# Teacher Development Renaissance Module

# Leader’s Guide for Hybrid Module

By Betty Jo Middleton and Gaia Brown

Developmental Editor: Pat Kahn

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***NOTE: adaptations for hybrid module appear in red italics throughout***

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## ****About the Authors****

**Betty Jo Middleton** is a retired Minister of Religious Education who has served eight congregations in the Greater Washington, DC, area and on the field staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association. She has created religious education materials for all ages. Betty Jo has led dozens of Renaissance Modules, including every version of this one, and has helped to develop several Modules. She and her husband J. Howard Middleton have lived in Alexandria, Virginia, since 1968. They have two children and four grandsons.

**Gaia Brown**, CRE/ML, has been a religious educator since 1975, serving congregations in New Jersey and Illinois before retiring from congregational work and moving to the Sierra Nevada (in Reno).  Gaia is the author of *UU Super Heroes* and *Super Heroes—Bible People* and co-author of *Treasure Hunting-Take Two* and *Compass Points.* She has been leading Renaissance Modules and having a hand in their revisions since 1984.  She and her husband have a blended family of five children and six grandchildren.

## Introduction

*Most of this introduction is posted online in the module’s online group.*

The Teacher Development Renaissance Module is designed to help religious professionals and lay leaders attend to their own faith development journeys as they guide volunteers in their development as relational, faith-filled teachers in the context of Unitarian Universalist religious education. Participants will gain the experience needed to use and adapt the module’s material and activities for their own religious education programs.

This module is divided into five sessions--the first is two and a half hours in

length; the second, third, and fourth are three hours in length; and the final session is three and a half hours in length—for a total of 15 hours of workshop time. You will need to adjust times to accommodate breaks, and to fit with the particular schedule for your module. Especially if your module is taking place over a week’s time, rather than two or three days, you may wish to use the Small Group Ministry (SGM) model. If you should decide to do so, see the small group ministry resources in Appendix 1.

*Hybrid version: The module consists of three two-hour webinars and one six-hour in person day. Refer to the schedule of sessions hybrid version.*

Power Point slides are included in this module. You will need to plan ahead for the necessary equipment to use them. Use newsprint as an alternative to the slides if appropriate equipment is not available.

*Hybrid version: use Power Point slides as needed by sharing your screen; remember that participants will only see the slide, not everyone’s video feed, when you are sharing your screen.*

The reader for the module is Parker Palmer’s [*The Courage to Teach*](http://www.couragerenewal.org/courage-to-teach/) *(Jossey-Bass 2007 or earlier editions).* Participants should obtain this book as early as possible to allow maximum time to complete the reading. The [Guide to the Reader](http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/ren_teacher_reader_guide.pdf) is available on the module resources page.

*Hybrid version: the (revised) Guide to the Reader is posted in the module’s online group.*

There are a considerable number of handouts that participants will need to have access to at the module. Information about this should be included in your welcome letter. Links are available on the [Module Resources page](http://www.uua.org/careers/re/renaissance/module-resources) of the UUA website.

*Hybrid version: All handouts are posted in the module’s online group.*

## Goals for Participants

* To reflect on religious education philosophy and relate that philosophy to the faith development of teachers
* To participate in a community of religious educators through study, worship, creating, and networking
* To gain understanding of teachers’ contributions and needs
* To increase understanding of child development and its relationship to teaching and learning
* To understand issues related to safety and ethics
* To explore and develop strategies for recruitment, support, appreciation and recognition of volunteers
* To work together to develop a sample teacher development program

## Schedule of Sessions

## *Hybrid Version*

Webinar 1: Teaching and Learning — What Shapes Us? 2 hours Opening and Introductions (20 minutes)

Orientation (10 minutes)

The Mutuality of Making a Difference (30 minutes)

Shared Praxis (30 minutes)

The Courage to Teach (25 minutes)

Closing (5 minutes)

Webinar 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers 2 hours

Opening (10 minutes)

Reframing Teaching (25 minutes)

What Teachers Bring (20 minutes)

What Teachers Need (20 minutes)

Recruiting Volunteers (25 minutes)

Safe Congregations (15 minutes)

Closing (5 minutes)

Webinar 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers 2 hours

Opening (10 minutes)

Different Ways of Knowing (20 minutes)

Learners and Designated Special Needs (20 minutes)

Paradoxes of Space (15 minutes)

Keeping the Classroom Covenant (30 minutes)

Final Projects (20 minutes)

Closing (5 minutes)

In Person Day: Toolkits for Teachers and Group Projects 6 hours Opening and Introductions (20 minutes)

The “Good Teacher” (20 minutes) *from in-person Session 2*

Child and Youth Development (20 minutes) *from in-person Session 3* Nuts and Bolts (25 minutes)

Dealing with the Unexpected (20 minutes)

Planning a Teacher Development Event (60 minutes)

Group Presentations and Response (150 minutes)

Loose Ends (15 minutes)

Closing Worship (30 minutes)

## List of Handouts and Additional Resources

**Review the handouts before the webinar and in-person gathering.**

*Hybrid Version: these are posted in the module’s online group.*

Session 1: Teaching and Learning — What Shapes Us?

1. Introduction to the Renaissance Program and Religious Education Credentialing
2. Preparation for Module Evaluation
3. Schedule of Sessions
4. Module and Session Goals
5. The Mutuality of Making a Difference
6. Shared Praxis
7. Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis
8. Tom Groome’s Shared Praxis in Action
9. Reflections on *The Courage to Teach*
10. Reflection Questions

Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

1. The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act
2. Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers
3. Channing on Teachers
4. The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part One
5. Tips for Successful Recruiting
6. *Omitted for copyright reasons*
7. Safety, Health and Ethics in Congregations
8. Code of Ethics Sample
9. Sample Health and Safety Guidelines

Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers

1. Faith Development Outline
2. Abbreviated Summary: Child Development
3. Abbreviated Summary: Adolescent Development
4. Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences
5. UUA’s Accessibility Resources for Congregations
6. Sample Referral Form for Individuals with Special Needs
7. The Children of Jowonio
8. The Paradoxes of Space
9. Creating an Environment of Acceptance and Mutuality
10. Discipline in Sunday School: What Would a UU Do?

Session 4: Toolkits for Teachers – Empowerment for Learning and Seeking

1. Support Checklist
2. The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part Two
3. Sample Religious Education Teacher Contract
4. Team Teaching
5. A Fictional (But Not Unrealistic) Teaching Team Rotation
6. Leader Reflection and Planning
7. Sample Teacher Check-In Form
8. How to be Sure the Teacher Development Workshop Goes Home with Your Teachers
9. Tapestry of Faith — Spiritual Preparation
10. Creating Covenants
11. Children’s Covenant
12. Teacher Dedication
13. Group Project and Presentation

Session 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship

1. Selected Online Resources

Appendix One: Small Group Ministry

Unitarian Universalist Teacher Development Using a Small Group Ministry

Model, by Gail Forsyth-Vail

Small Group Ministry and Lifespan Faith Development, by Rev. Helen Zidowecki

Appendix Two: Spiritual Practices to Use with Children

Meditation with Children, by Susan Freudenthal

Writing Prayers, by Tracey L. Hurd, Ph.D.

