facilitate the mini challenges. When it comes time for the characters to suggest what they will do, invite group discussion as needed on whether to designate something as Flow or Grounded as well as questions to aid specifying the action. You can direct them to the facilitator materials in the orientation packet as well.

If your group of Lorekeepers at the orientation is small, it may help for you to have a character for these mini challenges. You can use one of the pregenerated characters or your own, if you have created one.

Mini Challenges

1. A large order of dried tea leaves has arrived, but the supplier forgot to label what is in each bag.
2. Briney is upset because he has lost his good luck charm for the shop.
3. A young sea turtle bursts in the door and cries out for help. He is trying to deliver flour, sugar and eggs, but he forgot to tie up the boat and it is floating away.
4. Briney ordered a large quantity of what he thought was seashells for making crafts to sell at the shop, but he accidentally ordered shell pasta instead.
5. Three porpoises enter the Teashop. Two are chatting and go sit at one table while the third flops with a sigh at another table and keeps looking over at the other two with a forlorn look.
6. When the group tries to exit the shop, they discover that a large cat has fallen asleep outside right against the door such that they cannot open the door. Briney is sorting crates at the back door at the moment and can't move them out so going out the back door is not an option.

Anatomy of a Journey

Direct Lorekeepers to this handout in their packet. Briefly talk through each of the items.

Anatomy of a Review Journey

Direct Lorekeepers to this handout in their packet. Briefly talk through each of the items.

Note that you will be doing the Sequential Storytelling exercise as a group at the end of this orientation.

Lorekeeper Journal

- Talk about the importance of taking notes about what happens in sessions, both to help you remember as well as to communicate with other Lorekeepers.
- Direct Lorekeepers to the sample journal page in their packet and briefly talk through it.
- Discuss whether the Lorekeeper team would like this journal to be kept physically or digitally, where it will be stored, and how to access it.
- Emphasize the importance of recording things as soon as possible after each session, mostly for doing it before they forget what happened.

Lorekeeper Team Scheduling

- If you have a rotating team, take time now to populate and/or review the schedule.
- Discuss your program's procedures on how to reschedule and switch dates.
- Discuss any other logistics that are needed for your program that have not already been covered.

Tour of Curriculum Materials

Provide a hands-on tour of curriculum materials, where regular supplies are stored, how session materials will be prepared, and where any other needed materials may be. Review how to go about requesting additional materials and how to submit requests for reimbursement for materials they purchase. If applicable, discuss the budget available for materials.

Sequential Storytelling Exercise

Now we're going to work together to tell the story of our time here together today. This is the same exercise that is used in the review sessions of the curriculum. Make sure that the table card is available and visible for this exercise. If online, paste the following into the chat:

- *When it is your turn to add to our story, you can:*
 - Use “and then...” for what happened next.
 - Use “and before that...” for something earlier that shaped the story.
 - Use “and some of us felt that...” to voice emotional or reflective responses.
- *Anyone may “pass” their turn if they do not wish to share or “pass for now” if they wish to come back later.*
- **Options for Determining Sharing Order:**

- If gathered in a circle (in person), proceed around the circle in one direction.
- If meeting online, post a talking order into the chat so all can see and know when their turn is coming.
- Prepare index cards numbered sequentially ahead of time (make sure the number of cards matches the number of people before distributing them). Pass these out so each person receives a number; the story proceeds according to card order. For in-person orientations, we recommend using the numbered cards during the orientation so that Lorekeepers can experience this method. You can let them know that when they are leading the exercise in the curriculum, that they can use this or simply proceed around the circle for sharing.
- **Storytelling:**
 - **Share:** We will tell the story of our journeying group of characters. Each of you is invited to contribute a piece of this story, building on what others have shared.
 - **Explain:** The first participant in order continues with “and then...” sharing the next event, experience, or memory. Subsequent speakers may:
 - Use “and then...” for what happened next.
 - Use “and before that...” for something earlier that shaped the story.
 - Use “and some of us felt that...” to voice emotional or reflective responses.
 - Anyone may “pass” their turn if they do not wish to share or “pass for now” if they wish to come back later. After the initial round, any who “passed for now” should be invited to share.
 - **Share:** “Once upon a time earlier today, our group of Lorekeepers began their orientation, gathering here and [sitting down together/seeing one another on our screens]...” then turn the story over to the first participant to continue.
- **Closing:**
 - End the process when all who wish have shared.
 - Can ask: What did you notice? Does this process make sense to you?

Distribution of Certificates

Say: *You are now all “Teapot Approved” as Lorekeepers!*
 Distribute the certificates.

Closing and Chalice Extinguishing

As time allows, discuss the following:

- How are you feeling now about Lorekeeping and facilitating this roleplaying curriculum?

Thank your Lorekeepers for their time attending the orientation. Note any next steps needed and your program calendar as it relates to this curriculum.

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.