

Teacher Development Renaissance Module

Leader's Guide

By Betty Jo Middleton and Gaia Brown

Developmental Editor: Pat Kahn

Table of Contents

About the Authors

Introduction

List of Leader Resources

List of Handouts

List of Slides

Supply List

Schedule of Sessions

Session 1: Teaching and Learning – What Shapes Us?

Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers

Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers

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

Session 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship

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

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.

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.

The reader for the module is Parker Palmer's [*The 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.

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](#) of the UUA website.

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

List of Leader Resources

Leader Resource 1 Sample Welcome Letter

Leader Resource 2 Church Bulletin Bloopers

Leader Resource 3 Suggestions for Openings and Closings

List of Handouts and Additional Resources

Read the resources listed in bold type before the workshop to enhance workshop experience.

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

11. The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act
12. Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers
13. Channing on Teachers
14. The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part One
15. Tips for Successful Recruiting
16. Example Recruitment Skit
17. Safety, Health and Ethics in Congregations
18. Code of Ethics Sample
19. Sample Health and Safety Guidelines

Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers

20. Faith Development Outline

21. Abbreviated Summary: Child Development
22. Abbreviated Summary: Adolescent Development
23. Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences
24. UUA's Accessibility Resources for Congregations
25. Sample Referral Form for Individuals with Special Needs
26. The Children of Jowonio
27. The Paradoxes of Space
28. Creating an Environment of Acceptance and Mutuality
29. Discipline in Sunday School: What Would a UU Do?

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

30. Support Checklist
31. The Care and Feeding of Volunteers: Part Two
32. Sample Religious Education Teacher Contract
33. Team Teaching
34. A Fictional (But Not Unrealistic) Teaching Team Rotation
35. Leader Reflection and Planning
36. Sample Teacher Check-In Form
37. How to be Sure the Teacher Development Workshop Goes Home with Your Teachers
38. Tapestry of Faith — Spiritual Preparation
39. Creating Covenants
40. Children's Covenant
41. Teacher Dedication
42. Group Project and Presentation

Session 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship

43. 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

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
- 23 Safe 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:

- 29 Session 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

- Computer, projector and screen for [Power Point slides \(38 slides\)](#) 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

Leader Resource 1 Sample Welcome Letter

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 Teacher Development Module Participants,

We look forward to gathering at [Lovely Conference Center] for the Teacher Development Renaissance Module on [Whatever Your Dates Are]. This letter will let you know the preparation that will help you make the most of our time together.

The Reader for this module is *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* by Parker J. Palmer (Jossey-Bass). While the entire book is worthwhile, we will be looking specifically at chapters I, III, IV, and VI. A guide to the Reader can be found here:

http://www.uua.org/documents/dfd/reader_teacher_guide.pdf

There are also **handouts** and additional resources that you can access at [add URL]. Familiarity with many of these handouts prior to the module will be very helpful; the table of contents designates **in bold** which ones to read through ahead of time. Please print or save your own copy of all handouts. Also come prepared to take notes and to journal, whether you use paper or something electronic is up to you.

If you have materials you use such as background check forms, teacher report forms, tips for teachers, or other related resources, please do share them, either with paper copies or electronically.

If you have a musical instrument and would like to accompany our singing, please bring it!

Please note that we will be starting promptly at [Time] and will conclude the module at [Time]. Attendance for the **full** fifteen hours of the module and completion of the module evaluation are necessary for credit.

With anticipation,
Leader and Leader
Emails

Leader Resource 2

Church Bulletin Bloopers

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

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. 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](#) and/or the [Worship Web 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

Schedule of Sessions

Session 1: Teaching and Learning — What Shapes Us? 2.5 hours

- Opening and Introductions (20 minutes)
- Orientation (20 minutes)
- Making a Covenant (15 minutes)
- The Mutuality of Making a Difference (30 minutes)
- Shared Praxis (30 minutes)
- The Courage to Teach (25 minutes)
- Reflection (7 minutes)
- Closing (3 minutes)

Session 2: Teachers as Learners and Seekers 3 hours

- Opening (20 minutes)
- Reframing Teaching (35 minutes)
- What Teachers Bring (20 minutes)
- What Teachers Need (20 minutes)
- The “Good Teacher” (35 minutes)
- Recruiting Volunteers (25 minutes)
- Safe Congregations (15 minutes)
- Reflection (5 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)

Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers 3 hours

- Opening (10 minutes)
- Child and Youth Development (35 minutes)
- Different Ways of Knowing (15 minutes)
- Learners and Designated Special Needs (30 minutes)
- Paradoxes of Space (30 minutes)