## List of Slides

*Hybrid Version: Use slides as needed/if desired (by sharing your screen).*

Session 1:

1 Welcome: Gathering Activity

2 Welcome to the Teacher Development Renaissance Module

3 Please share

4 Orientation

5 Renaissance Program

6 Think of a teacher…

7 Thomas Groome Shared Praxis

8 What? So what? Now what?

9 What?

10 So what?

11 Now what?

12 Focusing Activity

13 Critical Reflection

14 The story/vision of faith community

15 Dialectic

16 Invitation to response, action, decision

17 The Courage to Teach

18 Session 1 Reflection Questions

19 SLT Hymn 118 This Little Light of Mine

Session 2:

20 Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

21 SLT Hymn 389 Gathered Here

22 The Courage to Teach quotation

23Safe Congregation Practices

24 Session 2 Reflection Questions

Session 3:

25 Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers

26 Reflect about the role…

27 The Paradoxes of Space

28 Session 3 Reflection Questions

Session 4:

29Session 4: Toolkits for Teachers – Empowerment for Learning and Seeking

30 Planning a Teacher Development Event

31 Presentation should include…

32 Session 4 Reflection Questions

33 STJ Hymn 1009 Meditation on Breathing

Session 5:

34 Session 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship

35 A new day dawns…

36 Collective Reflection

37 Session 5 Reflection Questions

38 Closing

## Supply List

*Hybrid Version: You will only need supplies for the in-person day.*

* Computer, projector and screen for [Power Point slides (38 slides)](https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/teacherdev_slides.ppt) for every session
* *Singing the Living Tradition*—at least one for every two participants
* *Singing the Journey* (The only song used here is “Meditation on Breathing,” which can be taught easily without the music.)
* Chime
* Chalice
* Cloth for chalice table
* Candles and matches, or LED-battery operated candle
* Scissors, including left-handed ones
* Easel and newsprint
* Letter size paper—white and colored
* Index cards, 4x6
* Pens and pencils
* Decorative craft items, such as bits of ribbon, star stickers, embroidery thread, yarn, or pipe cleaners, etc.
* Markers—all sizes, all colors
* Crayons
* Glue sticks
* Sticky notes

## List of Leader Resources

Leader Resource 1 Sample Welcome Letter *for hybrid module*

Leader Resource 2 Church Bulletin Bloopers *not needed for webinars*

Leader Resource 3 Suggestions for Openings and Closings *hybrid module: volunteers select their own readings for sessions 2 and 3; suggestions are posted in the module’s online group.*

### Leader Resource 1

**Sample Welcome Letter For Hybrid Module**

*To be sent either by the leaders or the module organizer to participants as their registrations are received (so they have ample time to prepare).*

Dear Friends:

We, [names of leaders], are really looking forward to leading a hybrid version of the Teacher Development Renaissance Module which begins in a few weeks. We look forward to getting to know you as we share a fun and fascinating exploration of developing and supporting RE teachers.

**Webinar Dates**

We will gather for three (3) online sessions and one in-person full day workshop according to the following schedule:

Webinar 1: [date, time, time zone]

Webinar 2: [date, time, time zone]

Webinar 3: [date, time, time zone]

**In Person Workshop:**Date: [date and time] (More specific details will be provided to registrants)  
Location: [location of in person day, address]

Attendance is expected for all sessions although we recognize that there may be unavoidable conflicts.  An occasional session may be rescheduled as the will of the group dictates.  *All sessions will be recorded for later viewing.*

**Module Resources:** (resources refer to standard in person module)

Handouts: <http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/renmod_teachdev_ho_appendices.pdf>

Guide to the reader: <http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/ren_teacher_reader_guide.pdf>

Reader: [The Courage to Teach](http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787996866,miniSiteCd-JBHIGHERED.html) by Parker Palmer, Jossey-Bass 10th Anniversary edition, 2007

**To get access to materials online:**

You will have access to a private section of UUA.org for the [module name] Hybrid Renaissance Module. There you will find all the required course materials, meetings links for each session and access to a forum for use by participants only to post reflections. In order to access these pages, you need a UUA.org account and Pat Kahn will add your account to the group.

If you don't already have a **UUA.org account**, please go to [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org), click "Create Account" in the upper right corner, and create an account. You can enter a username and password or log in using Facebook or Google.

You will then need to email [pkahn@uua.org](mailto:pkahn@uua.org) and tell her your username. She’ll add you to the group membership list and reply with the address of the private pages. To access the web based materials, make sure you log in each time.

**Technical requirements:**

Use of a web camera and headset for audio is required; being able to see each other is critical to building sense of community.

**Participant preparation prior to first webinar:**

This module is a little different from others in that we will be asking you to do some reading in preparation for each session, and to write a short reflection on the learning site after each session.

* Create uua.org account to access online materials
* Post an introduction in the Session 1 discussion forum
* Read the designated chapters of *The Courage to Teach* (found online and in the Guide to the Reader)
* Review designated handouts (found online and in the Guide to the Reader)
* View these Thomas Groom videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuCsSOVGARM> Part 1 38:58 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LufKV4g7E9Q> Part 2 24:55
* Optional video: Courage to Teach Guide for Reflection and Renewal <http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/videos/>

**Finally:**

Completion of this module entitles you to the same “credit” as an in person module and counts towards your Renaissance certification or RE Credentialing portfolio. The expectation is that you will attend all of the online sessions as well as the in-person workshop on [date and location]. We will send out additional details on the in-person session in the next few weeks.

We understand that you all have busy lives and an occasional absence will be excused. We expect to audio record each session so that participants can listen after the fact (subject to the whims of technology) but as with any module, the conversation and interaction between participants is integral and repeated absences will diminish your learning experience. *Anyone missing the final project or more than one session is welcome to continue to audit the course but will not receive credit*.

RE teachers/ volunteers are an essential part of our RE programs and we are excited to engage with you in the work of learning how to create a program that is faithful and sustainable. We look forward to “seeing” you on [date of first webinar] as we embark on this great learning journey together!

Name of leader Name of leader

[email](mailto:email) address [email](mailto:email) address

cell phone # cell phone #

### Leader Resource 2

**Church Bulletin Bloopers**

*Hybrid: these are not needed for webinars*

*These are included to provide energy breaks. Print them out (preferably on a flashy color of paper), cut them into strips, and put them in a basket on or near your chalice table. Laughter, being the best medicine, is also a great energizer. Invite participants to grab one and read it if they feel the group is sagging. You will also find that if you have two or three participants start reading these aloud at the end of a break, your group will hasten from all directions and be attentive, ready to work. We have suggested a few places where you can use these, confident that you can figure out the rest.*

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa will be speaking tonight. Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Announcement in the church bulletin for a national PRAYER & FASTING Conference: "The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer conference includes all meals.”

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 pm in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again" giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

"Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.”

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water". The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus.”

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say "hell" to someone who doesn't care much about you.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

During the absence of our Pastor, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J.F. Stubbs supplied our pulpit.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Belzer; the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The Rev. Merriwether spoke briefly, much to the delight of the audience.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, “Break Forth Into Joy.”

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare’s Hamlet in the church basement on Friday at 7 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Don’t let worry kill you off – let the church help.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person(s) you want remembered.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Let us join David and Lisa in the celebration of their wedding and bring their happiness to a conclusion.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The choir invites any member of the congregation who enjoys sinning to join the choir.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The music for today’s service was all composed by George Friedrich Handel in celebration of the 300th anniversary of his birth.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment, and gracious hostility.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Ushers will eat latecomers.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Potluck supper: prayer and medication to follow.

