

FALL
2018

Families

WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

More
Than
Winning



The Families pages are adapted from Tapestry of Faith lifespan faith development programs.

uua.org/tapestry



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Crossing the Finish Line Together

Based on a true story that happened at the 1976 Special Olympics in Seattle, Washington.

Years ago, at the national Special Olympics, nine contestants lined up at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the sound of the starting gun, they each set off down the track toward the finish line. That is, except for the one child who stumbled soon after their start, tumbled to the ground, and began to cry. Two of the other racers, hearing the cries of the one who fell, slowed down and looked back toward the start. Then without hesitation, they turned around. They began to run in the other direction—

toward the injured child.

While the other contestants raced toward the finish line, the two who had turned around hurried over to help the child stand up. The child was hurt, but not too badly. All three of them then linked arms and, together, walked the 100-yard track.

By the time the trio reached the finish line, everyone in the stands was waving and cheering. The fastest runner had already won the 100-yard dash. But the last three to cross the finish line had smiles on their faces. 🏆

EXPLORING TOGETHER

Playing sports gives us fun, health, and a chance to do our best. Sometimes this means working hard to become the strongest or most clever player and win. Sometimes “doing our best” means bringing kindness and fairness to the game. Sometimes it means discovering how to cope when we fail or make a mistake.



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High Five! A popular way to celebrate success

In major league baseball, scoring 30 homeruns in a season is a big deal. In 1977, Glen Burke, a rookie outfielder who was also one of the first openly gay professional athletes, greeted his L.A. Dodger teammate Dusty Baker with one hand high in the air when Baker crossed home plate to score his 30th homerun. A famous photo shows Baker at that moment, one arm raised to slap palms with Burke and huge smiles on both players' faces.



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You don't shake hands straight on, you have to hold your arm fully extended over your head, leap as high as you can, and touch skin.

—1970s TV sportscaster, explaining the “new” high five

Many Ways to Play

What can your body do? What special capabilities do you have?



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We can all win at sports, and winning doesn't only mean beating other players. No matter what you can do, there's a sport where you can work on skills, go after the benchmarks you set for yourself, and enjoy the feeling of a win.

Many common sports are adapted so people with disabilities can fully

participate. Bicycling, skiing, skating, and running are sports where people with vision limitations can practice and compete with a partner. Adaptation might mean special rules or equipment.

The Paralympic games are for athletes who have disabilities. People who use a wheelchair can play golf, basketball, fencing, and other sports we usually associate with walking or running. A seated version of volleyball uses a smaller court and a lower net.

Goalball is a sport for people who are blind or visually impaired. A three-player team tries to move the ball across the opposing team's goal line. The ball has bells inside. The players know where the ball is and how fast it's moving by listening.

Name of the Game

What's going on here? Match the sport with its name; answers on page 4.

- ___ Quidditch
- ___ Lacrosse
- ___ Caber toss
- ___ Shot put
- ___ Roller derby



Sports Stars! Role Models?

Sports are a big part of American culture. Top athletes can earn a high salary. Many advertise clothing, cars, or other products and make those brands famous, too!

Some champions are Serena Williams (tennis), David Ortiz (baseball), Gabby Douglas (gymnastics), Larry Byrd (basketball), and Bethany Hamilton (surfing). These winners' virtues are well known: leadership, humility, a willingness to take risks, hard work, and team skills.

Part of being a sports hero is life in public view. Millions of people saw Colin Kaepernick, quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, take a knee rather than stand for the national anthem. Many football fans now admire him even more for protesting police brutality toward African Americans and bringing his protest to a sport so many people watch.

Millions also see a sports star's mistakes. Michael Vick, a player with the Atlanta Falcons, served jail time for his involvement in dog fighting. Lance Armstrong, winner of seven Tour de France races, was banned from bicycling for using illegal drugs.

- ★ What sports stars do you admire?
- ★ What are their attitudes and behaviors that inspire you?
- ★ What do they teach you about being a winner?



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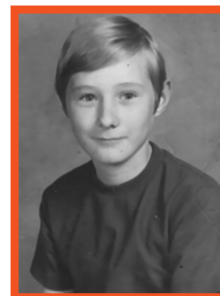
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Getting Good and Better

Keith Kron is a competitive tennis player, as well as a Unitarian Universalist minister. Growing up, he played football and volleyball, and was pretty good at wrestling, but worked hardest at basketball. He was the shortest boy in his class.

When he turned 10, Rev. Kron got a tennis racquet. He practiced hitting using a ball on an elastic string tied to a base. His close friends and he began to play a lot. Another birthday gift, tennis lessons, helped him improve even more.

Rev. Kron loves many things about playing tennis: healthy activity, challenging competition, and especially the never-boring journey of getting better: "After you've played for a while, you understand more about how your footwork and your stroke work together. You can test ways to play the game against someone who is taller or faster," he says.



Courtesy Keith Kron © iStock/Leontura

UUs may like to win; we also like to learn. We believe that we can make things better.

- What can you make better, in a game or sport you enjoy?
- Can you practice and improve a skill that helps you play?
- Can you help to improve the way people work together on your team?

Sports Practice, Spiritual Practice

Weekends can find Unitarian Universalist families torn. In family worship or religious education, a child has unique opportunities to grow in faith, compassion, justice-seeking, and wonder. However, a swim meet, soccer practice, or playoff tickets can entice you to make non-church plans.

You can make sports part of a child's faith development. Find teachable moments that connect sports activities with spiritual growth. For example: You observe your child on the field or in the pool, fully focused, mentally and physically, on what they're doing. Later, ask them how that moment felt. Offer them some words for that transcendent experience.

Maybe your child receives an "assist" (a pass) that enables them to score or a coaching tip that strengthens their skill. Mention it later. Slide the word "gratitude" into the conversation. Invite your child to find a way to thank their teammate or coach.

We try to win at sports, but sometimes we lose. You will have plenty of chances to support a child through a failure. Take on this ministry. Assure young athletes that although failure feels painful, they will have another chance. Praise a child for effort, bravery, and a supportive attitude toward teammates. Sports can build self-esteem for all children, not only the ones who show natural talent or score the most points.

Is your family watching, rather than playing? When we root for a team, we experience the drive and focus of the players right along with them. That's empathy. When we whoop with delight at a last-minute, tie-breaking score or a powerful tennis serve returned with grace and accuracy, what better experience of wonder and awe?

When our team loses, some fans experience a spiritual crisis. How do we honor these feelings? Do we curse and blame, or, reflect on lessons of spirit and technique the team could apply next time?

Sports can build self-esteem for all children, not only the ones who show natural talent or score the most points.



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■ How can family time involved with sports become part of living your Unitarian Universalist faith?

■ Where does your child have opportunities to act on their values, in sports?

■ What attitudes and behaviors do you model, as a sports fan?



FAMILIES: WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

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FIND OUT MORE

■ The Spirit of Adventure curriculum by Katie Covey, which helped to inspire this Families section, offers four sessions that engage children in UU Principles and values through sports. www.uure.com/spirit.html

■ Do you like the story, "Crossing the Finish Line Together?" It came from Love Connects Us, a Tapestry of Faith curriculum for grades 4/5. Discover more stories of courageous wins and UU strategies for fair play, in and out of the sports arena. www.uua.org/tapestry

Answers to matching game: 1. Roller derby; 2. Caber toss; 3. Shot put; 4. Quidditch; 5. Lacrosse