Keeping the Classroom Covenant (50 minutes)

Reflection (5 minutes)

Closing (5 minutes)

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

3 hours

Opening (5 minutes)

Nuts and Bolts (25 minutes)

Dealing with the Unexpected (20 minutes)

Planning a Teacher Development Event (120 minutes)

Reflection (5 minutes)

Closing (5 minutes)

Session 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship

3.5 hours

Final Group Preparation (10 minutes)

Opening (5 minutes)

Group Presentations and Response (140 minutes)

Loose Ends (15 minutes)

Reflection (10 minutes)

Closing Worship (30 minutes)

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
- Experience creating a covenant
- Draw on their own experiences to understand Parker Palmer’s definition of good teaching

SESSION AT A GLANCE

ACTIVITY	TIME
Gathering Activity: Gift Boxes	15
Opening and Introductions	20
Orientation	20
Making a Covenant	15
Mutuality of Making a Difference	30
Shared Praxis	30
The Courage to Teach	25
Reflection	7
Closing	3

GATHERING ACTIVITY: Gift Boxes (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Slide 1

- 4x6 index cards, one for each participant and leader, plus a few extras
- Variety of decorative items, such as bits of ribbon, star stickers, embroidery thread, pipe cleaners
- Scissors, included left-handed ones
- Glue
- Markers

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Cut off two opposite corners of each card, creating the appearance of a box and draw three lines to indicate sides of “box”
- Use provided slide or post on newsprint:

Each of us brings gifts to share with the group.

Decorate one of the “gift boxes”

Write on it one gift you bring to the group.

Keep the box with you.

- Make several examples as well as one for each leader
- Leaders will save these to use in the closing worship.

DESCRIPTION

As participants gather, point to the instructions and ask each person to prepare a “gift box” using the provided materials. As time allows, they may make more than one. Note: these will also be used in the closing of the module.

ACTIVITY 1: Opening and Introductions (20 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Gift boxes from the Gathering activity
- Name tags, pens, markers
- Chalice, candle and matches or LED-battery operated candle
- Centering table with cloth
- Chime
- Slides 2-3 or newsprint with Welcome to the Teacher Development Renaissance Module and information for introductions written on it

- *Singing the Living Tradition* Hymn 188, “Come, Come, Whoever You Are”
- Roster of participants

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Ask for a volunteer to light the chalice
- Optional: Ask a participant to lead the singing

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Ring a chime or in some other way call for the attention of the group. Begin singing “Come, Come, Whoever You Are,” singing it through three times or so. Optional: sing it as a 3 part round if you have three song leaders. Add the additional line “though you’ve broken your vows a thousand times” if someone can lead it (it is not in the hymnal).

Ask the volunteer to come forward and light the chalice. 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)*

Then 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....At this time let’s bring them forward, one
at a time.*

One of the leaders should model this; as you rise and place your “gift box” on the chalice table, say something like:

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

Note: Leaders should gather and save the gift boxes for the closing worship.

(15 minutes) Invite the participants to look at the information for introductions posted on the slide or newsprint:

- 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)

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? Who has flown across the country to be there and may not know anyone? This kind of information will help you facilitate the participation of individuals in the group.

ACTIVITY 2: Orientation (20 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Slides 4-5 or newsprint with Orientation and Renaissance Program information written on it
- 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
- Sticky notes for Parking Lot
- Newsprint and markers
- Optional: Basket for Church Bulletin Bloopers if using

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Arrange for someone on site to provide logistical details
- Prepare newsprint for Parking Lot and Volunteer Sign Ups
- If using Church Bulletin Bloopers, cut apart and place in basket

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Invite the designated person on site to review logistics such as policies about meeting room (moving furniture, use of tape, etc.), location of bathrooms, meal and snack times, and information about wireless internet if applicable.

(10 minutes) Ask the participants about their Renaissance Module experience. Is this module their first? Fifth? Tenth? 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.

(5 minutes) Review the schedule of the module on Handout 3, adding times for breaks as need. Review the goals for this module on Handout 4. Identify other resources for this module including:

- “Parking Lot.” Explain that this is where questions or issues not directly related to the session topic should be posted. At the end of each session the leaders will check the Parking Lot and decide whether, how, and when to address the questions.
- Resource tables. Invite people to peruse in their free time and to add sample brochures, programs, and materials they have brought to share.
- 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

- Optional: Basket of “Church Bulletin Bloopers.” Participants are welcome to take one and read it to the group if they see energy is flagging or the group just needs a minute for a break.

ACTIVITY 3: Making a Covenant (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint and markers

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 a prominent place. Mention that additional conversation about classroom covenants will be covered in Session 4.