### Leader Resource 3

**Suggestions for Openings and Closings**

*hybrid module: volunteers select their own readings for sessions 2 and 3; suggestions are posted in the module’s online group.*

Plans for each session include suggestions for openings and closings. You do not need to be limited to these, however. Many of the readings in *Singing the Living Tradition (SLT)* are suitable, especially those in the sections for Opening Words (Reading 416), Chalice Lightings (Reading 447), and Benedictions and Closing Words (Reading 677). Reading 456 may be used at any time for extinguishing the chalice. There are also many great readings in *Lifting Our Voices*, the companion to the *Singing the Journey* hymnal. Many songs in both *Singing the Living Tradition* and *Singing the Journey* are appropriate and may be familiar to participants. Favorite poems and readings from meditation manuals and other books may be suitable as well. Participants may have suggestions. Check [Worship Web](http://www.uua.org/worship/index.php) and/or the [Illuminations](http://www.uua.org/beliefs/illuminations/) app for additional resources.

Alternate Suggestions

Session 1, Opening

Reading 458 Hymn 360 Here We Have Gathered

Session 1, Closing

Reading 704 (first two verses) by Alfred Storer Cole, previously attributed to John Murray

Session 2, Opening

Reading 418 Hymn 407 We’re Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table

Session 2, Closing

Reading 683 Hymn 413 Go Now in Peace

Session 3, Opening

Reading 434 Hymn 378 Let Those Who Live in Every Land

Session 3, Closing

Reading 681 Hymn 414 As We Leave this Friendly Place

Session 4, Opening

Reading 447 Hymn 391 Voice Still and Small

Session 4, Closing

Reading 698

Session 5, Opening

Reading 561 Hymn 381 From All that Dwell Below the Skies

Session 5, Closing

Reading 684 Hymn 379 Ours Be the Poems of All Tongues

# Session 1: Teaching and Learning — What Shapes Us?

## GOALS

This session will:

* Orient the group to the module
* Model a welcoming focus on each participant
* Introduce the concept of mutuality in teaching and learning

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

* Begin to build a community of learners
* Draw on their own experiences to understand Parker Palmer’s definition of good teaching

## SESSION AT A GLANCE *Hybrid Version*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ACTIVITY | TIME |
| Opening and Introductions | 20 |
| Orientation | 10 |
| Making a Covenant | 15 |
| Mutuality of Making a Difference | 25 |
| Break | 5 |
| Shared Praxis | 20 |
| The Courage to Teach | 20 |
| Closing | 5 |

## ACTIVITY 1: Opening and Introductions (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Chalice, candle and matches or LED-battery operated candle

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Post an introduction in the Discussion Forum including a “gift” that you bring (Intro Parts 1 and 2)*

### DESCRIPTION

Hold up your own chalice, or invite participants to each light their own chalice and say:

*We light this chalice as we enter into the spirit of community.*

*May we speak, listen, share and learn,*

*That we may grow together in love and wisdom.* (Gaia Brown)

(15 minutes) Invite the participants to look at the information for introductions posted on slide 3: *Hybrid note: everyone will already have posted an introduction in the discussion forum*

* Name
* Congregation or setting
* Role or position in religious education
* Number of years in Unitarian Universalism
* Number of years in the field of religious education
* Number of Renaissance Modules taken
* RE Credentialing status (level completed or in progress)
* Ask the participants about their Renaissance Module experience. Is this module their first? Fifth? Tenth? *Hybrid: ask this during first webinar*

One of the leaders should model their response first. As the participants introduce themselves, one leader should keep eye contact while the other jots down notes on the list of participants: for whom is this a first or fifth module? Who is brand new to working in this field? Who is a lay person rather than a professional? This kind of information will help you facilitate the participation of individuals in the group.

*Hybrid version of gift box activity:*

Introductions Part 2: Participants were asked to post in the discussion forum a gift that they bring to the group. Say something like this, with pauses so that it has the flavor of a meditation:

Each of us brings gifts to the group….You have had a chance to think about a gift you bring to share with the group….let’s share these now.

One of the leaders should model this; saying something like:

*I’m Betty Jo, and I bring the gift of experience*

## ACTIVITY 2: Orientation (10 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handout 1, Introduction to the Renaissance Program and Religious Education Credentialing; Handout 2 ,Preparing for the Module Evaluation; Handout 3, Schedule of Sessions; Handout 4 ,Module and Sessions Goals
* Optional: Slides 4-5

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Orientation can be done as a short pre-webinar meeting*

### DESCRIPTION

*Hybrid: it’s helpful if leaders are online 30 minutes before the start of the webinar and invite participants to join early to work out any technical issues.*

(10 minutes) Do a brief tech review – Zoom details such as the chat box and breakout rooms as well as the online format (discussion forums, info for each webinar). Share screen as needed.

Referring to Handout 1, briefly describe the Renaissance program and the credentialing process. Then, referring to Handout 2, explain that Renaissance module evaluations, for participants, as well as leaders, are now online. In order to receive credit for the module, it is the responsibility of the participant to submit the evaluation within a week after the module concludes. Feedback about the site, lodging, or food arrangement should be communicated to the module coordinator or on site contact. If participants perceive a problem with facilitation or group dynamics, encourage them to speak directly to one of the leaders as soon as possible so that the situation can be remedied.

* Newsprint for volunteers to sign up to light or extinguish the chalice, offer chalice lighting words or lead songs at the beginning or ending of each session *hybrid: leaders do opening and closing words for session 1 and in-person gathering. Ask for volunteers to do Sessions 2 and 3.*

## ACTIVITY 3: Making a Covenant (15 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Use Zoom chat box (save and post in forum after the webinar)*

### DESCRIPTION

(15 minutes) Explain that because the making of classroom covenants and covenants among teachers is so important in religious education, it is beneficial to experience the entire process, rather than starting with a template as is usually done in Renaissance modules (due to time constraints). Ask the group to brainstorm some guidelines to create a safe and healthy sharing space, being sure to include: confidentiality, welcoming differences, sharing without dominating the group, honoring boundaries, and being respectful of the group’s process, plus whatever else is important to the group. Remind them to frame points in the positive as much as possible. Create the list together, review and edit until members of the group are in agreement on the concepts and wording. Then say the covenant together and post it in the chat box. Mention that additional conversation about classroom covenants will be covered in Session 4.

*Hybrid: save the chat box and after the webinar, one of the leaders (or a volunteer) should post the covenant in the Session 1 discussion forum.*

## ACTIVITY 4: The Mutuality of Making a Difference (25 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handout 5, The Mutuality of Making a Difference
* Slide 6

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Decide how you will create small groups of four persons—by counting off, self-selection, or other means (*Zoom break out rooms)*
* Ask two participants to prepare to read aloud the quotes on the handout

### DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) Say something like:

We will break into small groups for work or reflection in this module, but want to point out that not all work done in small groups fits into the model of Small Group Ministry (SGM), which implies ongoing groups where relationships may deepen over time. In the module we will want to you have an opportunity to be in groups with different people. There are resources about Small Group Ministry and suggestions for using SGM with your teachers in your packet of handouts (Appendix 1). Before we divide into groups let’s look at Handout 5 which has two quotes from The Courage to Teach. Let’s now hear the quotes read aloud…[volunteers read].

