

Wonder Box: Time for All Ages

Rev. Christina Leone, U.U. Church of Annapolis, Maryland
cleone@uuannapolis.org

Wonder:

Noun: A feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable.

Verb: Desire or be curious to know something

As Unitarian Universalists, we cherish wonder as a feeling and as an action. We honor in our principles the free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and encouragement to spiritual growth.

The Wonder Box is:

- **Multigenerational** – Involves all ages in worship through story *or* lesson.
- **Interactive** – Allows for interaction of children in worship, and spontaneous conversation with all ages in the congregation. Doesn't patronize or put anyone on the spot.
- **Multiple Learning Styles** – Visual/ tactile/ verbal, with the possibility for more!
- **Connected** – Supports the theme of the service; well-planned; a forethought.

Story:

- Write your own, take a spin on an old favorite, or tell an existing story!
- As much as possible... TELL the story, don't read. Use voices, dramatic pauses, hand-gestures. If you MUST show pictures, project them on a screen. Don't show from book.
- Use familiar hooks, "Once upon a time," "And the story goes," "Stories are powerful,"

Lesson:

- Have a "conversation" with the congregation about a topic.
- Use examples that all ages can relate to (or offer several examples). Remember elders!
- Invite spontaneous answers from the congregation. Don't put anyone on the spot unless they have been "cleared" in advance.

Tips and Tricks:

- Make it your own!
- Use songs, poems, ritual, call-and-response, interaction, etc. to liven things up!
- Work closely with the worship leader to ensure the Wonder Box supports the service.
- Choose a beautiful box (or container). Doesn't need to be expensive to be pretty.
- Call for volunteer, or choose ahead of time (especially if box contains something very unexpected or weird). You can have more than one volunteer sometimes!
- Honor the volunteer by using their name and thanking them before they sit back down.
- Honor the Wonder Box moment with dramatic and respectful introduction.
- Wrap up the Wonder Box time with a familiar closing, like, "Help me remember..."
- It's ok (good, in fact!) to challenge the congregation with difficult, sad, or scary topics. Be sure to tread carefully, and remind them of their community, safety, and/or role in creating justice now. Focus on emotions rather than specific details.