ACTIVITY 4: The Mutuality of Making a Difference (30 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.
- 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 (30 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

- Review the handouts and slides
- Test the equipment and cue the slides

DESCRIPTION

(20 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.

(10 minutes) Ask participants to form groups of three or four. 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 (25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Slide 17
- Index cards
- Pens and pencils
- Handout 9 Reflections on *The Courage to Teach*

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Distribute index cards and pens or pencils as needed

DESCRIPTION

(5 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) Let’s form into groups of three (perhaps there will be one dyad—it is better to have smaller groups than larger) and, first, 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. Now, on one side of your card, jot down the moment of joy, and on the other, the moment of despair. In your small group, share—one by one—with the others what you have written as your moment of joy. Others in your group then help you identify what gift, what strength, you brought to that moment...is that the gift you suggested you bring to this larger group?

(10 minutes) Say something like: We have ten minutes for this part of the activity, so we can devote three minutes to each person’s sharing and the identification of gifts. Then, 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) When all are back together in the large group, 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?

(5 minutes) Review any questions that have been posted in the Parking Lot and respond as appropriate. Ask if there are any closing thoughts about this session. Suggest that participants make notes about the session to prepare for the online evaluation.

ACTIVITY 7: Reflection (7 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 18

DESCRIPTION

(7 minutes) Show slide 19 and introduce Handout 10 saying something like: *Whether or not you are enrolled in the Religious Education Credentialing Program, it is a good practice to write a brief reflection shortly after attending any learning experience. Time is allotted at the end of each session for you to get started on the reflection questions and to address other issues or questions that have come up for you during the session.*

We encourage you to use these reflections for:

- *a newsletter article (to keep your congregation informed about your professional development)*
- *a report to the Board (to ensure congregational leadership knows professional expense money is put to good use) and/or*
- *your credentialing portfolio (to keep a record of the module and provide a short reflection to show how the module influenced your work)*

ACTIVITY 8: Closing (3 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Slide 19
- Chalice cloth
- Chalice
- Candle and matches or LED-battery operated candle

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Optional: Ask for participants to read the closing reading and/or lead the closing song.

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, sing the song, and extinguish the chalice.

Remind participants of the start time of the next session 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.

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
- 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	20
Reframing Teaching	35
What Teachers Bring	20
What Teachers Need	20
The “Good” Teacher	35
Recruiting Volunteers	25
Safe Congregations	15
Reflection	5
Closing	5

ACTIVITY 1: Opening (20 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”
- Optional: Basket of Bloopers

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Optional: One or two participants choose a blooper to read
- Optional: Ask a participant to lead the song
- Optional: Ask a participant to lead the reading

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) If possible one of the leaders should be available to greet participants as they arrive. As the group is settling down, invite those who have “bloopers” to share them. Then ring the chime. In the order that makes sense for you, do the reading, song, and lighting of the chalice.

(15 minutes) Invite participants to reflect on the first session, what they experienced and/or learned. 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, etc. Ideally this should not be rushed. 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 (35 minutes)

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."

Divide participants into seven groups, giving each group one of the principles, and ask them group to prepare a brief presentation to the larger group. Each group should take a few minutes to discuss the meaning of that principle for teaching as a spiritual practice. Referring also to Handout 12 Teaching in Faith: Providing Tools to Support and Sustain Volunteers, ask each group how that principle gets embodied (or not), and consider tools for teachers. After each group presents, allow a few minutes for full group discussion.

ACTIVITY 3: What Teachers Bring (20 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Easel and newsprint
- Markers (black or brown, plus three brighter colors)
- 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, preferably one who can write clearly on the easel pad

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 turn to a neighbor and as twosomes (or threesomes) 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 on easel paper, using black or brown marker. People will have to actually be able to read this list so don't be shy about using several pieces of paper. 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.) Indicate each category with its initial letter (I, E, S) written in one of three bright colors. When you are done, ask participants to look at the list. 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? Ask for a volunteer to take a pictures of the newsprint and share with the group. 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
- Scissors
- Newsprint and markers

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Determine how many groups you have if each one has about four participants
- Cut the list from the last activity into as many sections as you have groups, trying to have a fairly even number of items on each list
- Give each group one piece of newsprint and a marker

DESCRIPTION

(12 minutes) Divide participants into groups of about four. Give each group a section of the list from the prior activity. 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” that you have on your section of the list, 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 them to come up with a variety of kinds of solutions, not every one involving an inordinate amount of time for the religious educator. They might have several ideas for one thing but be stumped on others. Have each group designate a scribe and write down the situation, and briefly, possible remedies on newsprint. 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.