(15 minutes) After hearing the quotes, say something like:

Now we are going to break into small groups for reflection on these words and this question. [Show slide 6] You will have a little time to think about the question, then each of you will have a chance to share your thoughts. After your time of reflection in small groups, we will take a little time in our large group for reflection and sharing.

Gather again in the larger group and ask if there are those who would like to share from the different groups.

## ACTIVITY 5: Shared Praxis (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handouts 6, Shared Praxis; Handout 7, Lesson Planning Using Shared Praxis; Handout 8, Tom Groom In Action
* Slides 7-16

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Before the webinar, view Thomas Groome videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuCsSOVGARM> Part 1 38:58 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LufKV4g7E9Q> Part 2 24:55
* Test the equipment and cue the slides *(share screen if using slides)*

### DESCRIPTION

(15 minutes) The Shared Praxis model by Thomas Groome is a “classic” in religious education that underlies many Unitarian Universalist curricula, even if it is not explicitly stated. Ask who is familiar with it, and if anyone intentionally uses it in their program. Briefly review the Shared Praxis theory, inviting participants to follow along with the pie graphic in Handout 7. (Remind participants that the graphic has six sections, while Groome’s description contains the “focusing activity” and then five “movements.”) A strength of the graphic is that it shows how Shared Praxis is a continual process. Alternately, you can go right to the Power Point, which simplifies the explanation. After viewing the Power Point, take a look at one or more of the session plans on Handout 8 as concrete examples of how Shared Praxis works.

(5 minutes) Ask participants to form groups of three or four. *Hybrid: can do with whole group or divide into 2 groups in breakout rooms.* Make sure there is a mix of more experienced with less experienced participants in each group. Ask them to discuss how knowledge of Shared Praxis might help teachers in their programs, and how that in turn could benefit the children. Leave 2-3 minutes at the end to share ideas with the whole group.

## ACTIVITY 6: The Courage to Teach (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Slide 17
* Handout 9 Reflections on *The Courage to Teach*

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Optional video: Courage to Teach Guide for Reflection and Renewal <http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/videos/>

### DESCRIPTION

(15 minutes) Direct participants to look at Handout 9 and say something like: *The reader for this module is Parker Palmer’s The Courage to Teach. Handout 9 provides an overview of themes and serves as a guide to the reader. If you have not had time to finish reading the book, we encourage you to do so as soon as you can. This is a book you will want to keep on your professional book shelf for future use and reference. As religious educators, we are teachers—to the teachers we work with, to children and parents alike, and to others in our congregations. So, this book has relevance for us, as well as for the teachers in our religious education programs. Palmer says “I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy.” But, he adds, there are other moments when he despairs of being a teacher at all.* (p. 1) *Perhaps you have had such extreme moments as well. Palmer suggests looking at these opposites as paradoxes, seeing that the gifts we bring to teaching may also “go hand in hand with a liability. Every strength is also a weakness.”* (p. 71) *Think about a moment of joy you have had in teaching, where you felt that you were born to teach, and second, think about a moment of despair you have had in teaching. Jot these down. Hybrid: do not break into pairs; do as group.*

Invite each participant to share their moment of joy (briefly and one by one). After each one, ask other participants to help identify what gift, what strength, they brought to that moment…is that the gift they suggested you bring to this larger group?

After all joys have been shared, say:

*Now, let’s take one minute for each person to reflect on that moment of despair in teaching; we won’t get into problem solving about that!*

(5 minutes) Take a few minutes to talk about the experience of sharing moments of joy and identifying gifts. How might they use this exercise with volunteers?

## *ACTIVITY 7: Reflection*

*Not used in hybrid version*

## ACTIVITY 8: Closing (3 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Slide 19
* Chalice, candle and matches or LED-battery operated candle

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

### DESCRIPTION

(3 minutes) We will close with these words of Parker Palmer:

*The work required to “know thyself” is neither selfish nor narcissistic.*

*Whatever self-knowledge we attain as teachers will serve our*

*students and our [own learning] as well. Good teaching requires*

*self-knowledge: it is a secret hidden in plain sight.*

The Courage to Teach (1998) p. 3

In the order that best fits your situation, read the reading and extinguish the chalice. Remind participants of the *date of the next webinar* and ask that they review Handouts 11 – 20. In particular, ask for two volunteers to read the Dr. Seuss skit on Handout 16 in Activity 6 of Session 2. *They are to post responses to the session’s reflection question in the Session 1 forum, and do any preparation for the next session as detailed on the Session 2 page.*

# Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

## GOALS

This session will:

* Celebrate the gifts teachers bring to religious education
* Consider what teachers need to be effective
* Explore recruitment strategies
* Focus on safe congregations and the teacher’s responsibility

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

* Consider the gifts teachers bring to religious education programs and what they need
* Create representations of “the good teacher” for various age levels *Hybrid: will do this at in-person gathering*
* Frame volunteer teaching as a ministry that enriches the volunteer and see how this paradigm shift impacts congregational culture
* Reflect on the ways in which they currently support volunteers to find new and better ways

## SESSION AT A GLANCE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ACTIVITY | TIME |
| Opening | 10 |
| Reframing Teaching | 25 |
| What Teachers Bring | 15 |
| What Teachers Need | 20 |
| *The “Good” Teacher* | *in-person* |
| Break | 5 |
| Recruiting Volunteers | 25 |
| Safe Congregations | 15 |
| Closing | 5 |

## ACTIVITY 1: Opening (10 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Chalice, candle, and matches or LED-battery operated candle
* Chime
* Slides 20-21
* SLT Reading 652, “The Great End in Religious Instruction”

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Review the responses to reflection questions in the discussion forum.*
* Optional: Ask a participant to lead the reading

### DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) Light the chalice and do the reading. Invite participants to reflect on the first session, what they experienced and/or learned. *Hybrid: they posted responses in the discussion forum.* Then ask them to share an “aha moment”—something that occurred to them during the session or since that was a new learning, changed their point of view about something, raised a new question. Before moving along you might remind participants that the schedule, goals, and objectives for the session are on Handouts 3 and 4.

## ACTIVITY 2: Reframing Teaching (25 minutes)

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Review comments on Andrews’ 7 principles in the discussion forum.*

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handout 11, The Soul Only Avails; Handout 12, Teaching in Faith

### DESCRIPTION

Ask participants to take out Handouts 11 and 12 (which they were asked to read before this session). Say something like: *One of the most important things we can do is to help our congregations begin to change the culture around volunteering; to reframe teaching as a spiritual practice. Rev. Barry Andrews in the essay “The Soul Only Avails” says:*

*“Teaching the young, then, is not about filling their heads, but expanding their horizons; it is not about charting a course for them, but about being companions with them on their own journey in life. I am convinced that in religious education "the soul only avails," and that teaching is a spiritual practice requiring a certain discipline or adherence to fundamental principles. Perhaps you have others to add to the list, but here are the seven principles I would suggest as essential to the spiritual practice of religious education*.”

*Referring to the comments in the discussion forum, review each principle and ask participants to share.*Referring also to Handout 12 Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers, ask each person how that principle gets embodied (or not), and consider tools for teachers.