(8 minutes) Call the participants back to the whole group and ask each small group to share their ideas. They will probably have about two minutes each. Then have them post their newsprint with their list of solutions. Be sure their

names are included, so that other participants who look at these lists later know where to go if they want more information. Ask for a volunteer to take pictures of the lists and email to participants.

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

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

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

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- 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 representation of a good teacher 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 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
- Newsprint and markers

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

DESCRIPTION

Ask if anyone has a particularly successful recruitment story they would like to share. (If no one has one, share your own.)

(20 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 down on newsprint. 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 leaders 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)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handouts 17, Physical 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.

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 (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 24

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Refer participants to the reflection questions for this session and maintain silence for five minutes for reflective journaling

ACTIVITY 9: Closing (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- SLT Reading 691, "Gardeners of the Spirit"
- Chime
- Chalice
- Candle and matches or LED-battery operated candle

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Optional: Ask a participant to be the reader.

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) After some reflective silence, sound the chime. Ask for reflective sharing from the Time for Reflection. Have the reading and extinguish the chalice.

Ask participants to review Handouts 20-29 before the next session.

Session 3: Supporting Learners and Seekers

GOALS

This session will:

- Highlight the development of children and youth
- 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
- Be inspired to make improvements to create welcoming spaces for teaching and learning
- Discuss ways to redirect behavior so that the religious experience is safer and more welcoming for everyone

SESSION AT A GLANCE

ACTIVITY	TIME
Opening	10
Child and Youth Development	35
Difference Ways of Knowing	15
Learners and Designated Special Needs	30
Paradoxes of Space	30
Keeping the Classroom Covenant	50
Reflection	5

ACTIVITY 1: Opening (10 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chime
- Slide 24 or newsprint with SLT Hymn 123, “Spirit of Life”

DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) Ring the chime to call people together. Sing “Spirit of Life” SLT Hymn 123. 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 (35 minutes)

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

(15 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.

(20 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 3: Different Ways of Knowing (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 23, Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences
- Index cards
- Colored markers for drawing
- Easel and paper
- Tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Select a familiar rhythmic song for the rhythm band activity, such as Jingle Bells
- Review your own knowledge of Multiple Intelligences.

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Say something like:

Most of us use different ways of learning different things. Skills such as swimming or riding a bike are learned primarily by doing, although observation and instruction play a part. Learning specific information or

mastering a body of knowledge may involve reading, internet searches, hearing lectures, discussion, and a variety of other methods. Life learnings—how to deal with success and failure, loss and grief, for example—are more complex. In all of these areas, individuals also have their own ways of knowing, identified as Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner. How we think people learn will influence our teaching; awareness of Multiple Intelligences provides the reasoning for using a variety of learning experiences in our programming. Let's look at Handout 23.

(7 minutes) Say something like:

We would like you to organize yourselves into a rhythm band, with some members seated and some standing. You will need to have all members of each section near each other. First, we need some key shakers—a few people have keys? Okay, now we need some folks playing rhythm sticks—you can use pens or pencils for that. And we need hand clappers, knee slappers, toe tappers, and tummy patters. Some of you will need to double up on the instruments in order to have all of these.

Let the group organize itself, with leaders responding to questions about what instruments are needed but not making suggestions or giving directions.

(5 minutes) Tell participants the name of the song you've selected and direct their attention to the slide or newsprint with the words for the song and ask them to sing it through twice, playing their instruments all the while.

(5 minutes) After the singing, say something like:

Now quickly draw a stick figure of yourself with your instrument and tape it onto the newsprint in the same position you held in the orchestra.

(3 minutes) Ask:

What intelligences did you see in action in this?

They will no doubt have observed bodily-kinesthetic, musical, and perhaps interpersonal (as they organized themselves), spatial (as they organized and in placing the cards on the poster), and linguistic (reading the song). Ask if they can think of ways that other intelligences could have been included.

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 **M**ultiple **I**ntelligences, 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 (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Blank paper for each participant, plus a few extra
- Pencils, pens, markers
- Handout 27, Paradoxes of Space
- Slides 26-27

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Arrange for six participants to be prepared to read one of the six paradoxes

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Invite participants to reflect briefly about the role of space in teaching and learning in faith...What's important in an environment beyond safety? What makes a teaching and learning environment in a faith development setting welcoming? Encourage a few participants to briefly share their ideas.