## ACTIVITY 3: What Teachers Bring (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Slide 22
* Handout 13, Channing on Teachers

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Think about what you yourself bring intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually to this group of participants
* Ask a participant to be the group’s scribe, *typing comments in the chat box*

### DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Introduce this activity by saying something like:

*Parker Palmer says that while we need to know* ***what*** *we are going to teach (our subject matter) and* ***how*** *we are going to teach (our methodology) we do not often enough ask about the* ***“who****,” the “self” that teaches. The teaching self has three parts: the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual. Parker says: “Reduce teaching to the intellect, and it becomes a cold abstraction; reduce it to emotions and it becomes narcissistic; reduce it to the spiritual, and it loses its anchor in the world. Intellect, emotion, and spirit…are interwoven in the human self and education at its best.”*  (The Courage to Teach, 10th Anniversary Edition, p. 5) Have participants share one strength in each of these categories that they bring to volunteer teachers in their programs.

(10 minutes) Thinking still about these three aspects of the teaching self, consider what gifts teachers bring to the children, youth and adults in religious education settings. Brainstorm a list that someone records *inn the chat box*. When you have your list, go back and decide which of the three categories each of these gifts fits into. (Many might fit into more than one category, which is fine.) Are there any surprises or learnings there? How do they think the teachers (or potential teachers) in their congregations would respond to such a list? *Save the chatbox and* share with the group.

(5 minutes) End by referring participants to Handout 13 Channing on Teachers and ask them to compare Palmer’s three categories to the qualities Channing describes. Allow about five minutes for discussion.

## ACTIVITY 4: What Teachers Need (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* The list of teacher “gifts” from the prior activity

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Ask a participant to be the group’s scribe, typing comments in the chat box*

### DESCRIPTION

(12 minutes) Say something like: *We aren’t all Parker Palmer, and even* ***he*** *might have a hard time living up to all the items on this list. Taking a look at the “gifts”, let’s come up with ideas of what can be done to help teachers acquire the gifts they don’t have (or maybe don’t realize they have), or how they can otherwise compensate for what they lack. For instance, if one of the gifts is singing, what can you offer to teachers who don’t feel they are musical? If one of the gifts is enthusiasm how can you help a teacher who feels tentative?* Ask participants to share their ideas with a variety of kinds of solutions, not every one involving an inordinate amount of time for the religious educator. *Hybrid: ask people to share their ideas in the chat box.*  They might have several ideas for one thing but be stumped on others. For example, Can’t sing: maybe another member of the team can; ask a choir member to help out, recorded music, etc. Feels tentative: pair with experienced teacher. *Hyrid: save the chat box and share the comments.*

## ACTIVITY 5: The “Good Teacher” (35 minutes)

*Hybrid: explain to participants that they’ll do this activity at the in-person gathering, but tell them about it so they can think ahead.*

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Newsprint
* Markers and crayons
* Buttons
* Glue
* Yarn
* Additional supplies of your choice

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITIY

* Divide participants into small groups for different age groups

### DESCRIPTION

(20 minutes) Say something like: *Let’s divide into five groups: one for creating a for preschool children, one for elementary age children, one for a representation of a good teacher for middle school, one for a representation of a good teacher for older teens, and one for a representation of a good teacher for adults.* Note: Since there is an entire Renaissance module on Adult Faith Development, you may to choose to use four groups instead of five.

(15 minutes) After about 10 minutes, call the whole group together for sharing representations and general conversation about them. Post the pictures and ask a volunteer to take pictures and share them with the group.

## ACTIVITY 6: Recruiting Volunteer Teachers (25 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handouts 14, The Care and Feeding of Volunteers – Part 1; Handout 15, Tips for Successful Recruiting

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Review recruitment* *stories posted in the discussion forum*

### DESCRIPTION

Then ask participants to share the recruitment story they posted in the forum.

(15 minutes) While we have reframed teaching in a Unitarian Universalist religious education program as a positive opportunity, there still are plenty of obstacles to recruitment. Ask participants to name some of them and write them *in the chat box*. You don’t need an exhaustive list. Ask participants to look at the list and suggest ideas to overcome the obstacles. They might want to refer to Handouts 14 and 15. Other positive tips:

* Find others to help with the task—suggestions for recruits might come from the minister, the Religious Education Committee, the Membership Committee, other teachers (who might want to teach with a friend or someone they would like to know better.)
* Don’t ask someone outright to teach—ask them to *consider* teaching. This adds a bit of a buffer—the recruit is not asked to come up with a response to teaching, but to considering.
* Honor long time teachers by inscribing their names on a plaque in a prominent place. Make a big deal about these heroes and “sheroes” and let it be known that when others have taught however many (maybe five or six) years they too can have their names inscribed.
* Think diversity! Look beyond parents to young adults, elders, people without kids. And it’s important to have diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc. to model inclusion.

Another kind of conversation to have is whether or not to have teaching an expectation of parents. Some congregations find this to be successful, but we know that some parents have strengths that would better serve other aspects of the religious education program or the wider congregation. They may also wish to discuss how soon newcomers, parents or not, should be asked to teach.

Remind participants that the handouts for this session can be inspirational. They might want to call some of them to the attention of their Religious Education Committee (and maybe potential teachers) so that they can help in reframing volunteer teaching for the rest of the congregation.

## ACTIVITY 7: Safe Congregations (15 minutes)

### PREARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Post one experience or question about the safe congregation policies of your congregation.*

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handouts 17, Safety, Health and Ethics in Congregations; Handout 18, Code of Ethics Form; Handout 19, Sample Health and Safety Guidelines
* Slide 23

### DESCRIPTION

(15 minutes) It is not the role of the volunteer teacher to establish policies for safety in the congregation, but it is vitally important that teachers are made aware of all such policies and that they carry out such policies and participate in ongoing conversations about effectiveness of the policies. Some specific aspects of safe congregations that affect volunteer teachers are:

* Providing personal information requested when recruited
* Abiding by the two-adults-in-the-classroom policies (These are for the protection of the teacher as well as the students.)
* Reporting any incidents that arouse concerns about safe congregation practices.

Referring to the comments posted in the forum and the information above, ask participants:

What are your thoughts about these? And what other things can you suggest?

After general discussion, refer participants to Handouts 17-19 related to safety considerations.

## *ACTIVITY 8: Reflection*

*Not used in hybrid version*

## ACTIVITY 9: Closing (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* SLT Reading 691, “Gardeners of the Spirit” or another selection

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Optional: Ask a participant to be the reader.

### DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Have the reading and extinguish the chalice. Remind participants of the *date of the next webinar* and ask that they review Handouts 20-29 before the next session. *They are to post responses to the session’s reflection question in the Session 2 forum, and do any preparation for the next session as detailed on the Session 3 page.*

# Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers

## GOALS

This session will:

* *Highlight the development of children and youth (AT IN-PERSON DAY)*
* Review multiple intelligence theory
* Consider special needs of learners
* Explore paradoxes in teaching and learning space
* Consider ways to keep their classroom covenant

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

* *Demonstrate understanding child and youth development by creating representations of different ages AT IN-PERSON DAY*
* Be inspired to make improvements to create welcoming spaces for teaching and learning
* Discuss ways to redirect behavior so that the religious experience is safe and welcoming for everyone

## SESSION AT A GLANCE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ACTIVITY | TIME |
| Opening | 10 |
| Child and Youth Development | *in-person* |
| Different Ways of Knowing | 20 |
| Learners and Designated Special Needs | 20 |
| Break | 5 |
| Paradoxes of Space | 15 |
| Keeping the Classroom Covenant | 30 |
| Group Project Guidelines | 15 |
| Closing | 5 |

## ACTIVITY 1: Opening (10 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Optional: Chime

### DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) Ring the chime to call people together. Ask the designated volunteer to share opening words and light the chalice.Invite participants to start this session by picturing children and youth in their congregations. You might say, *Take just a moment and picture a scene—a happy scene or a typical scene.*

* *Where are the children?*
* *What are they doing?*
* *Where are you in relation to that scene?*
* *And how do you feel?*

## *ACTIVITY 2: Child and Youth Development*

*Hybrid: Moves to in-person day*

## ACTIVITY 3: Different Ways of Knowing (20 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handout 23, Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *View the Howard Gardner video* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8N2pnYne0ZA*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8N2pnYne0ZA) *(50:53)*
* *Review* [*Session 3 “Trees: Connected to All Life”*](http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop3) *from the Tapestry of Faith multigenerational program Circle of Trees. Be prepared to discuss what intelligences you saw in this session and what other activities could be added (and what intelligences). You may wish to refer to this website for ideas on applying MI theory:* [*http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/index.html*](http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/index.html)

### DESCRIPTION

*Have participants share their thoughts from the pre-webinar assignment (*[*Session 3 “Trees: Connected to All Life”*](http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop3) *from the Tapestry of Faith multigenerational program Circle of Trees).*

Lead a discussion, asking:

* *What intelligences did you see in this session?*
* *What other activities could be added (and what intelligences)?*
* *In what other ways might MI theory be applied in your RE program?*

Conclude with this quote from Howard Gardner:

*As much as possible, we should teach individuals in ways that they can learn. And we should assess them in a way that allows them to show what they have understood and to apply their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.*

Tell the participants that the source of this quote and much more about MI is the Multiple Intelligence OASIS website (OASIS = **O**fficial **A**uthoritative **S**ite of Multiple **I**ntelligence**s**, listed in Handout 43.

## ACTIVITY 4: Learners and Designated Special Needs (30 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY:

In-person:

* pens/pencils
* Post-its
* Chart paper divided into 2 columns; labeled with “traditional classroom” and “inclusive classroom”
* Handout

Online:

* Jamboard with two boards, labeled “traditional classroom” and “inclusive classroom”
* Handouts

**Description:**

*(10 minutes) Religious Educators are often responsible for ensuring the integration of children and teens with a diverse range of needs.  Before we discuss integration into the classroom, we need to discuss the classroom and how learning is experienced.*

Use the Jamboard post-it notes feature or in person, distribute post-it notes and pens.  Say something like: *If I ask the question, “When you think of a learning environment, what comes to mind?” What images pop into your mind’s eye?  What was the learning environment like when you were a child?  What were the expectations for students and teachers in a classroom?*

*Jot down your initial thoughts and then place them on the traditional classroom side of our chart/JamBoard.*

While participants complete this task, add a few post-its to the chart with some stereotypical “learning” activities like “everyone is sitting at a desk,” “a teacher talking,” “quiet,” “one right answer.”

After participants add their thoughts to the chart, read aloud the answers given and ask if everyone agrees with these thoughts.  If there is disagreement about an idea, take that post-it and put it on the top of the chart to come back to.  Depending on the ages of participants, you will get an array of answers but some should fall into the traditional, didactic teaching model that was/is used in public classrooms.

Say something like: *Think about our previous activity where we discussed learning styles. What type(s) of learners does this style of learning work for?  Who is left out? Why?*

(8 minutes) After discussion, say something like “*The traditional classroom learning style doesn’t really mesh with our UU values. Ensuring that classrooms and learning are accessible for all requires us to rethink the environment and the processes in our RE classrooms.  Think about yourself: what learning environment is most welcoming for you?  What type of learner are you and what do you need to fully participate in a meeting or learning opportunity? Take about 5 minutes and reflect or journal your thoughts about your own learning needs and how they impact your experience in a classroom.”*

Provide participants 5 minutes to think and write.  Possible responses could include:

* A need to move/pace/fidget during a meeting
* A need to talk through and brainstorm an idea or process
* A need for natural light vs fluorescent light
* Extended time for thinking and internal processing
* The choice to participate or not
* Visuals to support understanding

(10 minutes)After journaling, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts.  Participants will likely share needs similar to those listed above and more.  Say something like *“Now, think about the RE classrooms and programs you have in your congregation.  How are they welcoming to all of the needs we have discussed?  How are they not welcoming?  Is there anything you can change about classroom expectations or lesson design to make your space welcoming and inclusive for all?”*

Jot down ideas and thoughts on the JamBoard/chart under “inclusive classroom.” These ideas may include:

* Providing space in the classroom for movement
* Providing a quiet space
* Providing sensory and fidget items
* Adjusting expectations:
  + read/tell a story for those interested in participating vs making all participants participate;
  + allowing participants to choose their level of involvement in conversation vs requiring verbal input;
  + allowing for bathroom breaks as necessary (many people use bathroom breaks as a way to recenter or regulate themselves privately).

Revisit any post-its from the first part of the activity that did not fit under “traditional classroom.”  Do they fit under “inclusive classroom”? Why or why not?

Say something like: *Inclusive classrooms that embody our UU values often look nothing like a traditional classroom.  Sometimes volunteers can become frustrated if the learning environment or lesson does not match expectations of a “traditional” classroom. Having learning opportunities that are accessible and inclusive for all requires volunteers to move past traditional assumptions and toward more open-ended experiences.  Remind volunteers that not all learning is informational; if our congregation is our classroom, then talking out a problem, playing a cooperative game, and making a friend are all successful outcomes for a faith formation experience. Trusting children, teens, and adults to know themselves and their needs and allowing them to show up as their full selves in educational settings is how we actively live our UU values.  Part of a spiritual journey is to find the people and places that allow us to spread our wings and be ourselves. Is your congregation such a space?*

Share handouts 24-26, listing resources for creating inclusive classrooms and spaces within your congregation.  If time allows, have participants read The Children of Jowonio (Handout 26) responsively.

## ACTIVITY 5: Paradoxes of Space (15 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handout 27, Paradoxes of Space
* Slides 26-27

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Review posts about Paradoxes of Space in the discussion forum.*

### DESCRIPTION

*Before the webinar, invite participants to reflect briefly about the role of space in teaching and learning in faith and post responses in the forum to these questions: What’s important in an environment beyond safety? What makes a teaching and learning environment in a faith development setting welcoming?*

(15 minutes) Say something like:

When Palmer talks about “space” in education, he is talking about something more than a floor plan.Read this quote from *The Courage to Teach* (p. 71):

I mean a complex of factors: the physical arrangement and feeling of the room, the conceptual framework that I build around the topic my students and I are exploring, the emotional ethos I hope to facilitate, and the ground rules that will guide our inquiry.

In addition to physical space, Palmer is talking about emotional space.Ask for volunteers to read aloud one of the paradoxes (as shown on the slide. After they have finished, pause for a moment’s reflection. Then ask participants to take out Handout 27 Paradoxes of Space. Invite reflection on the paradoxes.