(10 minutes) Hand out sheets of paper and pencils, pens, or markers. Invite participants to quickly—in not more than five minutes—sketch the floor plan of a welcoming, safe, environment conducive to faith development. After five minutes, ask what they included in their drawings, what they saw as essential to the space. Say something like:

It is important to prepare the environment—perhaps your Sunday morning practice includes going around the space and checking that things have been set up properly; perhaps teachers or someone else does this... It is especially important when space is shared (as with a preschool) that things are ready for Sunday morning (or Saturday evening) classes. Having an appropriate classroom environment not only enhances teaching pleasure and interest in learning, it can also help diminish behavioral issues.

(15 minutes) Say something like:

When Palmer talks about “space” in education, he is talking about something more than a floor plan; while working on our floor plans, we have considered some of these aspects as well.

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 the six volunteers to each 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...you might conclude this time by asking:

Do you see any of these aspects in this module? What is missing?

ACTIVITY 6: Keeping the Classroom Covenant (50 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pens
- Handouts 28, Creating an Environment of Acceptance and Mutuality; Handout 29, Discipline in Sunday School

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Ask a participant to be the scribe.

DESCRIPTION

(10 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 to name 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.

(15 minutes) When you have eight or more ideas listed, 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 twelve 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.

(20 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 on newsprint. 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?

Ask the scribes to take a picture of the newsprint and share with the group.

ACTIVITY 7: Reflection (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chime
- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 28

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Participants have five minutes to consider the questions and do some reflective writing. The time can start and end with a chime.

ACTIVITY 8: Closing (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chime

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Invite participants to share a phrase or sentence they have just written in reflection. Alternately, if they don't want to share anything from their journal, they are welcome to share in just a phrase a learning they have had from this session. Leaders should also share something they have learned. When everyone has had a turn, thank the participants for their participation and ring the chime.

Remind participants to review handouts 30-42 before the next session.

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

GOALS

This session will:

- 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.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- 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.

SESSION AT A GLANCE

ACTIVITY	TIME
Opening	5
Nuts and Bolts	25
Dealing with the Unexpected	20
Planning a Teacher Development Event	120
Reflection	5
Closing	5

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. Close with Reading 439.

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 in the Religious Educator Facebook groups.

ACTIVITY 2: Dealing with the Unexpected (20 minutes)

DESCRIPTION

(20 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 (120 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

(10 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 four 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).

(110 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. Remind participants of the start time of the last session. If participants want to use the projector, give appropriate instructions so that no time is lost in set-up in Sessions 5.

ACTIVITY 4: Reflection (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 32
- Chime
- Materials for journaling

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Sound the chime and maintain silence while participants read the questions and write in their journals.

ACTIVITY 5: Closing (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Slide 33 or newsprint with STJ Reading 1009, “Meditation on Breathing”
- Chime
- SLT Reading 687, “Go Your Ways”

PREPARATION

- Optional: Ask one or two people to lead the singing.

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) Sound the chime and start with a moment of silence. Then do the reading and song in the order that seems most appropriate to you.

Reading 687

Go your ways,
knowing not the answer to all things,
yet seeking always the answer
to one more thing than you know.

John W. Brigham

Remind participants of the start time of Session 5 and any instructions regarding equipment.

Session 5: Group Presentations and Closing Worship

GOALS

This session will:

- Provide ideas for teacher development events
- Tie up loose ends
- Celebrate the time spent together and the good work done.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Present their teacher development events
- Reflect on what we have explored during this module
- Participate in a worship that highlights many of the concepts of this module.

SESSION AT A GLANCE

ACTIVITY	TIME
Final Group Preparation	10
Opening	5
Group Presentations and Feedback	140
Loose Ends	15
Reflection	10
Closing Worship	30

ACTIVITY 1: Final Group Preparation (10 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Depends on the groups

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Be ready to help participants find whatever last minute items they might need.

DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) Participants have this time to rehearse for presentations, gather things together, etc.

ACTIVITY 2: Opening (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chime
- Slides 34-35 or newsprint with STJ Hymn 1000, "Morning Has Come"

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Optional: Ask someone to lead the song.

DESCRIPTION

(5 minutes) If you have a group that particularly enjoys singing have them lead the song. Then invite each participant to complete "This morning/right now I feel....."

ACTIVITY 3: Group Presentations and Response (140 minutes)

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.

(20 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 (10 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chime
- Handout 10, Reflection Questions
- Slide 37

DESCRIPTION

(10 minutes) This last reflection time is longer so that participants can look back at the entire module (and to give leaders time to set up for the closing worship).

ACTIVITY 6: Closing Worship (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chime
- Cloth for the table
- Chalice, candle and matches (or LED candle)
- “Gift boxes” that were made in the first session
- Additional gift boxes if needed to have more than enough for each participant and leader
- 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 approach the chalice table and choose one of the gift boxes that were made in Session 1, and then to share why they chose that particular gift, what they are taking home, 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"