## ACTIVITY 6: Keeping the Classroom Covenant (30 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handouts 28, Creating an Environment of Acceptance and Mutuality; Handout 29, Discipline in Sunday School

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* *Ask a participant to scribe in the chat box.*

### DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Say something like:

At the beginning of each religious education year children make covenants with their teachers and peers. In an ideal world, when a child’s behavior did not match the promises of the covenant, the teacher could gently point to the covenant poster on the bulletin board and all would be well. And, of course, our world is much more complex than that!

Ask participants toname some circumstances that would lead children to behave outside the guidelines of the covenant. Some possibilities include:

* The child/youth doesn’t feel well
* The child had to sit quietly for the first fifteen minutes of the Sunday worship and now, in the classroom needs to be active.
* There was a fight with a sibling in the car that morning.
* Only one parent is part of the congregation, and the child/youth would rather be home with the other parent.
* The child is bored.
* For whatever reason, the child’s/youth/s attendance is spotty, and s/he has not formed friendships in the group.
* The child/youth first arrived in November, and has no idea what the covenant is.

(10 minutes) When you have eight or more ideas listed, *use Zoom breakout rooms to divide participants into groups of about four and ask them to choose a circumstance that interests them*. Each group should flesh out the hypothetical situation, describing the child or youth and how the covenant was broken, e.g. “this is about a nine year old girl. She and her older sister had a fight in the car on the way to church and her older sister belittled her. She arrived in the classroom looking sullen and was not paying much attention to what was happening. Halfway through the morning she made a caustic comment to the new girl in the group. The class covenant says we respect the members of our class”. The group should decide:

* What should be the immediate response of the teacher?
* What should happen if the behavior continues?
* What follow up, if any, should occur after the session ends?
* What can the teacher/s do to prevent this kind of thing happening again, with this child or another one?

Give the groups about five minutes to discuss their situation, with one person taking notes and have them create a presentation. Encourage role playing or other creative forms of presenting.

(10 minutes) Have the groups present their situation and some solutions. Then let the whole group comment on the solutions and add other ideas.

(5 minutes) Conclude with a general discussion of hints to keep things on track in the classroom and ask one or two volunteers to scribe in the chat box. Some ideas include:

* teachers need to be prepared so things move along
* every child should be personally greeted – by name
* teachers should make a point of knowing the children and their interests
* curricula should honor multiple intelligences
* teachers should never get in a power struggle with a child.
* what else?

Save the chatbox and share with the group.

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## *ACTIVITY 7: Reflection*

*Not used in hybrid.*

## *ACTIVITY 3: Planning a Teacher Development Event (15 minutes)*

*From Session 4 - use in third webinar*

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handout 42, Group Project and Presentation
* Slides 30-31

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Decide how you will place participants in groups (or if they will self-select).

### DESCRIPTION

(15 minutes) Ask participants to look at Handout 42. Describe the project, as outlined on the handout and slide, and answer any questions participants may have about the project. Divide participants into several groups, grouping those with like-size programs or whatever other criteria works for the group, such as balancing experience levels or learning styles (especially introverts/extroverts).

*Participants should share email addresses and plan to discuss their project plans before the in-person gathering. Explain that they will have one hour of work time at the in-person gathering to finish up before each group presents their project.*

## ACTIVITY 8: Closing (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Chime

### DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Invite participants to share in just a phrase a learning they have had from this session. Leaders should also share something they have learned. *Invite the descignate volunteer to share closing words and extinguish the chalice.*

Remind participants about upcoming the in-person gathering. *They are to post responses to this session’s reflection questions in the Session 3 forum, and do any preparation for the next session as detailed on the Session 4-5 page.*

# Session 4 & 5: Toolkits for Teachers (In-Person)

## GOALS

This session will:

* Create representations of “the good teacher” for various age levels *Hybrid: will do this at in-person gathering (from Session 2)*
* *Highlight the development of children and youth (from Session 3)*
* Provide practical “nuts and bolts” suggestions to help programming go smoothly
* Consider how teachers may deal with the unexpected
* Facilitate group planning for a teacher development event.
* Provide ideas for teacher development events
* Tie up loose ends
* Celebrate the time spent together and the good work done.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

* *Demonstrate understanding child and youth development by creating representations of different ages (from Session 3)*
* Gain insights into the importance of providing teachers with needed information
* Discuss ways religious educators and teachers may deal with unexpected issues and events
* Work with others to plan a teacher development event and a presentation for the last session.
* Present their teacher development events
* Participate in a worship that highlights many of the concepts of this module.

## SESSION AT A GLANCE

*Note: adjust for breaks and meals*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ACTIVITY | TIME |
| Opening and Introductions | 20 |
| The “Good Teacher” | 20 |
| Child and Youth Development | 20 |
| Nuts and Bolts | 25 |
| Dealing with the Unexpected | 20 |
| Planning a Teacher Development Event | 60 |
| Group Presentations and Responses | 150 |
| Loose Ends | 15 |
| Closing Worship | 30 |

## ACTIVITY 1: Opening (5 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Slide 29 or newsprint with Hymn 1009, “Meditation on Breathing”
* Chalice, candle and matches or LED-battery operated candle
* Chalice lighting words:
* Centering table with cloth
* Chime
* SLT for Reading 439 by Sophia Lyon Fahs

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Prepare newsprint or slide with words for chalice lighting:

We light this chalice for the joy to be found in working together to plan and create programs and events.

* Optional: Invite one or two participants to lead the singing.

### DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Call participants together with the chime and sing “Meditation on Breathing.” Light a chalice with the words provided. Invite a brief check in by participants. Do a round of introductions since this is the first time participants are together “in-person”. Close with Reading 439.

## ACTIVITY 5: The “Good Teacher” (20 minutes)

*From Session 2*

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Newsprint
* Markers and crayons
* Buttons
* Glue
* Yarn
* Additional supplies of your choice

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITIY

* Divide participants into small groups for different age groups

### DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) Say something like: *Think back to the second webinar when we spent time exploring what teachers bring and what teachers need. Let’s divide into four groups to create representations of the “good” teacher - for preschool children, one for elementary age children, one for middle school, and one for older teens.* Note: Since there is an entire Renaissance module on Adult Faith Development, you may to choose to use four groups instead of five.

(10 minutes) After about 10 minutes, call the whole group together for sharing representations and general conversation about them. Post the pictures and ask a volunteer to take pictures and share them with the group.

## ACTIVITY 2: Child and Youth Development (20 minutes)

*From Session 3*

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handouts 20, Faith Development Outline; Handout 21, Child Development; Handout 22, Youth Development
* Newsprint and markers
* Additional supplies such as colored paper, glue, scissors, etc.

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* The handouts refer to six stages and you want to have four groups.

Depending on the interests of your group, figure out how to divide up (maybe ages 3-7, 8-11, 12-15, 16-18; or 3-5, 6-9, 10-13, 14-18)

### DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) Start by noting that in this section we will focus on children and youth; let participants know that there is an entire 15 hour module on Adult Faith Development. Divide participants into groups to consider four different age levels. Encourage them to use the handouts on child and youth development and faith development as they discuss what the children/youth at their chosen level are like—physically, cognitively, socially, morally, spiritually. They are then to make a representation of a child or youth that illustrates their findings and be ready to share this in a three minute presentation.

(10 minutes) Have each group present its representation, following each presentation with brief comments from the rest of the participants.

Tell participants that the outline chart is really just a taste of development at different stages. Encourage participants to obtain a copy of *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* by Tracey Hurd. This book has summaries of development and “ways to support” different age children at the close of each chapter. These summaries by age group can also be found in Tapestry of Faith programs online.

## ACTIVITY 2: Nuts and Bolts (25 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Newsprint and markers
* Handout 30, Support Checklist; Handout 31, Care and Feeding of Volunteers – Part Two; Handout 32, Religious Education Teacher Contract; Handout 33, Team Teaching; Handout 34, Team Rotation; Handout 35, Leader Reflection and Planning; Handout 36, Sample Check-In Form; Handout 37, “Sticky” Teacher Development; Handout 38, Tapestry of Faith – Spiritual Preparation; Handout 39, Creating Covenants; Handout 40, Children’s Covenant; Handout 41, Teacher Dedication; Handout 42, Group Project and Presentation

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Ask for a volunteer to scribe.

### DESCRIPTION

(15 minutes) Say something like:

Lots of nuts and bolts are involved in maintaining your program like a well-oiled machine. The policies, procedures and all that jazz may be very familiar to the religious educator, the committee, and experienced teachers but can be mystifying to the new teacher or one who is returning after not teaching for a while. What are the things teachers need to know? For example: beginning and ending time for classes, where the supplies are…and so on. Let’s do some brainstorming on what teachers need to know and then we’ll talk about how we communicate this to them…Will someone record as we brainstorm?

Be sure to include such things as a teacher notebook or procedures manual (electronic or printed), weekly notes, etc. Ask the person who recorded ideas to take a picture of the newsprint and share with participants.

(5 minutes) Refer participants to Handouts 30-41 and say something like:

We don’t have the time in a 15 hour module to go into detail about every topic, so keep these resources handy once are back in your congregation, and better yet, share some with the RE Committee as a possible discussion topic for a meeting. If you do something that worked particularly well, be sure to share it with colleagues on the Reach email list. (If needed, the information on subscribing to the Reach list is included in Handout 43 in Session 5).

## ACTIVITY 2: Dealing with the Unexpected (20 minutes)

### DESCRIPTION

1. minutes) Say something like:

As much as teachers prepare it’s not uncommon for things to go off track at some point in the year. For example:

* A co-teacher doesn’t show up.
* *A child arrives in tears and says her family is moving or her parents are getting a divorce.*
* *A twelve-year-old boy says he is being bullied by public school classmates who tell him he is going to hell because his church doesn’t preach the saving message of Jesus Christ.*
* *Bad weather means there are two rather than 12 children in a class that day.*

Ask participants what other situations teachers in their programs have encountered. What were the teachers able to do (or could have done) to make the morning as successful as possible? What help (if any) could you have given them right then, that morning, in that circumstance?

## ACTIVITY 3: Planning a Teacher Development Event (60 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Handout 42, Group Project and Presentation
* Slides 30-31
* Newsprint, paper, colored paper
* Scissors, glue
* Other craft materials as needed

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Know what break-out spaces are available for groups.
* Decide how you will place participants in groups (or if they will self-select).

### DESCRIPTION

(60 minutes) Teams work on the group project, taking breaks as needed. Leaders should check in with each group occasionally and provide any needed assistance. As planning time ends, ask teams to re-gather in the larger group. If participants want to use the projector, give appropriate instructions so that no time is lost in set-up.

## ACTIVITY 3: Group Presentations and Response (150 minutes)

*From Session 5*

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Slide 36

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Determine order in which teams will present.

### DESCRIPTION

(120 minutes) Each group has 25 minutes to present their event, followed by five minutes for feedback. Explain that first the presenting team will speak about what went well and what they would do differently. Then, other participants will offer what they liked and what they would like to have seen more of. End with applause for each team.

(30 minutes) Engage all of the participants in a collective reflection, using the following prompts as needed:

* What are the tools teachers need?
* How can we frame teaching as spiritual development?
* What were some of the best elements across presentations?

Ask for a volunteer from each group to email their presentations to all participants (and leaders).

## ACTIVITY 4: Loose Ends (15 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Any remaining parking lot items
* Handout 43, Selected Online Resources

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Review any parking lot questions or concerns to determine how best to respond.

### DESCRIPTION

(15 minutes) This is the time to remind participants that they must turn in their evaluations to receive credit for this module. Assure them that you welcome frank feedback and that their responses go directly to the Renaissance Office and are shared only in the aggregate. This is also the time to thank your local host and anyone else who has been helpful in preparation for the module or caring for the participants’ needs.

Now consider whatever questions are left in the parking lot. If there are none, refer to the goals of the module found on Handout 2 and ask participants if there are any areas where they still have questions. Or you, as the leader, might feel that some area was not covered as thoroughly as you would have wished, and you might raise questions. Ideally, there should be questions from the group as well as from the leaders.

Remind participants that Handout 43 and the Appendices contain additional resources.

## ACTIVITY 5: Reflection

*Not used in hybrid module.*

## ACTIVITY 6: Closing Worship (30 minutes)

### MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

* Chime
* Cloth for the table
* Chalice, candle and matches (or LED candle)
* Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*, at least one for every two participants
* Slide 38 or newsprint with the blessing ritual words

### PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

* Set up chalice on the cloth, surrounded by the “gift boxes.”
* Decide on closing words (Reading 693 or other words of your choosing).
* Make sure there is a fairly strong singer to lead the opening song (Hymn 404, “What Gift Can We Bring”) If there is a keyboard to accompany the song, even better.
* Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice.
* Optional: Prepare newsprint if not using the slide with the words of blessing.
* Optional: Ask someone to read the chalice lighting words.

### DESCRIPTION

(30 minutes) If the song “What Gift Can We Bring” is unfamiliar to most people and particularly if you don’t have a keyboard for accompaniment, teach the song before the formal start of the worship.

Then, with the chime, invite participants into sacred space.

As the chalice is lit, a leader or participant reads:

What Do Children Need on Sunday Morning?

By the Reverend Lowell Brook

*They need to light a candle, and have a quiet moment to enjoy its mystery.*

*They need to sing a song, to hear their own voice and other voices joined*

*together,*

*And to feel the feelings that are stirred by music.*

*They need to hear a story and have a chance to share their own,*

*remembering that we are each different and also very alike.*

*They need to create something, realizing that by expressing themselves,*

*whether using words or materials, helps to bind the different parts*

*of ourselves and life together.*

*That’s what religion is.*

*They need to be with an adult who is interested in the world and who feels*

*the privilege and responsibility of their trust—one who is glad to be*

*with them,* *and regards them positively.*

*Into this safe and encouraging context, we may weave the content of our*

*religious traditions.*

*The history and common threads of our identity are important to be sure,*

*but without this* *essential loving embrace the education will not be*

*religious.*

Hymn 404, “What Gift Can We Bring”

Invite each participant to share what they are taking home and what they learned. Leaders should go last.

Ask participants to rise in body or spirit and form a semi-circle in order to see the words of the blessing (on the slide or newsprint). One leader should be at each end. A leader begins this ritual by taking the hands of the participant next to them saying these words from Parker Palmer:

(*Name,) May your teaching project the condition of your soul onto your students and bring a blessing to your ways of being together on your spiritual and religious life journey.*

The leader at the other end of the semi-circle takes the hands of the other leader and says the blessing to conclude the ritual.

Take a moment to recognize (with applause) participants who have completed their fifth module.

Closing Words: Reading 693 or another selection of your choosing

Closing Song: Hymn 402, “From You I Receive”